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Reclaiming a Multiplying Discipleship: Fostering the Dance of the Gathered and Sent Church

Matthew Lake

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

RECLAIMING A MULTIPLYING DISCIPLESHIP:
FOSTERING THE DANCE OF THE GATHERED AND SENT CHURCH

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MATTHEW LAKE

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George Fox University
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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This is to certify that the DMin Dissertation of

Matthew Lake

has been approved by
the Dissertation Committee on February 17, 2020
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Dissertation Committee:

Primary Advisor: H. Colleen Butcher, DMin

Secondary Advisor: Kory Knott, DMin

Lead Mentor: Leonard I. Sweet, PhD

Expert Advisor: Calvin Habig, DMin

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ABSTRACT

In the postmodern world, the local church has experienced significant decline as Christendom gives way to a more secular culture. Many shrinking denominational churches have missed imaginative opportunities and practices to produce multiplying disciples. This dissertation explores how declining denominational churches can embrace new opportunities for flourishing in a postmodern context through the development of a culture of multiplying discipleship. History—through examples such as the early church and Wesleyan movements—has shown that multiplying discipleship movements are possible in cultures not familiar with the Gospel. Such movements reveal new possibilities produced through the tension found between more formational offices of teaching, shepherding, and prophesying and more generative offices of apostleship and evangelism. Such a tension can be labeled as “gathered” and a “sent” forms of church existing simultaneously. By reclaiming this tension exhibited in the past, an imaginative stimulus for multiplying discipleship may be found for today and into the future.

Section one explores the history and dynamics of the wicked problem of experiencing multiplying discipleship in a changing world in local church settings. Section two unpacks other United Methodist Church curricula approaches for multiplying discipleship and notes how these approaches focus primarily upon a “gathered only” church mindset. Section three explores how multiplying discipleship occurred in the early church and the Wesleyan movement. This section identifies key APEST elements found simultaneously in formational (teaching, shepherding, prophesying) and generative (apostleship, evangelism) offices in both time periods. By applying these gathered and sent elements in today’s local churches, new multiplying discipleship opportunities

emerge. Section four describes the artifact, which is a curriculum of a four-step, repeating process to be completed at the participant's initiative. Section five articulates the specifications of the artifact. Section six summarizes the learning I have experienced from this project, along with new questions raised for future exploration.

SECTION 1: MINISTRY PROBLEM

A Changing World

The times they are a-changin'
— Bob Dylan

Change is everywhere.

Perhaps a more obvious statement cannot be made. Change is all around, increasing exponentially, affecting everyone and everything. As Kevin Kelly puts it, “All is flux. Nothing is finished. Nothing is done. This never-ending change is the pivotal axis of the modern world.”¹

It is no secret that American society is in a time of great transition. Modernity is giving way to post-modernity. Families come in increasingly unique shapes and sizes. Technology allows instantaneous connection with people all over the globe. Artificial intelligence is increasingly part of everyday life. Wealth is being accumulated in unfathomable amounts. The world is at an individual’s fingertips on the internet. The foundations of life and culture are shaking violently, affecting every area of life. No area of society is immune.

In agriculture, it is “go big,” get “specialized,” or go home.²

In medicine, it is partner with larger organizations or become non-existent.³

¹ Kevin Kelly, *The Inevitable: Understanding the 12 Technological Forces That Will Shape Our Future* (New York: Penguin Books, 2016), 6.

² Growing up on a farm, I have experienced this reality firsthand in the agricultural community.

³ UPMC Susquehanna Health, “Susquehanna Health Joins UPMC to Expand Healthcare Services, Advance Quality Care in Region,” *The UPMC Susquehanna Health Blog*, October 18, 2016,

In business, it is adapt to today or cease to exist tomorrow.⁴

In technology, it is innovate or become obsolete.⁵

In professionalized sports, it is form a “super team” while focusing on the greatness of individual players.⁶

In education, it is discover how to educate at a rate that avoids becoming irrelevant. For example, Dell Technologies issued a report by twenty tech, business, and academic experts, projecting 85% of jobs that will exist in 2030 have yet to be invented.⁷

In politics, people are simultaneously becoming both more tribal and more global.⁸

<https://www.susquehannahealth.org/in-the-community/blog/susquehanna-health-joins-upmc-to-expand-healthcare-services-advance-quality>.

⁴ Once-popular businesses such as Toys ‘R’ Us and Blockbuster are now extinct. See Chris Isidore, Jackie Wattles, and Parija Kavilanz, “Toys ‘R’ Us Will Close or Sell All US Stores,” March 15, 2018, <http://money.cnn.com/2018/03/14/news/companies/toys-r-us-closing-stores/index.html>. See also Celena Chong, “Blockbuster’s CEO Once Passed Up a Chance to Buy Netflix for Only 50 Million,” July 17, 2015, <http://www.businessinsider.com/blockbuster-ceo-passed-up-chance-to-buy-netflix-for-50-million-2015-7>. See also <https://ktla.com/2019/08/07/sears-kmart-are-closing-26-more-stores-including-in-california/>. The 5 largest business mergers have happened in the last 20 years. See <https://online.csp.edu/blog/business/5-biggest-mergers-of-all-time>. A very contemporary example of this is the recent Disney/Fox merger. See <https://www.vox.com/culture/2019/3/20/18273477/disney-fox-merger-deal-details-marvel-x-men>.

⁵ Consider social media networking giants such as Facebook compared to the struggles of Myspace. See Rachael Morill, “6 Social Media Networks That Just Couldn’t Make It Happen,” Customer Magnetism Blog, September 24, 2015, <https://www.customermagnetism.com/2015/09/24/7-social-media-sites-happen/>. As Kevin Kelly notes, “Because of technology everything we make is always in the process of becoming. Every kind of thing is becoming something else, while it churns from ‘might’ to ‘is.’” See Kelly, *The Inevitable*, 6.

⁶ For a current example and explanation of this phenomenon see Aswhin Yedavalli, “Superteams Are an Evolution in Sports,” Iowa State Daily, July 19, 2018, http://www.iowastatedaily.com/opinion/yedavalli-superteams-are-an-evolution-in-sports/article_0af12b9a-8bd7-11e8-92db-6fd71b98404f.html

⁷ Mark A. Cohen, “How Will Legal Education and Training Keep Pace With Change?” Forbes, September 10, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/markcohen1/2018/09/10/how-will-legal-education-and-training-keep-pace-with-change/#1d4ee8267055>.

⁸ Len Sweet, Class Lecture, Portland Seminary, February 18, 2019.

These transitions change how any institution or individual navigates, achieves, and defines success. As Dell describes it, “The pace of change will be so rapid that people will learn ‘in the moment’ using new technologies such as augmented reality and virtual reality. The ability to gain new knowledge will be more valuable than the knowledge itself.”⁹

A Wicked Problem

Figuring out success amid such rapid transition and turbulent times is no easy feat. In a 1973 treatise, Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber described the concept of a “wicked problem” as compared to a tame, or “good,” problem. Wicked problems are incredibly difficult to solve due to incomplete, contradictory, changing, and morphing circumstances, where no single solution seems to exist. Elements of wicked problems include no definitive formulation, defying any easy ways to test solutions on them, having an inexhaustible number of possible solutions or approaches, and being symptoms of other problems. Items such as climate change, education policies, public health, and politics increasingly fall under the category of wicked problems.¹⁰

I would add one more category fitting the rubric of a wicked problem—religious life and, more specifically, local church vitality.

Perhaps no area of society has struggled to adjust, keep up, and thrive in the rapidly changing cultural climate than the local church—particularly mainline denominational churches in American Western culture.

⁹ Mark A. Cohen, “How Will Legal Education and Training Keep Pace With Change?”

¹⁰ H.W. Rittel and M.M. Webber, “Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning,” *Policy Sciences* 4, no. 2 (1973): 155-169, <https://www.cc.gatech.edu/fac/ellendo/rittel/rittel-dilemma.pdf> .

The local, denominational church in America today has struggled to remain relevant, let alone vital, in this sea of cultural change. As Alan Hirsch puts it:

In the face of this upheaval, even the most confident among us would have to admit, in our more honest moments, that the church as we know it faces a very significant adaptive challenge. The overwhelming majority of church leaders today report that they feel it is getting much harder for their communities to negotiate the increasing complexities in which they find themselves. As a result, the church is on a massive, long-trended decline in the West.¹¹

The numbers and data reflecting this massive decline are substantive.

According to Barna researcher David Kinnaman, one in four Americans currently have no church connection at all and never did (this number has doubled in the last 20 years). Now 38% of the American population is post-Christian, meaning that at one time, perhaps as a child, they had a church connection, but now do not. This number rises to 48% for those under the age of 30.¹² David Scott summarizes this reality when he observes, “Mainline Christianity has been in numeric decline for the last half century, and within the last decade, American Christianity as a whole, including evangelical Christianity and Catholicism, has been in numeric decline.”¹³ Todd Wilson goes so far as to proclaim that 80% of American churches are either in decline or plateaued.¹⁴

In 2018, the Pinetops Foundation produced a report entitled “The Great Opportunity: The American Church in 2050.” This report utilized information from The

¹¹ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating Apostolic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2016), 2.

¹² David Kinnaman, interview by Carey Nieuwhof, *The Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast Episode 24*, February 23, 2015, <https://careynieuwhof.com/myodcast/>.

¹³ David Scott, “Coming to Terms with Numerical Decline in the U.S. UMC,” *United Methodist Insight: A Forum For Discerning God’s Will For The United Methodist Church*, April 25, 2016, <https://um-insight.net/in-the-church/umc-global-nature/coming-to-terms-with-numerical-decline/>.

¹⁴ Todd Wilson, *Multipliers: Leading Beyond Addition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Exponential Series Resource, 2017), 21, <https://exponential.org/resource-ebooks/multipliers/>.

Religious Landscape Study produced by the Pew Research Center (in 2007 and in 2014); the Baylor Religion Survey (2007-2011); the PRRI/RNS September 2016 Survey conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute; and the Gallup Annual Religion Surveys (1992-2016).¹⁵ Among other findings, this report projected the overall Christian percentage of the population to fall from 73% of Americans to between 54%-59% by 2050, with an unaffiliated church population rising to between 50 million and 70 million people.¹⁶

These observations are consistent with research from the Pew Research forum, which reflects a trend in the same direction. In 2014, 36% of people attended church once a week, which was down from 39% in 2007.¹⁷ Perhaps most troubling of all, Will McRaney notes that only one percent of churches in America are growing by conversion.¹⁸

A Particular Wicked Problem

This decline in vitality in the American church is true for mainline denominational churches in general, but for the purposes of this project, the focus will

¹⁵ Pinetops Foundation, *The Great Opportunity: The American Church in 2050*, <http://www.greatopportunity.org>. 2018, 17.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

¹⁷ Pew Forum, "Attendance at Religious Services," Pew Research Center: Religion and Public Life, <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/attendance-at-religious-services/>.

¹⁸ Will McRaney, "Church Planting as a Growth Strategy in the Face of Church Decline," *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 1, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 69-93. See also Sweet, Class Lecture, April 15, 2019.

primarily be upon the United Methodist Church.¹⁹ Leonard Sweet summarizes the significant decline of the United Methodist denomination when he comments,

Of all the denominations, the United Methodist Church is the one exhibited in a glass case as the “suicide denomination,” the one that seems either to have a death wish or that continues on a course that everyone knows will one day tailspin into a death spiral. In 1870, more than 40 percent of the population of the U.S. identified themselves as Methodist. Today that figure is a little more like 5 percent.²⁰

While the decline of influence and discipleship of the church in America as a whole is significant, the United Methodist Church (UMC) deterioration numbers are staggering. Decades ago, authors Will Willimon and Robert Wilson noted that in 1969 the UMC had 10,789,624 members. By 1984, that number had dropped to 9,266,853 members.²¹ Alarming, by 2016, UMC membership had dropped to 6,951,278.²² In looking at the decline from 2013 to 2014 in the United Methodist Church as a whole, Walter Fenton noted that the loss of 116,063 members that year was the equivalent to losing a 318-member local church every day of the year.²³

At a more localized level, consider the statistics of the Susquehanna United Methodist Church Conference²⁴ for the years from 2012 to 2017 (the year for which the most recent data is available). The average worship attendance in 2012 for the conference

¹⁹ Unless otherwise noted, all references to “church” moving forward will refer to the local American church in the United Methodist denomination.

²⁰ Leonard Sweet, *The Greatest Story Never Told* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2012), xv.

²¹ William H. Willimon and Robert Wilson, *Rekindling the Flame: Strategies For A Vital United Methodism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1987), 13.

²² General Council on Finance and Administration: United Methodist Church, “Data Services,” accessed March 25, 2018, <http://www.gcfa.org/services/data-services/>.

²³ Walter Fenton, “U.S. Membership Decline Continues,” Good News, November 20, 2015, <https://goodnewsmag.org/2015/11/u-s-membership-decline-continues/>.

²⁴ This is the United Methodist conference that I come from and currently serve within.

was 64,189. In just five years, the average worship attendance for the conference dropped to 53,151—nearly an 18% decrease.²⁵

For anyone who cares about the health of the church, these numbers are disturbing and raise a natural question: “What do we do about it?” or, as Nancy Murphy asks, “What must the church do to be the church?”²⁶ This is not a new question, nor is the answer overly difficult to comprehend. The answer is to raise up more disciples of Jesus Christ. As disciples produce more disciples, church vitality will proportionally multiply. Murphy puts it this way: “In keeping with the New Testament we can maintain that there is in fact one central calling for all Christians—to be part of the people of God.”²⁷ Or, as Sweet notes, “Today’s church has a reproduction problem.”²⁸ The irony of such sentiments is that they sound simple. But simplicity must not be mistaken for ease. Understanding the need for raising up more disciples of Jesus Christ is much different than actually raising up more disciples of Christ. The issue of multiplying discipleship is a wicked one precisely because within these simple answers is an underlying complexity.

²⁵ Susquehanna United Methodist Conference, *2018 Conference Journal*, https://www.susumc.org/files/resources/journals/2018/2018_Susquehanna_Conf_Journal_Section_9.pdf. and Susquehanna United Methodist Conference, *2013 Conference Journal*, <https://susumc.org/files/resources/journals/2013/2013-Susquehanna-Conf-Journal.pdf>.

²⁶ Nancey Murphy, Brad J. Kallenberg, and Mark Thiessen Nation, eds., *Virtues And Practices In The Christian Tradition: Christian Ethics After MacIntyre* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), 37.

²⁷ Nancey Murphy, et al., 42.

²⁸ Sweet, Class Lecture, Portland Seminary, April 15, 2019.

Why Is the Multiplication Crisis in the Local Church a Wicked Problem?

Wicked problems are, by their very nature, multi-factorial. They contain many layers of issues which must be addressed. Without much effort, one can notice the adaptive shifts occurring in technology, business, politics, medicine, etc., but there is one other element making discipleship multiplication difficult at the local church level that deserves recognition. This more hidden reality is this: in a post-modern world, many problematic issues do not happen sequentially but rather simultaneously. At the same time, a variety of cultures—even ones with differing perspectives—often find themselves co-existing in the same place.

It is now not uncommon for the same city or town to house multiple nationalities. Or multiple religious affiliations. Or multiple political perspectives. Or multiple sporting loyalties. Or even multiple coffee loyalties (Starbucks or Dunkin?). As the consulting group Isaac Morehouse puts it,

It was once the case that everyone in a certain age range was sure to have a lot of shared experiences. You saw the same shows, heard the same songs, wore the same clothes. There weren't many options. Today it's not uncommon for one 18-year-old to be a huge fan of a band or TV show that another 18-year-old in the same town has never even heard of. The number of shared experiences and cultural icons has diminished.²⁹

How does one address many individuals at the same time, at the same location, who hold vastly different perspectives? This is a wicked problem question.³⁰

²⁹ Isaac Morehouse, "The Obedience-Entitlement Matrix And Generational Differences," February 11, 2015, <https://isaacmorehouse.com/2015/02/11/the-obedience-entitlement-matrix-and-generational-differences/>.

³⁰ A helpful example that reveals the nature of a wicked problem in a vivid way is the exploration of different generations of people living in close proximity. Now in the same company it is possible to have the company founded by those from "The Greatest Generation," and run by Baby Boomers, Generation X'ers, Millennials, and now even Generation Z'ers all at the same time. Each one of these groups carry stereotyped ways of perceiving the world—from highly obedient to highly entitled. Thus the challenge

This is the type of question that the local church now faces and must address. A local church must now try to reach and connect with people of vastly different experiences. In that same space exists various understandings of discipleship—ranging from having no concept of what Christian discipleship is to discipleship being done in any of a variety of distinct ways. Throughout history, different eras have tended to be dominated by one discipleship perspective. However, in today’s post-modern world, strands from many historical perspectives are mixed together. This raises an imposing challenge for today’s local church when it comes to discipleship, making it distinctively wicked in nature.

To explore and analyze these historical perspectives, it is helpful to identify five key time periods in the church’s history and a primary discipleship philosophy prevalent at that time.³¹ The time periods suggested for exploration include: the Early Patristic Period of the Church (100AM-300AD); Later Patristic Period (381 AD-451AD); the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (1050AD-1500AD); the Reformation (1500-1700 A.D.); and Modernity into Post-modernity (1700AD-Present). By noticing prevalent discipleship perspectives from the past, their impact and presence can be more readily noticed in the present. This recognition can then provide helpful clues for moving into the future.

becomes, how does one lead, manage, inspire vision, foster ownership all at the same time with so many different groups with different perspectives whether those perspectives are real or perceived? See: <https://isaacmorehouse.com/2015/02/11/the-obedience-entitlement-matrix-and-generational-differences/>.

³¹ The time periods suggested after the life of Jesus are provided in the work of Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1994). It should be noted that these characteristics and perspectives are noted only in a general manner and not intended to be all-encompassing descriptions.

Further, Alan Hirsch provides a framework which allows for comparison between these time periods while simultaneously fostering insights related to multiplying discipleship.³² Hirsch advocates that the primary key to becoming a multiplying disciple is to reclaim the forgotten ways and practices of the early Christian movement³³ and to live into what he identifies as an APEST (Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Shepherd, Teacher) DNA.³⁴ These respective roles contribute to what can be labeled as formational and generative in nature.³⁵ Formational teaching is marked primarily by information and practices primarily among those who are already disciples. Generative teaching is characterized by discipleship practices and information sharing aimed at reaching and raising up those who are not yet disciples.

Among these five APEST offices, the three offices of teacher, shepherd, and prophet can be considered more formational in their teaching.³⁶ Teachers are skilled at conveying the doctrines and beliefs of the faith that are consistent from generation to generation. Shepherds focus on nurturing those who already are familiar with the traditional, doctrinal beliefs to help them grow deeper in their faith. In this way, shepherds help enforce the doctrinal beliefs among disciples already in the established faith community. Prophets are skilled at calling the church back to its foundational beliefs

³² For the purposes of this work I love the definition of a disciple that James Bryan Smith gives in *Magnificent Story: Uncovering a Gospel of Beauty, Goodness, and Truth* when he quotes Dallas Willard on page 147: “A disciple is an apprentice of Jesus in Kingdom living.” I appreciate this definition because it explicitly names Jesus as the One in whom disciples are made. The whole focus of this work is to foster the formation of more disciples of Jesus Christ.

³³ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 8.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 187-218.

³⁵ These are terms I have created to use for descriptive purposes in this work based on analyzing the identified time periods.

³⁶ This is my characterization of these offices.

amid changing times or when facing external, cultural pressures. Prophets keep those familiar with the faith anchored in the faith and return those who have strayed back to faith.³⁷

The offices of apostle and evangelist, then, can be considered more generative in nature.³⁸ They help generate new life in the faith in new places. Apostles can be thought of as faith pioneers, or faith entrepreneurs. They read cultures and changing contexts well. Apostles continue to push the faith into new places among new people. They figure out how to share the faith in relevant ways with people who are not yet part of the faith. Their role is once again necessary in a world that is transitioning from Christendom to new forms of being.³⁹ Apostles lead in new environments. Meanwhile, evangelists focus on sharing the gospel news with individuals outside of the established faith community. Whereas apostles serve more as entrepreneurs of the faith, evangelists serve more as broadcasters of the faith and recruiters to it. Apostles tend to utilize practices for generative impulse, whereas evangelists tend to utilize information in their teaching to share the generative impulse.⁴⁰

³⁷ For a brief description of teacher, shepherd, and prophet see Hirsch, *Forgotten Ways*, 209. In this work I use teacher to mean one who shares the mind and will of God in such a way that the people of God can gain wisdom and understanding. I use shepherd to mean one who pastors God's people in such a way as to help them develop through nurture, protection, and discipleship. I use prophet to mean one who is aligned with God and willing to share the truth of God as a mouthpiece of God even in difficult circumstances.

³⁸ These are my characterizations.

³⁹ Alan Roxburgh, *The Missionary Congregation, Leadership, and Liminality* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), 61.

⁴⁰ For a brief description of apostle and evangelist, see Hirsch, *Forgotten Ways*, 209. In this work I use apostle to mean a "sent one" who offers spiritual entrepreneurship to ensure that the Gospel is pioneered in new places and to ensure the Gospel is spread from one time period to the next. I use evangelist to mean a communicator of the Gospel so as to recruit others to the way of Christ.

This APEST framework provides a helpful method to compare different discipleship practices and philosophies found across different time periods.⁴¹

Dominant APEST Traits in Various Historical Eras

Discipleship in the Early Patristic Period of the Church (100AD-300AD)

Key Discipleship Reality: Discipleship in a world that did not know the Gospel.

Dominant APEST Office: Apostles

The early church had the task of sharing the Gospel in a world and culture that did not know anything about the Gospel. Early apostles had to discern how to live the Gospel in new places among new people. The success of the early Christian movement was dependent upon these apostles learning how to share the Gospel in relevant ways to the context and culture they found themselves in. The apostolic work of these early disciples led to the cultivation of the other offices of prophecy, evangelism, shepherding, and teaching.

After Jesus ascended and the Holy Spirit came upon His disciples, the early church had to learn how to raise up disciples in a world unfamiliar with the Gospel—thus a strong apostolic spirit was needed. During this time, Christianity was a fringe religion at best. Scriptures were not yet canonized⁴² and the world did not give authority to the teachings of Christ. Therefore, there arose a strong voice of evangelism to spread the teachings of Christ.

⁴¹ These descriptions are not intended to oversimplify the complexity found in each time period.

⁴² Canonization was the process by which the scriptures as found in today's form of the Bible came to be. Councils such as the Council of Nicea played instrumental roles in this canonization process to approve which scriptures would end up in the Bible and which ones would not.

In the early church, several teaching and shepherding media were used to foster a habitus of multiplying discipleship. These media included catechesis, worship, the Didache, a strong prophetic voice to keep followers grounded in God's truth, and the Apostolic Tradition. Catechesis was a means of teaching through relationship (apprenticeship) that rehabilitated the candidates' behavior. Worship was the community's ultimate counterformative act, in which the new Christian discipleship habitus was enacted and community could emerge.⁴³

The Didache was one of the earliest, more formalized forms of teaching to be developed in order to initiate new converts into the beliefs and practices of the Christian habitus.⁴⁴ Krider notes, "The text is short enough to be easily memorized by potential members, who learned what the text meant by apprenticing themselves to community members, who were examples, craftsmen of the Christian way."⁴⁵

As early Christian communities developed, matured, and connected across different regions in the first centuries, they began to develop common approaches and responses to common problems, even in different settings. Such approaches could loosely be labeled curricula. The ensuing text that captured this maturing process was the

⁴³ Alan Kreider, *The Patient Ferment Of The Early Church: The Improbable Rise Of Christianity In The Roman Empire* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2016), 41.

⁴⁴ Aaron Milavec, ed., *Didache: Text, Translation, Analysis, and Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003); Thomas O'Loughlin, *The Didache: A Window on the Earliest Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 35.

⁴⁵ Kreider, 139.

Apostolic Tradition,⁴⁶ which served as an early “best of” collection of practices for discipleship multiplication in local communities.⁴⁷

Eventually, around 200AD, the early church developed “rules of faith,” which were designed to be summaries of the Christian faith. However, these rules were “fixed neither in words nor in theological affirmations.”⁴⁸ Rather, “Insofar as the Rule was fixed, it served as a standard of the faith, while its flexibility allowed for theological creativity and adaption to local needs.”⁴⁹ These rules would foster early discipleship efforts by providing a basis for catechetical instruction and a guide for the interpretation of scripture.⁵⁰ As communities developed and lived by these rules, they began to be led by shepherds (pastors) who would foster the habitus in each community.

The results of these tools and media in fostering multiplying discipleship were impressive: the number of Christians grew impressively in the first three centuries.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Ibid., 139.

⁴⁷ Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search For the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods For the Study of Early Liturgy*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 53.

⁴⁸ John H. Leith, ed., *Creeds Of The Churches: A Reader In Christian Doctrine From The Bible To The Present*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1982), 20.

⁴⁹ Leith, *Creeds*, 20.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Estimates vary on just how much growth occurred. Some say as much as 40 percent per decade in those centuries. See Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 6. Others say growth occurred but not to as great a degree. See Jan N. Bremmer, *The Rise of Christianity Through the Eyes Of Givvon, Harnack, and Rodney Stark* (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2010), 50-51, 64-65. Nonetheless, it is agreed that significant Christian growth occurred during this time. See also Bart D. Ehrman, *The Triumph Of Christianity: How A Forbidden Religion Swept the World* (London: Oneword, 2019), Appendix, 287-294.

Later Patristic Period (381AD-451AD)

Key Discipleship Reality: Theological doctrine took shape as discipleship became associated with the nation state.

Dominant APEST Office: Teachers

As the early church began to mature, it found better language and teaching to express its beliefs through established doctrine and would forever have an imprint on Christian discipleship. The formulative importance of the patristic period cannot be overstated. Every mainstream Christian body regards the patristic period as “a definitive landmark in the development of Christian doctrine.”⁵² At this time theology—in relation to doctrine—was not yet viewed as a defense of doctrine but rather as “a specific and time-bound cultural expression of faith that was (and still is) sensitive to contemporary questions and needs.”⁵³

Christianity continued to grow when the emperor Constantine aligned himself with Christianity. As Robert Markus states, “The ‘Constantinian revolution’ not only forced Christianity to re-assess itself in relation to its own past. It also raised other, far-reaching questions about the nature of the community and the communities that it considered itself to be, and their inter-relationships.”⁵⁴ For the first time in history, an

⁵² Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Blackwell, Cambridge, MA: 1994), 8.

⁵³ Iain S. Maclean, *Sweeney Theological Review* 43 no. 3 (2000). Review of DiBerardino, Angelo. *History of Theology v 1: The Patristic period. Publisher Collegeville* (Minneapolis, MN: Literugial Press, 1997).

⁵⁴ Robert Markus, *The End Of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 137.

“imperial” ideology would arise with the advent of the Constantinian influence, where Christian leaders sought to help the faithful understand and live out their faith.⁵⁵

Due to this reality, Christianity could continue to grow not only because of the intentional formation of a countercultural habitus; for the first time, it could also grow because it was the popular religion of the day. Theology emerged from the hidden world of secret meetings to become a matter of public debate and interest in the Roman Empire.⁵⁶ It became difficult to distinguish between those with “authentic” Christian faith and those adhering to the nationalized religion. The question became, “How could Christians remain distinct in this culture?”

One of the ways that Christians sought to live as a distinct people was by shifting away from a focus on holy places by living as holy people.⁵⁷ Christians would be Christian through their practices and focus on God within them wherever they found themselves, rather than in particular places. Augustine exemplified this mindset when he said, “Clean out the chamber of your heart; wherever you wish to pray, that is where He will abide. He who hears you is within you.”⁵⁸

In this time, Christianity became reconciled with the empire and no longer had to worry about persecution or existing under “a siege mentality.”⁵⁹ Because Constantine wanted a united church in the empire, he wanted to see doctrinal differences debated and settled as a matter of priority. Theologians had the freedom to work without threat of

⁵⁵ Iain S. Maclean, *History of Theology: v 1: The Patristic Period*, 390.

⁵⁶ McGrath, 9.

⁵⁷ Markus, *End*, 139.

⁵⁸ Augustine, In Ioh. Ev. Tr. X.1. In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus (CC 36).

⁵⁹ McGrath, 9.

persecution. The result was a time of definitive formation in Christian thought,⁶⁰ which would allow for much more formalized teaching. This teaching would influence every major Christian movement thereafter. Further, because of this reality and the canonization of the Bible,⁶¹ Christianity carried an authoritative posture it had not previously held.

During this time, tradition, creeds, liturgies, and catecheses arose from the established doctrine that fostered the habitus of multiplying discipleship. “The word ‘tradition’ literally means ‘that which has been handed down or over,’ although it can also refer to ‘the act of handing down or over.’”⁶² A liturgy was understood as “the common action of all present.”⁶³ It was a way to teach common people theology on which to base their lives. A creed was understood as a “concise, formal, and universally accepted and authorized statement of the main points of Christian faith.”⁶⁴ At the same time, “the creeds are the record of the Church’s interpretation of the Bible in the past and the authoritative guide to hermeneutics in the present.”⁶⁵ In this way, the producing of the creeds can be argued to be a highly semiotic exercise⁶⁶ of interpreting the signs and

⁶⁰ McGrath, 9.

⁶¹ As early as 367A.D, in The 39th Festal Letter of Athanasius, the 27 books currently found in the New Testament were being identified. These would later be officially canonized at the Council of Hippo in 393AD and Council of Carthage 397 AD. McGrath, 15.

⁶² McGrath, 16.

⁶³ Hillgarth, 85.

⁶⁴ McGrath, 17.

⁶⁵ Leith, *Creeds*, 9.

⁶⁶ Chrystol Downing defines semiotics as “the study of signs.” She argues that reading the signs of the times can result in a “re-signing of truth.” Chrystol Downing, *Changing Signs Of Truth: A Christian Introduction To The Semiotics of Communication* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 15.

context of the day to share the Gospel tradition in a relevant, yet enduring, way. During this time, some of the most famous creeds—still used today—were created, such as the Apostle’s Creed and the Nicene Creed.⁶⁷ The teachings centered around these creeds would be formative for Christians for millennia to come.

The Middle Ages and the Renaissance (451AD-1500AD)

Key Discipleship Reality: In a time of division and chaos, discipleship continued through smaller communities of faith and with a focus on the individual.

Dominant APEST Office: Shepherds

Rome was conquered by Alaric in 410AD. Many consider from this time until around 1000AD as “the Dark Ages,” indicating that culture and learning were hard to achieve in the ensuing instability.⁶⁸ Due to the insecurity of this time, the medieval period is not ordinarily viewed as a golden age of intellectual freedom.⁶⁹ With the conquering of Rome, Christianity was no longer “favored” as a protected religion of the empire because there was no empire. Without the umbrella of a national religion, Christians once again were forced to live in more isolated communities in order for the formation of faith to occur. During this time, discipleship was largely fostered through the shepherding that occurred in various faith communities.

⁶⁷ See the entire work of John Leith, ed., *Creeds Of The Churches: A Reader In Christian Doctrine From The Bible To The Present*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1982).

⁶⁸ McGrath, 26.

⁶⁹ David Burr, “Olivi And The Limits Of Intellectual Freedom,” in *Contemporary Reflections On The Medieval Christian Tradition: Essays In Honor Of Ray C. Petry*, ed. George H. Shriver (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1974), 185.

Further developments at this time included both division in the understood Christian faith as well as the rise of competing ideologies. The relationship between the Eastern church, based in Constantinople, and the Western church, based in Rome, became increasingly strained.⁷⁰ Simultaneously, various schools of thought, such as intellectualism, scholasticism, and humanism, began to emerge.⁷¹ One result of these developments was the communication of Christian practices as portrayed through the arts.⁷² Monasteries became shepherding communities where art and theology collided. The results in these communities were creations such as Franciscan iconography,⁷³ where faith stories could be shared through paintings and mosaics.⁷⁴

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a literary and artistic revival occurred, which has come to be called the Renaissance.⁷⁵ This movement centered in Italy and would foster a fascination over generations of thinkers. Certain historians, such as Jacob Burckhardt, argue that the Renaissance gave birth to the modern era. In relation to the fostering of multiplying discipleship, this was the era when, Burckhardt argues, “human beings first began to think of themselves as individuals.”⁷⁶ Such a focus on individual

⁷⁰ McGrath, 27.

⁷¹ McGrath, 29.

⁷² See for example the works described in Navid Kermani’s work: *Wonder Beyond Belief: On Christianity*, trans. Tony Crawford (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018). See “Christ Carrying the Cross (late 15th century),” 43; “Christ Giving His Blessing (1465),” 59 and “Madonna of the Rose Bower (1450),” 97.

⁷³ Paul F. Grendler, “Review of ‘Christianity and the Renaissance: Image and Religious Imagination In the Renaissance’ by Timothy Verdon and John Henderson,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 22 (Winter 1991): 805-806.

⁷⁴ Grendler, 805.

⁷⁵ Again see the complete work *Wonder Beyond Belief*, of Navid Kermani for many artistic examples of the types of work that arose in this renaissance time period.

⁷⁶ McGrath, 31.

experience—even independent of community—would have an influence for ages to come.

The Reformation (1500-1700 AD)

Key Discipleship Reality: Discipleship came to be viewed as counterculture.

Dominant APEST Office: Prophets

By the start of the Reformation period, often dated to October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther shared his 95 Theses, the theological world was ripe for a prophetic word. Prior to this event, Luther offered this statement, which highlights many of the ongoing struggles he and other reformers had with Roman authorities:

I have read our Erasmus, and my opinion of him grows daily worse...I fear that he does not advance sufficiently the cause of Christ and the grace of God, in which he is more ignorant than Lefevre. The human weighs more with him than the divine. It seems to me that not everyone who knows Greek and Hebrew is for that reason a Christian, since Jerome, who knew five languages did not equal Augustine, who knew but one, although Erasmus thinks Jerome superior. The opinion of him who attributes something to free will, is very different from the opinion of one who knows nothing but grace.⁷⁷

Many of the underlying factors that contributed to the Reformation, including a focus on grace, God's sovereignty, the influence of humanism, and professionalization of clergy separate from laity, can be noted in this statement.

Such factors conspired to lead individuals such as Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, and John Calvin to offer a prophetic call of reformation. These individuals were concerned with the moral, theological, and institutional reform that was needed, in their perspective, in the Christian Church.⁷⁸ As a result, the prophetic call of these individuals challenged

⁷⁷ Hyma, *Renaissance*, 275.

⁷⁸ McGrath, 55.

not just the world of ideas, but religious, social, and political reform in society itself.⁷⁹

Eventually Luther's understanding of discipleship caused him to take action, which resulted in him being excommunicated from the Roman Church with the Bull of Excommunication in 1520. In doing so, Luther would take with him two thirds of Germany and the Netherlands, nearly all of Scandinavia, and most of the British people. "Indirectly he caused the United States of America to go the same way."⁸⁰

This movement coincided with the invention of the Gutenberg printing press, which provided the means for the rapid dissemination of religious material in the vernacular. In this way, the prophetic voice of the reformers was magnified using the tools found in the midst of a major cultural change. Luther did not actually believe he was changing the Catholic church, but rather calling the church to be the church as God intended it.⁸¹ Yet his prophetic voice continues echo even today through denominational descendants of what he helped begin with the Reformation.

Modernity into Post-Modernity (1700AD-20th century)

Key Discipleship Reality: Discipleship functioned within the pioneering spirit of the exploration of new physical worlds (colonization) and new ways of perceiving the world (from modernity to post modernity).

Dominant APEST Office: Evangelists

⁷⁹ McGrath, 59.

⁸⁰ Albert Hyma, *Renaissance To Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951), 278.

⁸¹ For a small sampling of the type of prophetic message that Luther and others offered in this time period please see the work of Leonard Sweet and Frank Viola, *Jesus: A Theography* (Nashville, TN: W. Publishing Group, 2012), 314.

The world changed rapidly from 1700 onward. Expansion was everywhere—both physically and metaphysically. Christian theology moved beyond the boundaries of Western Europe; North America was colonized; seminaries arose to support and give identity to various Christian denominations; and much more focus was given to theological development and “modernity.”⁸² While the exact definition of modernity can be argued, it is characterized by a confidence in humanity’s ability to think for itself utilizing scientific methods, and is exemplified in the term “Enlightenment.”⁸³

The dawning of the Enlightenment represented yet another shift for the world and the church. “Prior to the Enlightenment, it could be taken for granted that the Bible was authoritative. . . . However, during the modern period the life and teachings of Jesus became for many merely illustrative of universal moral principles available to any rational person.”⁸⁴ In this way, a subtle form of nationalism arose, in which a version of Christendom existed in the public sphere but defined through the lens of modernity. This was particularly the case in the form of the nationalized religion of the Anglican church.

In response to this nationalized religion and in the emerging world of modernity, prominent evangelists arose who were driven to share Christ in new and relevant ways. Individuals such as George Whitefield, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, and, later, Billy Graham all sought to share the news of Jesus Christ in such a way as to draw people into a vibrant life with Christ as opposed to a form of state-induced religious affiliation.

⁸² McGrath, 76-77.

⁸³ McGrath, 77.

⁸⁴ Murphy, *Virtues*, 31.

Discipleship Today: A Postmodern World

Key Discipleship Reality: Strands of all previous eras are simultaneously found today

Dominant APEST Office: Apostle, Prophecy, Evangelist, Shepherd, Teacher

One of the complicating factors that contributes to the local church's struggle with multiplying discipleship is the wicked problem that various elements from many previous eras are simultaneously present today. This creates a multi-layered, multi-factorial reality which offers no easy solutions. Today, in more and more church settings, there are increasing numbers of people who have no idea of what the Gospel is about,⁸⁵ much like the early church setting. At the same time, in those same churches, many individuals still see the role of national politics to be, in part, a blessing of religion in society more similar to the age of Constantine. In a world perceived as "dark" or hostile to the local church, other congregations seek to simply disassociate from society and survive as best they can, perhaps similar to churches in the middle ages. Still other churches believe their key role is to offer a prophetic call to get churches back to the fundamentals of the Bible and reform society in a manner more reminiscent of the Reformation. Simultaneously, many ideas from the Enlightenment are still evident in society and many churches still teach and operate in a manner that reflects the didactic style of modernity.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ See the statistics cited under "A Wicked Problem."

⁸⁶ These observations are based on field education interviews I conducted. These interviews included: Larry Leland, interview by author, Harrisburg, PA, February 27, 2018; Chris Backert, interview by author, Williamsport, PA, February 18, 2018; Bruce Barnard, phone interview by author, Williamsport, PA, February 16, 2018; Cathy Davis, phone interview by author, February 20, 2018; Rich Morris, interview by author, Williamsport, PA, February 19, 2018; and Dr. Billy Wilson, phone interview by author, March 1, 2018.

For centuries, the religious landscape of the American church was dominated by the scientific, modern mindset of the Enlightenment. During this time the church learned to validate itself through academic and empirical pursuits within the context of a culture that embraced a Christendom mindset. As George Marsden observes, “Even evangelicalism today—with its focus on scientific thinking, empirical approach, and common sense—is a child of early modernity.”⁸⁷

This is no longer the case in a postmodern world. As Stanley Grenz puts it, “Scholars disagree among themselves as to what postmodernism involves, but they have reached a consensus on one point: this phenomenon marks the end of a single, universal worldview.”⁸⁸ We are now in a culture which values differences and a celebration of the local and the particular at the expense of the universal.⁸⁹ A practical result of this postmodern reality is the rise of competing value systems. On Sunday mornings, church is no longer the only option: travel, sports, music, vacations, and the business of life provide meaningful alternatives for people.⁹⁰ Such a reality has resulted in “regular” church attendance increasingly meaning “irregular” attendance. Some estimates now put “regular” church attendance on a weekly basis below 20% for the American population.⁹¹

⁸⁷ George Marsden, “Evangelicals, History, and Modernity,” in *Evangelicalism And Modern America*, ed. George M. Marsden (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1984), 98.

⁸⁸ Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer On Post-Modernism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 11-12.

⁸⁹ Charles Jencks, “The Post-Modern Agenda,” in *The Postmodern Reader*, ed. Charles Jencks (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992), 24.

⁹⁰ Leland interview by author and Dr. Billy Wilson, field interview by author. Both shared these sentiments, which confirmed Jencks’ assertion.

⁹¹ Kelly Shattuck, “7 Startling Facts: An Up Close Look At Church Attendance In America,” *ChurchLeaders Articles*, April 10, 2018, <https://churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/139575-7-startling-facts-an-up-close-look-at-church-attendance-in-america.html>. Additionally, Warren Bird published an email article on March 27, 2018 for the Leadership Network Advance entitled “Is Monthly

While postmodernity is in full swing, the effects of modernity are still felt. The problem is a truly wicked because multiple layers of reality exist. There are no easy, one-step solutions that quickly result in discipleship multiplication. How, then, can a wicked problem be addressed in a way that yields discipleship multiplication?

How Do You Address a Wicked Problem?

Disciples of Jesus have always had to figure out how to live and multiply in the context they found themselves in. Instruction and formation on how to live as disciples to please God has been given from early in the church's existence. As Paul commanded the Thessalonians, "As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more."⁹²

In this regard, the "what" in "What do we do about it?" is provided through the instructions and teachings of Jesus, e.g., Matthew 28:19, "Go make disciples of all nations." The more challenging issue becomes, "*How* does the church live out this instruction so as to experience health and vitality through multiplying discipleship?" Based on the statistics already provided, it is safe to say that today's local churches are not doing a good job of figuring out this "how."

The result of so much change is creating a wicked problem, where many local churches fail to understand the new cultural context to which they belong, in which simultaneous layers of understanding related to discipleship exist. Paul Heibert says,

Attendance the New Norm?" In that article, he says the new monthly norm may be as low as 1.8 times per month.

⁹² 1 Thess. 4:1 (NIV).

“Contextualization may be defined as the process by which the gospel takes root in a specific socio-cultural context.”⁹³ This current inability of churches to read their context in a way that fosters viral discipleship is what Sweet refers to as a “semiotic breakdown.”⁹⁴

However, in many ways, this is nothing new—at least in terms of the local church needing to learn to read its context. In each era already identified, the church has had to learn how to discern the signs of the times of which it was a part in order to foster a robust form of multiplying discipleship. Paradoxically, the church has to live into the changing times while offering the consistent teachings of Christ. Because of this, the church in each age has needed to discover, create, or utilize media and tools by which to hold on to elements of consistency in discipleship formation throughout very different contexts.

One of the primary ways Christians have sought to address this “contextualized consistency”⁹⁵ throughout history has been through the development of what French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu calls “habitus.” Bourdieu contends that humans are formed by more than intellectual knowledge. He believes humans are formed by “corporeal

⁹³ Paul Heibert, “Critical Contextualization,” *Trinity Journal* 30, no. 2 (2009): 199-207, http://hiebertglobalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/199_Chang_Critical-Contextualization.pdf.

⁹⁴ Leonard Sweet, “Semiotics, An Introduction” (lecture, Portland Seminary, Portland, OR, September 6, 2017). Sweet observes most churches have been trained to reactively respond to what has already happened in culture, as opposed to being trained to proactively look for signs of where the culture is going. He makes a comparison between the ability of Sherlock Holmes to read clues of what has occurred and the ability to read the language of the culture. The latter is semiotics. Semiotics is learning to read the language of the culture and church. This is what local churches must learn to do in a postmodern culture.

⁹⁵ This is a term I offer for usage in this work. I have not found the term anywhere else. However, this term is influenced by the work of Vincent Donovan, as summarized by Titus Presler, who shares Donovan’s insistence on a culturally unencumbered gospel in mission work with an equally radical insistence that the gospel of Jesus Christ must be preached to all cultures and peoples in all times and places. Titus Presler, *Missiology* 18 no. 3 (July 1990): 267-276.

knowledge,” which is more a system of dispositions that humans carry in their bodies⁹⁶ that are reinforced by story, example, and repetition all happening in community.⁹⁷ James K.A. Smith elaborates on this concept: “Habitus is acquired, is learned, by incarnate pedagogies that in oblique, allusive, cunning ways work on the body and thus orient the whole person.”⁹⁸ The result, then, is that habitus “Constitutes our profoundest sense of identity; that forms our deepest convictions, allegiances, and repulsions; and that shapes our response to ultimate questions—what will we live for, die for, and kill (or not kill) for.”⁹⁹ When multiplying discipleship has occurred in a vibrant manner in Christian history, there has been an intentional development of habitus.

Historically, the church’s answer to the “how” of forming such habitus has been through discipling—meaning “the church’s teaching and formation of its members”¹⁰⁰—in the time/context/tradition it found itself. Given that traditions are “historically extended and socially embodied,”¹⁰¹ it is important to consider the theological nuances of a given era to allow for generation, while also emphasizing consistent formational teaching. In this way, the approach to multiplying discipleship starts to take on a multi-dimensional approach with both formational and generative components; this approach is much more appropriate for addressing a wicked problem.

⁹⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 130-35.

⁹⁷ Kreider, 39.

⁹⁸ James K.A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 98.

⁹⁹ Tertullian, *Apol.* 39.7.

¹⁰⁰ Murphy, 37.

¹⁰¹ Murphy, 31.

Wicked Problem Approaches

Lesslie Newbigin poses the question well when he asks: “What would be involved in a missionary encounter between the gospel and this whole way of perceiving, thinking, and living that we call ‘modern Western culture?’”¹⁰² What would such a missionary encounter look like through a discipleship journey that both embodies formation and generation with contextualized consistency in a changing world?

Newbigin further highlights the wicked problem reality when he observes, “If—for modern Western people—nature has taken the place of God as the ultimate reality with which we have to deal, the nation-state has taken the place of God as the source to which we look for happiness, health, and welfare.”¹⁰³ Notice the simultaneous existence of two ways of perceiving God. How is today’s local church to foster multiplying discipleship in such a complex, shifting world?

Perhaps even more accurately, it can be asked, how do we do the semiotic work to explain our postmodern, multi-layered, worldview from the point of view of the Gospel? Many churches have chosen to react to the wicked problem of realizing multiplying discipleship with “non-wicked solutions.” That is to say, many churches have chosen to respond with one-dimensional reactions rather than more imaginative, multi-layered proactive possibilities. Therefore, for instance, some churches have chosen to answer the wicked problem only by contemporizing their worship services and hoping that will solve their attendance and discipleship woes. Some churches create a new governing board

¹⁰² Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness To The Greeks: The Gospel And Western Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), 1.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 26.

structure. Others demand better preaching or musicianship. Still others hope a new pastor or staff person will do the trick. Some implement the newest membership program or Bible study. Some pursue megachurch status. Others start over with a church plant. Of course, many do nothing at all. To be clear, many of these efforts are well-intentioned (with the exception of not trying to change anything in the face of rapid decline).¹⁰⁴

Yet despite the reactionary effort of so many churches, the decline has continued. So, what can be done? This is a daunting question, particularly when so many brilliant minds and churches have struggled to come to adequately answer it. It would be both foolish and presumptuous to believe this specific work could offer one solution to “fix” the discipleship multiplication crisis that is plaguing so many local churches today—particularly when compared with the highly capable individuals found throughout church history.

However, this work seeks not to discredit history or offer a magical solution that was missed by others. Rather, this work seeks to build upon what history has taught us in the past, in order to experience a new reality today, for a better life of corporate, multiplying discipleship tomorrow. The goal is not to react to history or today’s challenges with a presumptive knowledge, but rather to ask imaginative questions with a semiotic focus of reading the signs and context of today in order to discover how multiplying discipleship may become a reality.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Dr. Billy Wilson, interview by author, March 1, 2018.

¹⁰⁵ Leonard Sweet, “Semiotics, An Introduction” (Lecture, Portland Seminary, Portland, OR, September 6, 2017).

SECTION 2: OTHER SOLUTIONS

Neo, sooner or later you are going to realize,
just as I did, that there's a difference between knowing the path,
and walking the path.
— from *The Matrix*

A Wicked Problem Requires a Wicked Solution

The statistics already cited¹⁰⁶ highlight the reality of the wicked problem of multiplying discipleship in today's Western culture local churches. That reality is this: No simple solutions exist for how to easily foster multiplying discipleship.

Multiplying discipleship has so many factors working against it, it is a challenge to even identify them all, let alone adequately address them to help the church again find its footing. To address the depth of the problem, many simultaneous factors must be evaluated.

Factors Contributing to the Viral Discipleship Problem

One: Cultural Upheaval

For centuries, the religious landscape of the American church was dominated by the scientific, modern mindset of the Enlightenment. Newbigin posed the issue this way: “How can we move from the place where we explain the gospel in terms of our modern

¹⁰⁶ See pages 4-6 in section 1 of this dissertation.

scientific worldview to the place where we explain our modern scientific world-view from the point of view of the gospel?”¹⁰⁷

In a similar manner, Vincent Donovan, after serving as a missionary in Tanzania for seventeen years and then returning to ministry in America, notes, “Conversion, to most people, no longer means ‘metanoia.’ It means rather proselytism and is a pejorative word. Missionary work, which involves taking the message of Christ to people who do not believe in him, who indeed have never heard of him, thus becomes a distasteful task.”¹⁰⁸

There was a time when local churches were central in communities, with the rest of the community literally built around them. This reality has changed. Many local churches fail to realize the context has changed and that their voice is marginal at best and no longer central to a community.¹⁰⁹

Culture is also changing rapidly due to the influence of technology. As Kelly comments, “At the center of every significant change in our lives today is a technology of some sort. Technology is humanity’s accelerant. Because of technology everything we make is always in the process of becoming.”¹¹⁰ In other words, endless change is the new constant. David McDonald makes the same case when he says, “The future is already here, albeit in embryonic form.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Newbiggin, 22.

¹⁰⁸ Vincent Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered*, 25th anniversary ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 1.

¹⁰⁹ Chris Backert, interview by author, February 13, 2018.

¹¹⁰ Kelly, 6.

¹¹¹ David McDonald, *Then. Now. Next. A Biblical Vision of the Church, the Kingdom, and the Future* (Jackson, MI: Westwinds Community Church, 2017), 24.

Because of its massive impact on culture, few elements illustrate the high level of change for all of culture more than technology. David Kinnaman points out smartphones have apps for locating Thai food, checking the weather, watching movies, sending and receiving money, listening to music, shopping, blogging, tweeting, and even finding sexual hookups within a five-mile radius of your location.¹¹² This is a world and culture that did not exist just a few decades ago. The adaptive shift in culture is massive. The local church must seek out the semiotic significance found in the shift and discover the implications of this shift for discipleship in the local church.

Two: Irrelevant Measurements

When asked why multiplying discipleship is not occurring in many churches, Billy Wilson, a District Superintendent in the Wesleyan tradition, replied: “Churches are measuring the wrong things. Churches are measuring attendance and cash instead of leaders and apprentices. It is easy to get a crowd for worship but that does not translate to deep discipleship practices.”¹¹³

Author Glenn McDonald makes a similar observation when he notes that church systems have learned to only measure attendance, buildings, and cash (The ABC’s of measurement). When these metrics are measured, questions such as, “How many people are on site (and is that number increasing)?... Is there room for everyone in our

¹¹² David Kinnemon, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church... And Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks, 2011), 43.

¹¹³ Billy Wilson, interview by author, March 1, 2018.

facilities?... Will we have enough money to pay the bills this month?” arise.¹¹⁴ The problem, then, is that such measurements lead to seating capacity (focused inward) rather than sending capacity (focused outward to connect with potential new disciples).¹¹⁵

Susquehanna Conference United Methodist District Superintendent Larry Leland, when asked why multiplying discipleship is not occurring, replied, “Because we have a two- to three-generation focus on membership rather than discipleship.”¹¹⁶ This comment highlights a misunderstanding of discipleship focused on good members who belong to an institution rather than on an authentic understanding of biblical discipleship. Dallas Willard describes such a membership approach as a “mental assent” approach.¹¹⁷ Such a perspective uses the acceptance of the right information as the definition to existing as a Christian. The focus is completely on information, and involves no change of practice in lifestyle as a result of personal interactions with Christ.

The example modeled by Jesus with His disciples reveals a focus upon apprenticeship so that discipleship can truly occur, rather than the adherence to particular membership vows. Hauerwas and Willimon note that the goal of discipleship is “the production of people who more closely resemble in their lifestyle, beliefs, and values, disciples of Jesus. We are uninterested in our youth knowing more ‘about’ Christ; we

¹¹⁴ Glenn McDonald, *The Disciple-Making Church: From Dry Bones to Spiritual Maturity* (Grand Haven, MI: FaithWalk Publishing, 2004), 3.

¹¹⁵ Ed Setzer and Warren Bird, *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 171.

¹¹⁶ Larry Leland, interview by author, Williamsport, PA, February 27, 2018.

¹¹⁷ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life In God* (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins, 2001), 43.

want them to know and follow Christ.”¹¹⁸ The discipleship goal is to emulate the master, in this case Jesus. Jesus began a viral movement through apprenticing His disciples. Thus, disciples today must also embody the same practices of Jesus in order to create new disciples and foster multiplying discipleship.

C.S. Lewis understood that the purpose of the church was to draw people to Christ and make them like Christ. He believed that if the Church was not doing this, then all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible, were a waste of time.¹¹⁹ Irrelevant measurements yield irrelevant discipleship. However, these faulty elements are often the only elements the church knows how to measure, resulting in a complete loss of imagination for any different type of metrics.¹²⁰

Three: Institutional Preservation

Stetzer and Bird note, “The institutionalizing of the church is essentially its immunization to an evangelistic impulse.”¹²¹ For too many churches, the norm becomes caring for its church building and members over new people. The focus shifts to

¹¹⁸ Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989), 105.

¹¹⁹ Will Vaus, *Mere Theology: A Guide to the Thought of C.S. Lewis* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 167.

¹²⁰ Two clear examples of this type of faulty measuring include the vital statistics that have been determined in the UMC. While some of the measurements can be helpful, a clear focus on the attendance, buildings, and cash is prevalent. Please see the report at: <http://vitalsigns.trendsendapp.com/reports/25/overview/filter/26535>.

Another example to note is in the Susquehanna UMC Conference publication called the Link. Each year this publication highlights which churches in the conference have paid their apportionments (yearly financial shares paid by local churches to the conference) in 100% completion. Never does the Link publish celebrations related to which churches have seen people come to new life in Christ, or numbers of new leaders raised up, or numbers of new apprenticing relationships developed, or other such creative scorecard elements.

¹²¹ Stetzer and Bird, 171.

programs and staff, over connecting with people in new places who do not know Christ. When this becomes the reality for a church, it has effectively taken the first step toward ensuring no more new generations of disciples are reached. At the same time, more and more churches focus on training shepherds and teachers to care for and edify those in the institutional church, but neglect investing in apostles and evangelists to be sent to those outside the church in an incarnational way. This institutional focus creates a lack of generative life and energy essential to viral discipleship by failing to encounter new people where they may be.¹²² How ironic that a church which originated by sharing the incarnational presence of Jesus with people now often offers the message of Christ from a distance.

Four: Passive Christian Spirituality

As Sweet notes, “Our passion for God reflects God’s passion for us. Passion is what enabled Wesley’s soul to be beefed up as his body was depleted in telling anyone who would listen that Jesus Christ alone can tell you who you are, why you’re here and where you’re going.”¹²³ In so many ways, the local church in the Western culture has lost its passion and purpose. It has forgotten to see itself as part of God’s story, which produces people with a cause.¹²⁴ Without a cause, there is no passion. There is no excitement. No one wants to belong to a church, or anything else for that matter, if it is devoid of meaning, passion, and purpose. Chris Backert, National Director of the U.S.

¹²² Hirsch, 207-208.

¹²³ Sweet, *The Greatest Story Never Told*, 59.

¹²⁴ Hauerwas and Willimon, 67.

Fresh Expressions, agrees when he says, “Most people just find church irrelevant and unhelpful and do not see it speaking to their life. Nothing happens when you go to church... This is the problem. You are not really called to anything or challenged in any way.”¹²⁵

Five: Culture of Instant Gratification

In a world of fast food, microwaves, instant text messaging, electronic banking, online shopping, and access to almost endless information with the click of a button or swipe of the finger, the willingness to be patient is an increasingly lost art.

Kreider shares, “Cyprian relates the faith that the Christians are to demonstrate to a particular virtue—patience. Their faith is a patient faith.”¹²⁶ Patience is barely understood as a concept today, let alone practiced. For desperate, declining churches, or for church plants that must produce results before their grant runs out or to get more grant funding, patience seems impossible. But the practices necessary for viral discipleship take time to be learned, fostered, embodied, and mastered. Much like an airplane accelerating down a runway before taking off to great heights, viral discipleship takes time before experiencing the exponential results.

¹²⁵ Chris Backert, interview by author, February 19, 2018.

¹²⁶ Alan Kreider, 14.

Six: Stability Focus

Even though change can be understood to be good and even needed for survival,¹²⁷ change is still often resisted by both individuals and organizations.¹²⁸ Over the years, institutions of all kinds have operated with a strong aversion to change and an unwillingness to get messy. Especially in the United Methodist Church, look no further than the comprehensive statistical reports, yearly charge conference reports, and vital statistical numbers sent out every year for proof of the desire for order.

Yet the early church did not grow in a nice, neat, orderly fashion. As Kreider comments, “According to the evidence at our disposal, the expansion of the churches was not organized, the product of a mission program; it simply happened. Further, the growth was not carefully thought through. Early Christian leaders did not engage in debates between rival ‘missional strategies.’”¹²⁹ This sentiment is consistent with what Tim Harford argues: “...we often succumb to the temptation of a tidy-minded approach when we would be better served by embracing a degree of mess.”¹³⁰

The Church is meant to be living and breathing. Too much control, management, or institutionalization kills the Church. Harford makes this point in giving an analogy related to German forests that were noted to be dying in 1968. German foresters earlier

¹²⁷ Sweet offers the biological reminder that human cells change completely in the human body every seven years. Leonard Sweet, *SoulTsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 73.

¹²⁸ Sweet humorously points to this reality when he highlights the message of two different bumper stickers. One says, “Change is good. You go first.” The other says, “Change is good. Unless it happens.” Sweet, *SoulTsunami*, 74.

¹²⁹ Kreider, 9.

¹³⁰ Tim Harford, *Messy: The Power of Disorder to Transform Our Lives* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2016), 207.

had tried to “clean up” the forests, hoping to facilitate growth. “Yet what is perfectly clear is that the attempt to map, quantify, and ultimately tidy the German forests not only transformed them but nearly killed them. It turns out that what you need to keep a forest alive cannot easily be quantified and mapped.”¹³¹ The same is true for churches as well. Today’s United Methodist Church in particular depends on orderly systems of administration.¹³² Yet, as the statistics already given demonstrate,¹³³ such an orderly focus seems to be squelching the Holy Spirit, not invigorating it. Nassim Taleb makes the argument that “some things benefit from shocks; they thrive and grow when exposed to volatility, randomness, disorder, and stressors and love adventure, risk, and uncertainty.”¹³⁴ Taleb also observes that “wind extinguishes a candle and energizes a fire.”¹³⁵ While Taleb did not make this observation in any theological context, his observations hold true when considering the growth of the early church through times of persecution when individuals may have been martyred but the Christian movement thrived.¹³⁶ It would appear the church needs to focus on less stability, not more.

¹³¹ Harford, 207.

¹³² See, for example, the listing of yearly journals found for the Susquehanna United Methodist Conference and the copious statistics for the administrative systems in place: <https://www.susumc.org/forms-reports-journals/>.

¹³³ See pages 6-7 of this dissertation for specific statistics on the UMC decline.

¹³⁴ Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *Antifragile: Things That Gain From Disorder* (New York: Random House, 2012), 3.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Kreider, *Patient Ferment*, 51. Here Krieder cites Wolfgang Reinbold as saying, “Every public execution was a great and often successful advocating opportunity for the church” and Everett Ferguson’s assessment that the martyrdoms were “the best advertising available.”

In order for churches in decline to experience progress and growth, they will have to learn to get messy in their practices of discipleship rather than remain in overly structured ideas of discipleship frequently learned in curriculum study guides.

Seven: Retreating versus Exploring

Concerning how many people live their lives, Sweet says, “The fact that many people live boring lives, the fact that many people make so little of their lives, is not life’s fault. People are in a state of semiotic breakdown. Semiotic breakdown is the disconnect from all that is and can be from perceived possibility.”¹³⁷ Because of this, especially for people in the church, Sweet notes, “Without doing our semiotic homework, Christians can only follow trends. We can’t create them. Faith widens imagination and lengthens the horizons.”¹³⁸

Thus, when today’s church faces new challenges and changes from how it has always been it reacts negatively instead of engaging positively. Rather than the transition being viewed as an opportunity for something new, it is taken as a mourning of what has been lost. The reality that the United Methodist Church, in particular, has experienced such loss in a changing time is striking given that its heritage is one of a renewal movement.¹³⁹ In fact, theologian and scholar Geoffrey Wainwright makes the observation, “Every denomination in a divided and broken Christendom is an *ecclesia in via* [church

¹³⁷ Leonard Sweet, *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who’s Already There* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010), 47.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹³⁹ Lacey Warner, *The Method of Our Mission: United Methodist Polity and Organization* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 5.

in pilgrimage], but Methodists have a peculiar heritage that might make the transitive character of our ecclesiastical existence not only tolerable but positively proleptic.”¹⁴⁰

These seven obstacles to multiplying discipleship illustrate the wicked, complex nature of the problem of fostering multiplying discipleship in local churches. Though many in the past have sought to address the issue, long-term, wide-scale, effective solutions remain elusive. But there are clues to be found which offer hope.

An Old/New Approach

Historically, the church has addressed the problem of a lack of multiplying discipleship through various ideations. These attempts can be categorized as having “curriculum-esque” tendencies focused upon both teaching and practice. In the early church, the catechesis was used to focus on this rigorous teaching and practice in order to instill the formative elements of multiplying discipleship.¹⁴¹ In other movements, i.e., the Wesleyan movement, individuals such as John Wesley came up with what can be viewed as contemporized forms of curricula. For example, Wesley’s Sermons and the Articles of Religion provided information for sound teaching while focus was also given to particular actions such as proclaiming the gospel, leading others to Christ, Christian conferencing, and being sent to people who did not yet know the Gospel.¹⁴² The catechesis of the early church and Wesley’s sermons and Christian conferencing practices

¹⁴⁰ Geoffery Wainwright, *The Ecumenical Movement: Crisis and Opportunity for the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 220-221.

¹⁴¹ For a helpful overview of the intensity of the catechesis process please see Alan Kreider, *The Patient Ferment Of The Early Church*, particularly chapters 4-6. See also pages 38-39 of this work, which emphasize how the early church sought to create contextualized consistency.

¹⁴² See Lacey Warner’s work, *The Method Of Our Mission*, particularly pages 24-35.

were certainly not official forms of curriculum in and of themselves. But they fulfilled the role of what curricula can offer. Therefore, a curriculum today that embraces both formative as well as generative elements may again prove useful.

The development of curricula is not a new idea. Many curricula already exist in and for contemporary churches. So, why offer another curriculum? Such curricula do not often yield much fruit for multiplying discipleship. Perhaps a new and different type of curriculum that is relevant to today and addresses the wicked problem of multiplying discipleship is needed.

Consider the following examples of curricula that already exist and how they seek to foster discipleship. For the scope of this work, only discipleship curriculums within the United Methodist Church will be explored.¹⁴³

Specific Discipleship Curricula in the United Methodist Church

In 2008, Carolyn Slaughter from Ginghamburg United Methodist Church in Tipp City, Ohio created *Following Jesus: Steps To A Passionate Faith*.¹⁴⁴ Also in 2008, Jim

¹⁴³ For the record, there are relatively few United Methodist discipleship pathways to explore. Also, although the focus herein will be on United Methodist Curricula, the same argument of the need for a multi-dimensional approach would apply to many other discipleship pathway curricula out there. For example, years ago, the Willow Creek association produced both the “Reveal:Where Are You?” book identifying where individuals were on their spiritual journey as well as the “Follow Me: What’s Next For You?” book which acted as a discipleship pathway for next actions. While these resources offered helpful research findings and clear next steps, the information still focused on an “inside-the-church-only” approach with its information. Please see: Greg L. Hawkins and Cally Parkinson, *Follow Me: What’s Next For You?* (Barrington, IL: Willow Creek Resources, 2008).

It should be noted that it can be easy to criticize any discipleship program or curriculum that exists. However, authors who has made such an attempt at all should be commended. The reality is that few discipleship curriculums exist at all. The authors mentioned herein took significant steps to help their local churches grow in discipleship. Part of the goal of this dissertation is to build upon the work these authors began.

¹⁴⁴ Please see Carolyn Slaughter, *Following Jesus: Steps To A Passionate Faith—Leader Guide* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008).

Harnish and Justin LaRosa from Hyde Park United Methodist Church in Florida produced *A Disciple's Path: Deepening Your Relationship With Christ And The Church*.¹⁴⁵ In 2017, Mike Schreiner and Ken Willard created a resource called *Stride: Creating A Discipleship Pathway For Your Church*.¹⁴⁶

In general, these discipleship pathways present formative teachings in a one-dimensional approach but do not consider the context of an increasingly post-Christian culture. The result is a series of discipleship pathways which focus on creating committed volunteers within the church rather than preparing and sending laity outside the church into the rapidly changing world. Additionally, these pathways focus predominantly on discipleship from a strictly formational sense, leading only to discipleship consumption rather than practice.

Three specific areas, common to each discipleship plan, contribute to a consumeristic mindset. These include: 1) a focus on quick information over patient formation; 2) an orientation to functioning in the institutional church as the highest discipleship ideal; and 3) an absence of apostolic practices in the wider culture beyond the institutional church.

A Focus on Quick Information Over Patient Formation

Just as traveling to a destination takes time, so does proper formation. While each of the aforementioned discipleship plans does include specific time spent in study and

¹⁴⁵ Please see Jim Harnish and Justin Larosa, *A Disciple's Path: Deepening Your Relationship With Christ And The Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2012).

¹⁴⁶ Please see Mike Schreiner and Ken Willard, *Stride: Creating A Discipleship Pathway For Your Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2017). This is my assessment after having reviewed and analyzed them.

focus, the timeframes remain relatively short. Slaughter's discipleship pathway is twelve weeks long.¹⁴⁷ Harnish's and Larosa's pathways are six weeks long.¹⁴⁸ The pathway of Schreiner and Willard has the hope of seeing individuals sharing in an ongoing experience through community groups, learning groups, and service groups, but those individuals are only required to share in one starting session, along with four classes of connecting.¹⁴⁹ In these pathways, time is given to share information, but that time is limited. In embracing quick discipleship paths, churches adopt a posture of immediacy.

As Cyprian notes, "Therefore, as servants and worshipers of God, let us show spiritual homage the patience that we learn from the heavenly teachings. For that virtue we have in common with God. Christians are to be visibly distinctive. They are to live their faith and communicate it in deeds, and their deeds are to embody patience."¹⁵⁰ Patience is crucial for formation. Patience leads to right learning, which leads to right embodiment. Quick information does not correlate to fast formation.

Because many contemporary discipleship pathways have a shorter time of instruction, the most they can do is focus on information rather than practices of formation, because practices take time to master. Both Slaughter's and Harnish/Larosa's works are roughly 90% information-based, while about 70% of Schriener/Willard's work is information based.¹⁵¹ Such a focus makes it easy to think that discipleship can be lived

¹⁴⁷ Slaughter, 3.

¹⁴⁸ Harnish and Larosa, 5-7.

¹⁴⁹ Schreiner and Willard, 37-42.

¹⁵⁰ Cyprian, *De Bono Patientiae*, trans. George E. Conway (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1957), 265.

¹⁵¹ These are approximations given by me, in my own judgement, after reviewing each discipleship pathway in their entirety and analyzing their content.

out simply by being aware of the necessary information. As Slaughter herself comments, “Everything we have studied in the last twelve sessions can be summed up in the word discipleship... It is now up to you to take this information and let it, in the power of the Holy Spirit, transform your life.”¹⁵² Particularly symptomatic of the underlying issues at hand is the usage of the word “information” alone with the concept of studying, rather than “information and practices” for studying. Such an approach is the discipleship equivalent to watching a two-minute video on how to surf and thinking that by consuming the information of the video, one is suddenly prepared to hit the waves after the two-minute video ends.¹⁵³

An Orientation to Functioning in the Church as the Highest Discipleship Ideal

Common to all three discipleship plans is an internal focus when it comes to living as a disciple. Given that each pathway is information-heavy, when practices are suggested, they are nearly always offered with a focus within the institutional church rather than beyond it. Ideal discipleship is defined as sharing in regular worship, participating in a small group of some kind, learning in an ongoing Bible study, and then serving somewhere to fill a need (usually some church volunteer or outreach program). Repeatedly, these focus points in the church are the gold standard by which mature disciples were measured. Harnish and Larosa are explicit about this when they identify that A Disciple’s Path “is designed primarily to help individual disciples find their place to serve in their local congregation of that part of the body of Christ known as the United

¹⁵² Slaughter, 126.

¹⁵³ See Sports and Outdoors, “How To Do Surfing for Beginners,” YouTube video, 2:01, March 12, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0rnmsgUeO0>.

Methodist Church.”¹⁵⁴ Schreiner and Willard offer similar sentiments when they indicate the metrics used for “mature discipleship” are metrics primarily for “institutional church” settings, which focus on worship attendance, giving, serving, and adult groups.¹⁵⁵ The discipleship focus includes primarily an “in-church” focus when it speaks of the importance of community, learning, and serving.¹⁵⁶ Yet such a focus leads to an obvious problem: the lack of connection and interaction with non-Christians.

An Absence of Apostolic Practices in the Wider Culture Beyond the Institutional Church

In general, there is a hesitancy in these discipleship plans to name specific action steps to serve in mission out in the world. For example, even when Harnish and Larosa point toward an outward focus by encouraging disciples to participate in invitational evangelism, the specific action point is: “What could be your next step toward growth in the practice of invitational evangelism?”¹⁵⁷ not “What *will* your next step be?” The focus is on “think about” rather than “do.”

The lack of apostolic practices in each discipleship pathway is evident. Practices related to ongoing mentoring, missional discipleship, recruitment to the Way, fasting, extended catechesis, the priesthood of all believers, testimony sharing, radical hospitality and generosity, pioneering, planting of new faith communities, sacrificial living, contextual living, and extended praying are all conspicuously absent from the surveyed

¹⁵⁴ Harnish and Larosa, 88.

¹⁵⁵ Schreiner and Willard, 80-81.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁵⁷ Harnish and Larosa, 105.

discipleship plans.¹⁵⁸ If some of these primary practices which both form deeper discipleship in individuals and simultaneously reach out to individuals beyond the institutional church are not present in a discipleship pathway, then eventually it will be impossible for local churches to experience growth or multiplication.

Realists might argue that we live in a world of either/or and it is unrealistic and naïve to believe that both formational and generative communities can dance together in holy tension in the same church.¹⁵⁹ Could such a mindset be based only on what is observed, or a lack of imagination of what could be? Not only is a both/and approach possible for the local church, it is needed in today's shifting world. Increasingly, the church must learn to dance in tension to discover new life rather than avoid tension and experience loss of life. Warner describes the needed "dance" as a dynamic of "gathering, going... and gathering again."¹⁶⁰ Christians know they are forming rightly when generation is the result. Both are needed. Formation and generation feed seamlessly off each other. There is a holy tension of ebb and flow, along with a simultaneous filling and releasing as modeled in the perichoretic dance found in the Trinitarian relationships.

If the local church can learn to dance again by holding in holy tension the formational elements and the generative elements as defined in the offices of APEST, then exponential, multiplying discipleship may once again become a reality in the local church. history may once again repeat itself. A curriculum option will allow for these

¹⁵⁸ Such concepts are at times hinted at in the reviewed discipleship paths, but not explored in any extended depth. I appreciate that Schreiner and Willard specifically reference mentoring. However, they use it for a one-off coaching conversation with participants rather than an ongoing relationship—see pages 70-71 of their book.

¹⁵⁹ Such a mindset is prevalent in today's highly politicized environment.

¹⁶⁰ Warner, 25-26.

elements to be focused upon in a contextualized manner consistent with the “curricula-esque” approaches of the early church and the Wesleyan movement. The use of a curriculum can also provide step-by-step guidance in a practical, specific way for churches already experiencing the chaos of the massively changing culture. But unlike many other contemporary curricula, the goal of this curriculum will be to focus on both information *and* practices, yielding a reclaimed apostolic discipleship focus rather than better church volunteers.

SECTION 3: THESIS

“This is the way; walk in it.”
—Isaiah 30:21

Some of the first individuals to raise significant questions around multiplying discipleship for a postmodern world were Lesslie Newbigin and Vincent Donovan.¹⁶¹ Each served as local missionaries in foreign contexts and were drawn to key questions of faith related to being disciples in a changing environment while rediscovering Christianity itself. Their works raised such questions more from a missiological perspective rather than an explicitly discipleship-oriented one, but they laid the groundwork for discovering multiplying discipleship in an increasingly post-Christian world. They realized that what had worked in terms of developing disciples of Christ for so long, no longer did. Such a realization prompted Donovan to exclaim, “The day we are completely satisfied with what we have been doing; the day we have found the perfect, unchangeable system of work, the perfect answer, never in need of being corrected again, on that day we will know we are wrong, that we have made the greatest mistake of all.”¹⁶²

Despite so many church individuals and leaders having at least a peripheral connection with discipleship, it is difficult to find among influencers specific “plans of discipleship formation” for our day and age which will result in multiplying discipleship.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ See their complete works: Vincent Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered*, 25th anniversary edition, and Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness To The Greeks: The Gospel And Western Culture*.

¹⁶² Donovan, 146.

¹⁶³ This observation is made from practitioner interviews with individuals such as Chris Backert, Larry Leland, and Billy Wilson, and from listening to the needs of ministry practitioners in general.

The focus of this work is to offer a curriculum that addresses the wicked components associated with multiplying discipleship. Specifically, the goal is to offer a curriculum that is both multi-dimensional in its approach (focused upon both formative teaching and generative practices) and designed to foster discipleship that moves beyond a consumeristic mindset.¹⁶⁴

David Epstein comments, “In a wicked world, relying upon experience from a single domain is not only limiting, it can be disastrous.”¹⁶⁵ Such a disastrous reality is playing out when it comes to multiplying discipleship in many local churches today. Churches try things based only on their own experience, or what they see happening around them, and hope for the best. But again, as Epstein notes, “The current world is not so kind, it requires thinking that cannot fall back on previous experience. Like math students we need to be able to pick a strategy for problems we have never seen before.”¹⁶⁶

How might such an observation apply to the discipleship problem facing local churches today? Consider the work of Karl Duncker.

M.L. Gick and K.J. Holyoak describe the work of Karl Duncker, who posed one of the most famous hypothetical problems in all of cognitive psychology. The problem is told:

Suppose you are a doctor faced with a patient who has a malignant stomach tumor. It is impossible to operate on this patient, but unless the tumor is destroyed the patient will die. There is a kind of ray that can be used to destroy the tumor. If the rays reach the tumor all at once at a sufficiently high intensity, the tumor will

¹⁶⁴ Admittedly, one reason discipleship pathways do not sell well from a marketing perspective in our current cultural context. Another reason appears to be that few have done the work necessary to address the wicked nature of the problem of discipleship multiplication.

¹⁶⁵ David Epstein, *Range: How Generalists Triumph In A Specialized World* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2019), 107.

¹⁶⁶ Epstein, 104.

be destroyed. Unfortunately, at this intensity the healthy tissue that the rays pass through on the way to the tumor will also be destroyed. At lower intensities the rays are harmless to healthy tissue, but they will not affect the tumor either. What type of procedure might be used to destroy the tumor with the rays, and at the same time avoid destroying the healthy tissue?¹⁶⁷

Many medical students and philosophers have wrestled to figure out the solution.

“The answer is that you (the doctor) could direct multiple low-intensity rays at the tumor from different directions, leaving healthy tissue intact, but converging at the tumor site with enough collective intensity to destroy it.”¹⁶⁸ By addressing the issue from a number of vantage points in a converging manner, the solution emerged.

This approach of applying multiple strategies that may not be alike on the surface, but hold deep structural similarities, is finding increased validity in various fields of research. For example, when it comes to helping organizations change, the people in the organization need to change. The Prosci ADKAR model recognizes this reality and advocates a multi-pronged approach to change people in order to change organizations. Using the analogy of the low-intensity rays, the ADKAR model offers the “rays” of awareness of the need to change, desire to support the change, knowledge of how to change, ability to demonstrate skills and behaviors, and reinforcement to make the change stick.¹⁶⁹ The belief here is that true change comes about as a result of multiple, simultaneous approaches with the individual. Of these five points of emphasis, three may be categorized as more informational in nature (awareness of the need to change, desire to support the change, knowledge of how to change) and two may be categorized as more

¹⁶⁷ M.L. Gick and K.J. Holyoak, “Analogical Problem Solving,” *Cognitive Psychology* 12 (1980): 306-55.

¹⁶⁸ Epstein, 106.

¹⁶⁹ See the Prosci ADKAR Model website for more details. <https://www.prosci.com/adkar>.

practice-oriented (demonstrate skills and behaviors, and reinforce those skills and behaviors).

What if such a perspective could be applied to the issue of discipleship formation and church vitality? What possibilities might emerge? An examination of different time periods reveals that, surface-level differences aside, problems were approached with underlying similarities in the different eras.

Discovering Structural Similarities for Multiplying Discipleship

Earlier, five time periods were examined in a general manner to discover the dominant APEST feature of each era. Within those historical eras, under very different circumstances and contexts, there have been instances where the local church has experienced multiplying discipleship. This work will focus on two different time periods in which multiplying discipleship occurred: the birth of the early church through the first centuries¹⁷⁰ and the Wesleyan movement in America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

As these two time periods are compared, it becomes clear how particular structural similarities of discipleship in these time periods resulted not just in multiplying discipleship but in an entire movement of discipleship. In each movement, there simultaneously existed both formative and generative components. They do not exist in a vacuum, where one is fundamentally separate from the other, but rather in a holy tension of “give and take,” where one makes the other better.¹⁷¹ The formational elements of

¹⁷⁰ Kreider, 1-9.

¹⁷¹ Sweet, Class Lecture, Portland Seminary, February 18, 2019. Sweet gives the example of tension yielding something better, such as a salsa comprised of different elements.

teaching allow for a sense of consistency among all disciples anywhere, while the generative practices of teaching allow discipleship to grow organically, creatively, and imaginatively among non-believers in whatever new environments disciples find themselves.

In categorizing these structural similarities, Alan Hirsch's framework of APEST¹⁷² is again helpful to analyze the holy tension found between formative and generative elements.

Formative and Generative Communities of the Early Church

The formative and generative offices of APEST were prevalent as the church grew in the first centuries. As a second-century epistle to Diognetus observed, Christians “day by day increase more and more.”¹⁷³ Alan Kreider uses the term “ferment” to describe the synergistic effect that the healthy tension these five offices had as they danced with one another and as the early church simultaneously experienced multiplying discipleship.¹⁷⁴

In the early church, the power of the formative community, with its focus upon teaching, shepherding, and prophesying, was evident. Teaching was a key ingredient in the discipleship culture of the early Christians as they formed a new habitus for living through emphasized catecheses.¹⁷⁵ These teachers “wrote apologies and taught

¹⁷² Hirsch, *Forgotten Ways*, 187-218.

¹⁷³ Diognetus, *Early Christian Fathers*, ed. C.C. Richardson, trans. E.R. Fairweather (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1953), 218.

¹⁷⁴ Kreider, 3.

¹⁷⁵ Kreider, 2.

unbelievers as well as Christians who could come,”¹⁷⁶ which contributed to the movement.

In addition to teaching, formation through shepherding in worshiping communities was viewed as essential for the church’s mission.¹⁷⁷ As McGowan summarizes, “Christian liturgy... is the sum of very specific and concrete performance, undertaken because they are believed by the members of the church to be constitutive of their faith, their allegiance and their identity. These actions, offered as service to God, constitute Christian worship.”¹⁷⁸

Early Christians were anchored to live discipleship-modeling faith in Christ through a prophetic focus on the truth of Jesus. In particular, Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount served as prophetic fuel,¹⁷⁹ along with passages such as Isaiah 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1-4 which Origen insisted all believers knew.¹⁸⁰ “The prophetic focus on truth framed preaching around core, distinctive elements in the Christian religion such as God as One, Jesus as Savior and Judge, the Resurrection, and ascetic self-control.”¹⁸¹

The offices of apostleship and evangelism in the generative community were just as important in the early church as the offices of the formative community. Apostles were, in the model of the original twelve disciples of Jesus in scripture, those

¹⁷⁶ Everett Ferguson, “Some Factors In The Growth Of The Early Church,” *Restoration Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (1973): 45, ATLA Religion Database.

¹⁷⁷ Kreider, 2.

¹⁷⁸ Andrew McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 262.

¹⁷⁹ Kreider, 91.

¹⁸⁰ Kreider, 91-92.

¹⁸¹ Ferguson, 33.

missionaries on the frontiers doing what could only be explained by God. Ferguson observes that one of the primary elements that attracted people to Christianity in the early church was Christians living as apostles who were able to perform miracles and exorcisms, and were willing to give up their lives for the sake of the Gospel.¹⁸²

Evangelists also played a crucial part in the multiplying discipleship of the early church. Evangelists were essentially “recruiters” to the cause and good news of Christ, able to share the Gospel in a way that others could receive it well.¹⁸³ Origen says of these evangelists: “Some of them accordingly make it the business of their life to wander not only from city to city but from township to township and village to village in order to gain fresh converts for the Lord.”¹⁸⁴

This healthy tension found in the dance between the formational focus of the teachers, shepherds, and prophets and the generative focus of the apostles and evangelists resulted in multiplying discipleship in the early church in a world that did not know the Gospel. This dance would not prove to be an anomaly.

Formative and Generative Communities of the Wesleyan Movement

The Wesleyan tradition emerged from a missional imperative rather than from roots of disagreement, as had other denominations.¹⁸⁵ As a result, this ecclesiology was

¹⁸² Ferguson, 37-40.

¹⁸³ Alan Hirsch, *5Q: Reactivating the Original Intelligence and Capacity of the Body of Christ* (Columbia: 100 Movements, 2017), 106-107.

¹⁸⁴ Ferguson, 44.

¹⁸⁵ Lacey Warner, *The Method of Our Mission: United Methodist Polity and Organization* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 29.

shaped, like the early church, from the dance of a healthy tension between the formative and generative components of community.

Thomas Langford notes this tension when he says, “The Holy Spirit challenges believers to full maturity in Jesus Christ; and the Holy Spirit gathers believers into worshipping [more formative in nature] and serving communities [more generative in nature].”¹⁸⁶

Like the early church, teaching, shepherding, and prophecy played prevalent roles in the Wesleyan tradition. Teaching was based on such doctrinal materials as the Articles of Religion, Confession of Faith, General Rules, and Wesley’s Sermons and Notes.¹⁸⁷ Shepherding came through intentional religious gatherings. As Warner observes, “While thousands attended occasions for Methodist field preaching, the vast majority of those converted into Christian faith and discipleship participated in religious societies, or small groups called class and band meetings.”¹⁸⁸

The Wesleyan movement lived into the prophetic office by offering clear declarations of truth that set them apart from other religions. Chief among these prophetic distinctions were a commitment to orthodoxy, repenting and believing in the gospel as the only way to heaven, justification through grace alone, and living into that

¹⁸⁶ Tom Langford, *Practical Divinity: Theology In The Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 37.

¹⁸⁷ Warner, 43.

¹⁸⁸ Warner, 18.

justification.¹⁸⁹ For Wesley, the prophetic call to a distinctive life of truth lived in serving the broken, lost, poor, and hurting was paramount to authentic Christianity.¹⁹⁰

The Wesleyan movement gained momentum because it not only lived into the formational offices of teaching, shepherding, and prophesying; it practiced the generative offices of apostles and evangelists as well. John Wesley himself began as the primary apostle and evangelist in the Methodist movement. Wesley “felt that his calling as well as his ordination made it necessary for him to disregard parish boundaries and normal parish protocol in his attempts to fulfill God’s commission to him to preach the gospel.”¹⁹¹ It was this apostolic mindset that circuit riders and itinerant preachers later in the movement would carry to the fringes of society. Wesley also introduced consistent teaching and practices of the Christian faith in some newer ways such as class meetings, particular methods of discipline, a focus on practical application of faith, and the creation of resources such as the Doctrinal Standards and the Articles of Religion.¹⁹²

Evangelism also played a strong role in Wesley’s renewal movement. Langford comments, “The Wesleyan revival became a wave that would move across England, sweep over the borders into Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, extend across the Atlantic into Nova Scotia, the other North American colonies, and to the Caribbean islands... dominated by a sense of evangelistic mission.”¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ Warner, 30.

¹⁹⁰ Warner, 31.

¹⁹¹ Richard Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 102.

¹⁹² Warner, 24, 29, and 34.

¹⁹³ Langford, 16.

Thus, in both the early church movement and the Wesleyan movement, the active presence of all five APEST offices is found moving in a synergistic tension between formative and generative teaching. The result is a multiplying discipleship in both instances. This framework offers insight for how to reclaim a multiplying discipleship in today's local denominational church through the recognized structural similarities of previous successful discipleship efforts. These structural similarities provide clues and insights for a new type of curriculum to guide today's local church through the wicked problem of experiencing multiplying discipleship.

Insights for Living into Multiplying Discipleship Today

Focus on Multi-Dimensional Solutions (Over One-Dimensional)

To reclaim a culture of multiplying discipleship and experience something beautiful, today's local church must address the issue from multiple angles, rather than from one angle, using a framework such as the APEST model.

A church that tends to be strong in the formative elements of discipleship may be called a "gathered" form of church. The gathered community refers to what one could call the "attractional-traditional-organized-inherited-institutional-established" form of church.¹⁹⁴ Gathered church discipleship tends to involve what many Christians in America think of when they think of "church," including the average Sunday morning worship experience along with most established ministries in such a church setting. In

¹⁹⁴ Ed Stetzer, "Missional or Attractional? The Value of Embracing a Both/And Mentality," The Exchange (blog) Christianity Today, August 30, 2017, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2017/august/missional-or-attractional-value-of-embracing-bothand-mental.html>.

general, the gathered church has traditionally been strong in formative teaching when it comes to discipleship.

Simultaneously, a church that is strong on the generative elements of church may be called a “sent” form of church.¹⁹⁵ The sent community refers to a “pioneering-organic-incarnational-fresh expression” approach to ministry.¹⁹⁶ This mode of discipleship is directed toward those with no knowledge or experience of the inherited church. The sent church tends to excel in new practices leading to generative realities. It involves meeting people on their turf in experimental ways to develop incarnational relationships, eventually leading to some form of worship.

Whereas the emphasis for the gathered community is to grow disciples by attracting people to join them by coming to their gathered space, the primary emphasis for the sent community is to make disciples by joining them in their space: by “going.”¹⁹⁷ One mode of church is not considered superior to the other here. Both bring strengths, with the gathered church offering a strong formational component and the sent church offering a strong generative component. The idea is to understand how both, when dancing in proper tension in the same local church community, can yield new possibilities for reclaiming a multiplying discipleship.

¹⁹⁵ These are the terms I have chosen to use to summarize two vastly different modes of discipleship. For the remainder of this paper I will only use the terms “gathered” and “sent.” Please note all that is entailed when I use these terms.

¹⁹⁶ For a comprehensive overview of what is meant by the term “sent church” please see the complete work of Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating Apostolic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2016). Please also see <https://freshexpressionsus.org> for more on the National Fresh Expressions of Church movement that is occurring. According to National U.S. Fresh Expressions national director Chris Backert, a fresh expression of church may be defined as “A form of Church for our changing culture established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church.”

¹⁹⁷ Leonard Sweet, *So Beautiful: Divine Design For Life And The Church* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009), 66.

Consider the imagery of a couple dancing to music. Imagine being in step with the tune of Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the tune that crosses all ages and contexts. For the dance to work, both partners must be in step with the music and each other to flourish in a dynamic way. One of the keys to good dancing is to maintain proper tension between the partners.¹⁹⁸ Too much tension results in a static, structured, routine with little flair, imagination, or flexibility. Too little tension results in chaos, a lack of precision, an absence of direction, and partners who have no idea what the other one is doing.

But when the tension in the dance is just right, a beauty greater than what each individual partner could produce ensues. There is an exquisite ebb and flow between routine and creation and choreography and spontaneity.

The early church movement and the Wesleyan movement demonstrate it is possible to navigate the holy tension between focused structure and imaginative response—resulting in a beautiful dance of flourishing, multiplying discipleship. The contexts of these settings were very different, but individuals in the early church and in the Enlightenment period of the Wesleyan movement learned to dance in the context in which they found themselves. Whereas the early church navigated the dance during a time when tradition was incredibly important, Wesley learned to dance in a time when reason was paramount. What does such a dance look like in an age when it could be argued that experience often takes precedence over scripture?¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Mitch Marcello, interview by author, Williamsport, PA, November 27, 2018.

¹⁹⁹ Theologians who have studied Wesley believe Wesley viewed the interpretation of Scripture in relation to tradition, reason, and experience, while giving primary emphasis to scripture. See: Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity: Theology In The Wesleyan Tradition* (Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN: 1983), 251-252. It has been my observation and opinion in studying discipleship that the primary rival to scripture in the early church was tradition. The primary rival to scripture in the Enlightenment period was reason.

As statistics reveal, many local, denominational churches have been unable to navigate the dance between the “known” and the “unknown,” or between “structured and improvised,” to use dancing language.²⁰⁰ In these situations, pastors and congregations must begin to ask themselves if they trust each other enough to dance and improvise as needed while exploring “sent practices.”

Because many of today’s local churches have lost this ability to dance in a harmonious tension, these churches are experiencing what Colin Gunton refers to as a “lopsided ecclesiology.”²⁰¹ In these churches, multiplying discipleship does not exist because of too much focus on the institutional, formational mode. Gunton asserts that today’s local churches have, by and large, fallen into a static mode of operation deficient in “the dynamic of the Spirit.”²⁰²

What would such a dance look like that might simultaneously avoid a “lopsided ecclesiology” and result in multiplying discipleship? A glimpse to the past provides imaginative possibilities for “the way” forward.

Now, today, the primary rival to scripture is experience. Therefore, I argue that multiplying discipleship must recognize this contextual reality of the importance of experience and adapt accordingly to share scripture in a relevant way. In this way, there exists a “dance” between the two.

²⁰⁰ See Pew Forum, “Attendance At Religious Services,” Pew Research Center: Religion and Public Life, <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/attendance-at-religious-services/>; David Kinnaman, interview by Carey Nieuwhof, *The Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast Episode 24*, February 23, 2015, <https://careynieuwhof.com/myodcast/>; General Council on Finance and Administration: United Methodist Church, “Data Services,” <http://www.gcfa.org/services/data-services>.

²⁰¹ Colin E. Gunton and Daniel W. Hardy, eds., *On Being The Church: Essays On The Christian Community* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1989), 78.

²⁰² Ibid.

Comprehend and Walk the Way

The ancient Romans did not invent roads, but as Mark Cartwright points out, “As in so many other fields, they took an idea which went as far back as the Bronze age and extended that concept, daring to squeeze from it the fullest possible potential.”²⁰³

The most famous Roman road was the Via Appia—known as the Appian Way. It was constructed in 312 BCE and covered 132 Roman miles.²⁰⁴ The road allowed for robust trade with other parts of the world and contributed greatly to Rome’s influence in the known world.²⁰⁵ The Appian Way was known for being a strategic commercial center for the Roman Empire because of several important trade routes which converged along it.²⁰⁶

In the ancient Roman Empire, roads were the only way to get from one place to another over land since airplanes did not yet exist. Roads became symbols of power, life, and destination as they were traveled.²⁰⁷ Then, as now, having the information that a road existed was important because one cannot travel a road if they do not know it exists. However, a road was only useful in getting to a destination and fostering vitality if the information of the road was combined with the practice of travel. Only by comprehending the reality of the road and then putting that understanding into practice by

²⁰³ Mark Cartwright, “Roman Roads,” *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, <https://www.ancient.eu/article/758/roman-roads/>.

²⁰⁴ Cartwright.

²⁰⁵ Paul J. Achtemeier, ed., *Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1985), 1202.

²⁰⁶ Robert W. Wall, ed., “The Acts Of The Apostles,” *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 150.

²⁰⁷ Achtemeier, 1202.

navigating the road could those making the journey experience all that the expedition had to offer. In this way, roads literally created a way where there was no way.

The term “the way” originally referred to the literal meaning of “path, road, or journey.”²⁰⁸ In this context, individuals could say they knew of the way, meaning they knew a certain road existed—whether they actually traveled it or not. With time, the term “the way” evolved to take on more meaning. It became more figurative and could describe “natural patterns of behavior, observed in the world, God’s patterns of activity, and human lifestyles.”²⁰⁹ Over time, there was a shift from “knowledge about” to “knowledge that informed behavior.” In the New Testament writings, the term “The Way” took on an even more specific meaning. “Jesus Himself was identified as the Way to a new relationship with God, which issued in a new quality of life and a new way of living.”²¹⁰ By the time this term, the Way, was used in the book of Acts,²¹¹ it had become a particular name for the early church.²¹²

J.A. Fitzmyer notes that followers of the Way were “marked out by a distinctive way believers live together and by their beliefs about Jesus.”²¹³ Notice the combination of both distinctive living (action) and beliefs (information). Both generative and formative

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ See Acts 9:2; 19:9; and 19:23.

²¹² Wall, 150.

²¹³ J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles, AB 31* (Garden City, NY: Double Day, 1998), 423-424.

elements were needed for the Way to bring forth full vitality. This sense of distinctive living exemplifies the “habitus” defined earlier by Pierre Boudieu.²¹⁴

In a sermon discussing Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, based on John 14:6, Tim Keller notes how the Way progressed from a sense of wisdom in general in society, to describing life in God’s more specific law and wisdom in the Old Testament, to describing Jesus very specifically as the Way to God. As such, Jesus became recognized as the literal path/road/journey to God, while simultaneously existing as the way to truth and life.²¹⁵

Understanding that the Way of Jesus involves both information and practice is crucial. Just as one never reaches the exciting destination of a road without actually traveling on it, so followers of Christ never reach the fullness of the Way without putting into practice the knowledge they possess. This is a key reason why many of today’s churches are experiencing rapid decline²¹⁶ and why there have been times when the Christian movement has flourished.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 130-135.

²¹⁵ Tim Keller, “Knowing The Father” (sermon), posted October 27, 1991, <https://gospelinlife.com>.

²¹⁶ Many statistics on church decline have already been given. In particular David Kinnaman shares that 38% of the current American population is now Post Christian and 25% of the American population never had a connection with the church. See David Kinnaman, interview by Carey Nieuwhof, *The Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast Episode 24*, February 23, 2015, <https://careynieuwhof.com/mypodcast/>. In the United Methodist Church, the decline has been particularly steep. Sweet points out that in 1870 over 40% of the American population connected with the United Methodist Church, but today it is down to 5%. See Leonard Sweet, *The Greatest Story Never Told* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2012), xv.

²¹⁷ See for example the biblical book of Acts or the work of Lacey Warner, who notes the thousands of lives affected by the Methodist movement. Lacey Warner, *The Method Of Our Mission: United Methodist Polity And Organization* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 18.

When asked why people in the culture no longer know the Way, the local church's response is often that people do not have the information about Jesus as the Way to believe in. If they did, then all would be well.²¹⁸ While local churches and discipleship pathway curricula should be commended for their desire to share the knowledge of Christ, many are missing resulting practices to live into the knowledge of Christ. Without accompanying practices, the likelihood of faith generation is minimal.

In a recent class discussion, Sweet shared with one of his doctoral cohorts how baptism was practiced in the early church. Sweet notes,

In the early church, it was usually a three-year process and pattern for one to become baptized into the Christian faith. Why? Because the real mission of the church was to disciple people in the Way of Jesus, not the teachings of Jesus. To do this, it took people three years of being disciplined and apprenticed in the faith. It was a three-year catechumen. Today we focus on doctrine over practice. We focus on confirmation over catechesis. We need to return to discipling people in the way of Jesus and not just the doctrine of Jesus. Individuals must once again learn to live as Jesus lived.²¹⁹

History has shown Sweet's observation to be true.

As a result of his careful study of the practices of the early Christian church in the formation of disciples, Kreider notes, "But according to Athenagoras, the witness of the local Christians was rooted less in words than in the habits of people, who in reflexive behavior 'do not rehearse words but show forth good deeds' that people could see. The behavior that performed these good deeds was shaped by intentional formation."²²⁰ For

²¹⁸ Reverend Bruce Barnard, interview by author, February 16, 2018 and Dr. Cathy Davis, interview by author, February 20, 2018.

²¹⁹ Leonard Sweet, "Holy Week Discipleship," Synchronous Chat Class Presentation, Portland Seminary, Portland, OR, April 8, 2019.

²²⁰ Kreider, 134.

Kreider, good formation involves not just information, but practice. The combination of information and practice results in an experience of generative, multiplying discipleship.

Or, as Tertullian famously puts it, “Christians are made, not born.”²²¹

When posing the question of how Christians were made in the past, Kreider concludes they were made through “a process of formation...rooted in the habitus of the communities...It was embodied knowledge rooted in predispositions that guided the Christians’ common life and expressed themselves in practices.”²²² Notice again the progression of formation leading to generative impetus.

One of the earliest “Christian training manuals” was the *Didache*.²²³ Potential members learned what the text of the *Didache* meant by “apprenticing themselves to community members, who were examples, craftsmen of the Christian way.”²²⁴

Steven Ford notes in regard to preparation for baptism, “Instruction in the proper Christian way of life is clearly indicated, and a context of prayer and fasting is obvious. In addition, the community itself participate in the formative process through joining the catechumens in ascetical activity.”²²⁵ Again, both information and formation are essential in the Way.

²²¹ Tertullian, *Apology: De Spectaculis*, trans. T.R. Glover (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 177.

²²² Kreider, 134.

²²³ Thomas O’Loughlin, *The Didache: A Window on the Earliest Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 35.

²²⁴ Kreider, 139.

²²⁵ Stephen R. Ford. “The Place of Catechesis in the Early Church: Its Implications for Christian Initiation Today,” *Saint Luke’s Journal Of Theology* 24, no. 3 (1981): 179, ATLA Religion Database.

As Joseph Grassi describes, in the early Church, the first step was focused upon reexamining “the root significance of Christian initiation, which is that of identification with Christ. This is associated with acquiring a new name and personal presence—that of Christ himself.”²²⁶ This focus on identification with Christ in a personal manner and not simply as information to consider is a key distinction. An awareness of Christ in a personal manner often leads to particular practices in a way that informational awareness does not.

Clinton E. Arnold gives a more contemporary slant to the need for reclaiming both formation and generative impulse by sharing a case study from his own ministry. He describes how he and his wife were asked to develop an assimilation ministry in their local church. The goal was for individuals to take an eight-week course that blended the basics of Christian doctrine and practice and then helped them into existing, age-appropriate programs in the church.²²⁷ Arnold found this time and effort to be woefully lacking. The process led him to ask many questions, ranging from whether an eight-week process was really enough, to whether new believers were getting enough scripture immersion, to whether new believers were being helped to turn away from sinful practices and lifestyles.²²⁸ Ultimately, Arnold came to the following conclusions: New

²²⁶ Joseph A. Grassi, “Christian Mantras: The Rediscovery And Power Of An Ancient Approach To Inner Christian Transformation,” *Worship* 49, no. 9 (1975): 530, ATLA Religion Database.

²²⁷ Clinton E. Arnold, “Early Church Catechesis and New Christians’ Classes in Contemporary Evangelicalism,” *Journal Of The Evangelical Theological Society* 47, no. 1 (2004): 39, ATLA Religion Database.

²²⁸ Arnold, 40.

believers needed much more than eight weeks for proper formation,²²⁹ and teaching should be a top priority for Christian scholars, not just in academia but in local churches. Not only would this help new believers engage scripture and creed seriously, Arnold deduced, but spiritual and moral formation could then properly occur in a way that led to a very different lifestyle, where one's old style would be left behind.²³⁰ Yet again, proper formation does not end with formation; it leads to generation.

Arnold's experience is not unique. The ways forward in discipleship formation for many churches involve consumption of knowledge without application of living. The results, then, are all too familiar—an accelerating decline in church vitality and growth. Combined formational and generative practices such as ongoing mentoring, missional discipleship, recruitment to the Way, fasting, extended catechesis, the priesthood of all believers, testimony sharing, radical hospitality and generosity, pioneering, planting of new faith communities, sacrificial living, contextual living, and extended prayer—simultaneously existing—are all conspicuously absent from the surveyed discipleship plans.²³¹

Again, Hirsch highlights the necessity of learning and practice when he observes that churches who live into a full model of APEST²³² succeed in raising up disciples who

²²⁹ Arnold is not alone in his conclusion. F. Willis Johnson offered the same feedback in my interview with him in my field research experience. F. Willis Johnson, interview by author, Columbus, OH, March 4, 2019.

²³⁰ Arnold, 43-54.

²³¹ Such concepts are at times hinted at in the reviewed discipleship paths, but not explored in any extended depth. I appreciate that Schreiner and Willard specifically reference mentoring. However, they use it for a one-off coaching conversation with participants rather than an ongoing relationship—see pages 70-71 of their book *Stride*.

²³² APEST stands for Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds, and Teachers. See Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating Apostolic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2016), 187-217.

live fully into the Way. This APEST model embraces both knowledge and practice. I appreciate Hirsch’s insight when he says, “I now believe that the APEST functions and callings are no less than the modes of Jesus’ presence in the church. It is the way in which Jesus chooses to be present and operate in and through his people!”²³³

Discipleship pathways that focus on expediency, information, and a lack of formation produce consumeristic Christians.²³⁴ Consumeristic Christians enjoy consuming teaching, learning, and information but rarely put the learning into practice. Because there is extensive taking in of information, and little living out, individuals then become spiritually obese.²³⁵

At the risk of being too graphic, I appreciate how Hartnell puts it when he says, “Within the modes of humoral medicine everything that was expelled from the body—sweat, vomit, saliva, feces, could be pored over for its quality and quantity by a knowledgeable healer for signs of underlying internal imbalance, and urine was no exception.”²³⁶ Seeing what comes out of Christians gives significant clues as to what is going on inside of them. If nothing (or too little) is coming out of Christians, then something is seriously wrong with the health of their discipleship.

²³³ Alan Hirsch, *5Q: Reactivating the Original Intelligence and Capacity of the Body of Christ* (Columbia: 100M, 2017), 22.

²³⁴ This is a term I personally use in a general manner. I do not know if it belongs to anyone else.

²³⁵ This term is, again, one I use in a general manner. Or I could use a phrase my colleague Rebecca Iannicelli, Dean of the Cabinet of the Baltimore-Washington UMC Conference, utilizes: “Spiritually constipated.”

²³⁶ Jack Hartnell, *Medieval Bodies: Life, Death And Art In The Middle Ages* (London: Profile Books, 2018), 256.

Applications of the Dance:

Three Keys for Experiencing Multiplying Discipleship Today

In both the early church movement and the Wesleyan movement, the active presence of all five APEST offices dancing in a synergistic tension between formational and generative elements of church produced multiplying discipleship. This framework offers much insight for reclaiming a multiplying discipleship in today's local denominational church.

Learn to Improvise: Focus on the Generative Initiative Found in the Sent Community

As mentioned, many of today's local, denominational churches have become ecclesiologicaly unbalanced. Alan Hirsch asserts:

The habits of institution that we have inherited through the European formulas are coded according to a different template than the fivefold one [of APEST]. Christendom churches have generally followed... the more generic Shepherd-Teacher model. Most of these, as we have seen, have managed to assiduously script a full APEST typology out of the tradition... We are out of touch with the more instinctive models laced throughout the book of Acts.²³⁷

Today's local churches must again discover the passion of living on the fringes of society. Darrell Guder comments, "Especially crucial for missional ecclesiology today is the recovery of the apostolic function in the church."²³⁸ So many local churches today have very little apostolic initiative. Because John Wesley felt compelled to share the gospel with everyone and to spread scriptural holiness over the land, he had, out of necessity, a willingness to experiment, risk, fail, and deal with opposition. The result was

²³⁷ Hirsch, *5Q*, 146.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 99.

a fresh approach to ministry in his context.²³⁹ In a world of tremendous change, where so many churches are declining and dying,²⁴⁰ the reclaiming of the sent community with its generative focus is essential to rediscovering a multiplying discipleship.

Sweet notes, “One of the most revolutionary features of the Wesleyan revival was its liberation of the laity for leadership, and its blurring of the lines between clergy and lay when it came to priestly functions and spiritual guides.”²⁴¹ Sweet’s observation points to the need for today’s local church to again foster a generative identity among its members, where all are empowered to live into an apostolic, rather than consumeristic, disposition.

Reclaim the Power of Choreography through Focus on Formation in the Gathered Community

Historically, the power of the gathered community through the offices of teaching and shepherding and prophesying was to offer formation in Christ, but many local churches today have turned the *formational* journey into an *informational* process. This was not the original intent of shepherding, prophesying, and teaching.²⁴² Dunnill observes, “Arguably it is the failure of the church to nurture Christians in fully Christian habits of living and thinking that is the prime cause of the crisis of decline in which we

²³⁹ Langford, 13.

²⁴⁰ David Kinnaman, interview by Carey Nieuwhof, *The Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast Episode 24*, February 23, 2015, <https://careynieuwhof.com/myodcast/>; and see the complete work of David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church... And Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks, 2011).

²⁴¹ Sweet, *Greatest Story Never Told*, 79.

²⁴² Hirsch, *5Q*, 112.

now find ourselves in the ‘West.’”²⁴³ The result, then, is a flawed understanding where now “we have reduced clergy to social workers instead of pastors, and motivational speakers instead of preachers, and marketers instead of evangelists, and ‘cultural architects’ instead of priests, and leaders instead of prophets.”²⁴⁴

The purpose of gathering was never for remaining “simply gathered” but for formation for sending. Specifically, “The early Christians were uncommonly committed to forming the habitus of their members. In doing so they emphasized catechesis—careful formation and teaching—in preparation for baptism.”²⁴⁵ This habitus then led directly to a discipleship rightly lived in personal devotion to God and not simply knowledge of God.²⁴⁶

Proper gathering leads to proper sending. Mortimer Arias argues for “the biblical emphasis on hospitality [a gathered community trait] as a paradigm for missional evangelism [a sent community trait].”²⁴⁷ Arias explains, “Christian mission from its beginning has been centrifugal mission—going from the center to a periphery in the world... the process for carrying out our mission describes the gathering of those participating in discipling, whether new or longstanding, in worship, including baptism and teaching.”²⁴⁸

²⁴³ Dunnill, *St. Mark’s Review*, 30. Parentheses are mine.

²⁴⁴ Sweet, *Greatest Story Never Told*, 79.

²⁴⁵ Kreider, 2.

²⁴⁶ Hirsch, *5Q*, 146.

²⁴⁷ Mortimer Arias, “Centripetal Mission Or Evangelization By Hospitality,” *Missiology* 10, no. 1 (January 1982): 74, ATLA Religion Database.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Dance with the Right Amount of Choreography and Improvisation: Pursue the Healthy Tension Found in the Dual Embrace of Gathered and Sent Community

Many churches choose to operate in an either/or mode and are not experiencing multiplying discipleship. They exist as an attractional, institutional church focused strictly on gathering for themselves, or they operate only to reach out to others in a sent mode, but then often fail to develop a deep habitus of discipleship through learning and growth. Many churches are threatened by a dual expression approach. This dual focus “contrasts sharply with what counts as ‘making disciples’ in many parts of the Christian world today, where some sections focus on ‘outreach’ to nonbelievers while others focus on the ‘care and nurture’ of their members—but perhaps seldom both.”²⁴⁹

Practically, what does this dance between the gathered and sent communities look like in the local church? Ferguson provides a helpful description: “And when they had only laid the foundations of the faith in foreign places, they appointed others as pastors and entrusted them with the nurture of those that had recently been brought in, which they themselves went on again to other countries and nations, with the grace and cooperation of God.”²⁵⁰

When today’s local church can learn to reclaim this dance, a multiplying discipleship will again be found. The revival in the early Methodist movement was able to result in a multiplying discipleship because the “commitment to foundational Christian beliefs deeply informed the practices²⁵¹ in the context in which they found themselves.

²⁴⁹ Dunnill, 30.

²⁵⁰ Ferguson, 44.

²⁵¹ Warner, 29. Parentheses added are mine.

Part of the genius of Wesley was that he was simultaneously intentional (a more gathered community trait) and flexible (a more sent community trait). Heitzenrater observes, “Consequently his method was not a static, settled scheme, but rather an approach to life that grew and developed and changed as he confronted different crises, had further insights, and met new friends.”²⁵² Such an approach is exactly what today’s local church must embrace in an ever-changing world.

What would it look like if every local church learned to dance in a holy tension, the giftings of both the gathered and sent communities, so that the APEST offices could again be lived out to the fullest degree? It would create a new DNA in which a healthy culture of multiplying discipleship could flourish.

Imagine a double helix.²⁵³ One strand holds the attributes of the gathered community, with a focus on shepherding, teaching, and prophesying. The other strand holds descriptors of the sent community, with a focus on apostleship and evangelism. Holding them endlessly in healthy tension, ebbing and flowing, feeding each other, is Jesus. These concepts can be summarized in this way:

| <u>GATHERED (S-P-T)</u> | | <u>SENT (A-E)</u> |
|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Stable | J | Nimble |
| Discipleship Oriented | E | Evangelistically Oriented |
| Resourced | S | Entrepreneurial |
| Voice of the Community | U | Voice in the Community |
| Centralized | S | Decentralized |

²⁵² Heitzenrater, 42.

²⁵³ I love this imagery as given on the cover of Sweet’s book *So Beautiful*.

In this DNA, the gathered church offers its stability, centralized resources, focus on discipleship, and community voice/influence, while the sent church sends new disciples with a focus on evangelism and adventure nimbly into the crevices of society in a decentralized manner. The sent community infuses energy, new life, vitality, and adventure into the gathered community. The gathered community offers resources, nurture, influence, and mature discipleship to the sent community. In this way the gathered and sent communities dance—over and over and over again they dance—leading to more and more multiplying discipleship.

Conclusion

Understanding the original Christian movement and the Wesleyan movement in light of both a formational and generative approach reveals significant reasons to advocate for the validity of such an approach. However, not all will see it as a valid approach.

Proponents of strongly attractional, gathered models of church may seek to discredit a dual-expression approach because they will argue the “sent community” is not a valid form of living as church because it neither looks like nor operates like church on Sunday mornings or within the walls of the established church facility.²⁵⁴ Such individuals may also choose to view gathered and sent communities as being in

²⁵⁴ This perspective is shared based upon feedback heard at my field research setting at the *Leading Edge Gathering*, Atlanta, GA, October 23, 2018. For some, the idea of sent community was completely foreign in their large, gathered, attractional settings of church.

competition with one another, rather than resourcing one another.²⁵⁵ Yet the evidence is clear that the days of “attractional only” churches are waning.²⁵⁶

On the other hand, those with a strong anti-institutional bias will not want to belong to anything with a connection to the gathered church. They believe that by themselves, they and God are “good.” However, the church has always been meant to live in some form of gathered community rather than in isolation.²⁵⁷ Too much isolation results in cultic expressions.

Finally, realists might argue that we live in a world of either/or and that it is unrealistic and naïve to believe that both gathered and sent communities can dance together in holy tension in the same church.²⁵⁸ Could such a mindset be based only on what is observed, or a lack of imagination of what could be? Not only is a both/and approach possible for the local church, it is needed in today’s shifting world. Formation and generation feed seamlessly off each other. There is a holy tension of ebb and flow, along with a simultaneous filling and releasing, as modeled in the Trinitarian relationships.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁵ I have personally heard this idea expressed repeatedly in various presentations I have offered in connection with Fresh Expression U.S. For more information on Fresh Expressions please see: <https://freshexpressionsus.org>.

²⁵⁶ Paul Mueller, “Some Thoughts About The Attractional, Sending, And Engaged Church,” *Missio Apostolica*, 19, no. 2 (November 2011): 123-134, ATLA Religion Database.

²⁵⁷ The works of various scholars have been influential to this approach, including: Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision Of The New Testament* (London: T.&T. Clark, 2003); N.T. Wright, *Paul And The Faithfulness Of God* (London: Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2013); and John Howard Yoder, *The Politics Of Jesus; Behold The Man! Our Victorious Lamb* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972).

²⁵⁸ Such a mindset is prevalent in today’s highly politicized environment.

²⁵⁹ Few examples better demonstrate the analogy of “both/and” and “gathered/sent” than the reality of the Trinity. Space here does not permit an extensive review of the relationships and inner-

Tod Bolsinger asks, “How do we develop leaders for mission in this rapidly changing, unchartered-territory world?”²⁶⁰ New lands require new roads to traverse them. New roads require people who are willing to explore the land and be disciplined enough to find a way forward. Followers of the Way become pioneers.

Today’s followers of the Way in Jesus Christ again have the opportunity to move into unchartered territories through a new type of curriculum that can lead to multiplying discipleship. The fullness of life in the Way is realized not just in the teachings of Jesus, but also in the practice and application of Jesus Himself. Behavior must match knowledge. The road is both known, through information believed, and traveled, through actions taken. In this way, a thriving new life of depth and spiritual health may burst forth through a reclaimed pathway of multiplying discipleship.

working nature of the Trinity. However, the simultaneous out-pouring yet continual inward filling nature of the Trinity provides a beautiful example of the type of dance being lifted up with gathered and sent.

²⁶⁰ Tod Bolsinger, *Canoeing The Mountains: Christian Leadership In Unchartered Territory* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015), 31.

SECTION 4: ARTIFACT DESCRIPTION

The work herein has sought to explore the problem of how local, declining denominational churches, in a massively changing culture, can embrace a culture of multiplying discipleship in their own setting. Tackling such a problem can be described as a wicked one because there are no easy, one-solution answers. Wicked problems require multi-factorial responses in order to discover effective solutions. For local churches, this means engaging in semiotic awareness in order to discover new possibilities. In the case of this artifact, it means a new type of discipleship pathway to foster a culture of multiplying discipleship. Most local churches do not have any type of discipleship pathway or corresponding curriculum in place. Among those local churches that do have a discipleship pathway, the approach in the curriculum is often one-dimensional in the sense that the curriculum is designed primarily to offer information that produces healthy church volunteers. In an adaptively changing world, local churches do not need well-informed volunteers in the church. Local churches need mature disciples who produce other disciples with both a formational and generative focus.

The artifact created here is a new type of curriculum which seeks to foster multiplying discipleship through a simultaneous focus on formation and generation with an APEST DNA. This curriculum offers four distinct steps which can be lived into over the course of one year, at the fastest pace, or over the course of numerous years. Steps one and two focus more heavily on an informational approach, while steps three and four focus more on experience-based approach. The curriculum is set up to cycle on a yearly basis so that individuals can move through it at the “God pace” they need.

The gathered focus of this curriculum (Steps 1 and 2) focuses more heavily upon the formation of those already in the church through a more informational approach. This gathered emphasis utilizes the offices of teaching, shepherding, and prophetic truth in order to be formed in discipleship.

At the same time, this curriculum goes beyond a focus on gathered formation to a focus on sent generation (Steps 3 and 4). By embracing the offices of apostleship and evangelism, local church disciples reclaim what it means to be sent to share the love of Christ in a culture that increasingly does not know such love.

The gathered focus provides necessary formation of disciples. The sent focus provides the generative impetus for that formation to not remain only among church members but shared with those outside the local church. Those reached through the sent focus still need the formation that comes with the gathered focus. In this way, there is a multi-dimensional, dynamic approach. This manner of operation allows the local church to be proactive in its solution to the discipleship challenge it often faces, rather than reactive. Such an approach also provides multiple responses to the wicked problem of a lack of multiplying discipleship, which allows for a much greater chance of success at achieving a true solution at a practical level.

Further, the curriculum created draws directly on two significant movements in history (the early Church movement and the Wesleyan movement) where multiplying discipleship did flourish in cultures that were not familiar with the Gospel. These historical references give both validity and credibility to the curriculum designed in this artifact. By examining how apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers lived

into gathered and sent modes of operation in those times and applying those practices, today's local church can also experience the reality of multiplying discipleship.

Unlike many discipleship curriculums which are "once and done" this curriculum offers an ongoing nature that can truly have a lasting impact in a local church culture. In each of these ways, the curriculum created for this artifact provides a practical, incarnational approach that any local church can utilize.

SECTION 5:
ARTIFACT SPECIFICATION

GOALS and STRATEGIES

****What are the main goals for the Track 02 artifact?**

- To create a curriculum that can help raise up multiplying disciples of Jesus Christ in local church settings
- To offer an alternative/new type of curriculum
- To provide a relevant ministry tool in the midst of the changing culture
- To offer a tool that is both practical and yields results

****How will you test a “beta-version” of the Artifact and assess its success?**

- A beta-version of the Artifact has already been run over the last three years in a local church setting. Success is determined by: number who have shared in the journey, number who have taken a next steps, faithful discernment and living into of call, and the fruits of new ministries launched.

****How will you measure the success of your Artifact?**

- Metrics such as: number of participants, how many are taking next steps, new ministries started, current ministries deepened, measurement of multiplication, awareness of new cultural DNA, growth of understanding of gathered/sent mindset, new relationships created, new conversations introduced, and fruitfulness of ministry will all be explored.

****How will you adequately maintain the finished product over the long haul (of its life)?**

- This artifact is designed to be ongoing. Individuals can choose to move through the curriculum at the speed they wish. This artifact is also designed to be “living” in the sense that it will operate until it no longer serves a helpful purpose or is no longer seeing results. Because this artifact is set up on a repeating basis, it allows for refinement, adjustment, and contextualization with each iteration.

AUDIENCE

****Who is the primary intended audience/user of your completed Artifact?**

- Leaders and laity in local churches who desire to see new and deeper disciples raised up.

****What do you want the audience/user to do/think/experience after encountering your artifact?**

- To have a discipleship mindset shift: To move from church volunteer to local missionary
- To experience hope for discipleship in a changing world
- To come alive in their unique calling to help others live into multiplying discipleship
- To experience a renewed culture of vitality in a declining church

****What task will your audience/user be trying to accomplish when your Artifact might be utilized?**

- Discovering and embracing the unique God calling on their life and then living into it in such a way that discipleship multiplication occurs

ARTIFACT SCOPE AND CONTENT

****Define the scope of your Artifact. What will be the technical and content parameters for your artifact?**

- The scope of this artifact is for any church member in any local church. It is for clergy and local church leaders who are looking for hope and practical steps for renewed discipleship in a changing culture. The artifact will pull both from historical and current sources/authors/scholars who will offer possibilities and challenges to discipleship multiplication in culturally contextualized ways. A new, original Bible study based primarily off of the Gospels and Acts will also be introduced that is designed for exploring a discipleship movement from an early Church perspective.

****How will the content of your Artifact be organized?**

- The content is organized into four steps.
Step 1 = 4 sessions, 1 hour each. Focus is on **CONNECTING** to God and God's people.
Step 2 = 6 sessions, 2 hours each. Focus is on **DISCOVERING** one's call on their life.
Step 3 = 12 sessions, 2 hours each. Focus is on **EMBRACING** one's call on their life.

Step 4 = 3 years, 3 sessions/year, 1 hour 30 minutes each. Focus is on MULTIPLYING by embracing call in such a way as to raise up more multiplying disciples. Individuals must feel called to Step 4 and be invited to participate.

****What special technical or functional requirements are needed?**

- Only that individuals must complete the step prior to the one they wish to engage in. Exceptions can be made to engage in step 2 before step 1 if the pastor or leader of Disciple's Journey feels this would be a good step for the individual. Individuals who desire to move to Step 4 and be approved by the local leader.

BUDGET

****What is the entire budget (line-item) for the Artifact?**

- Time is the biggest cost, to organize and implement into the life of the church. Cost does not exceed \$500 in a year.
- Cost:
 - Copies—\$150
 - Books—\$150
 - Food—\$200

****What hardware and software may be required to complete the Artifact?**

- No specific hardware or software is needed. A working computer with PowerPoint capability is ideal.

****Outsourcing Fees?**

- None if volunteers or office staff assemble notebooks and order materials.

****Ongoing personnel/administrative support costs?**

- Ideally, one person to keep track of who has completed each step, organize correspondence with participants, organize invites to next step, and roll out communication for upcoming steps.
- The leader will need to do weekly prep to be ready to present/lead.

PROMOTION

****How will you market or make available your Artifact to your intended audience/users?**

- Local Church: Utilize all church communication tools to invite individuals to participate in the curriculum.
- Abroad: I am part of the United Methodist Church, which is highly connectional in nature. I know a number of bishops and congregational development leaders in various conferences. Many have already indicated an interest in this type of resource. I also know various publishers and marketers who would be interested in offering this type of resource. I serve on the Fresh Expressions U.S. national team. There is interest at that level for this type of resource. I would also utilize social media connections.

****What is your overall marketing strategy?**

- To utilize a MACRO approach (be in touch with publishers, marketers, conference leaders, judicatory leaders), and a MICRO approach (social

media, personal connections, and many local churches that I have ties with to introduce them to this resource). This is the same approach taken at the local church level.

STANDARDS OF PUBLICATION

****What are the “standards of publication” particular to the chosen media genre?**

- TBD

****What is the rationale for your choices?**

- To allow as many as possible to share in the resource of this artifact.

ACTION PLAN

The components for this Track 02 artifact have already been identified and completed. Needed technical skills are already present and a timeline has already been developed and completed.

SECTION 6: POSTSCRIPT

This dissertation process has been an enlightening one, leading to some unexpected and exciting discoveries. The genesis of this dissertation was to explore new possibilities for discipleship in a changing world. Specifically, how might discipleship look when combining a spirit of experimentation with historical and scholarly input? The results of this exploration have provided clues for a practitioner-based approach for creating a culture of multiplying discipleship.

One of the original goals was to explore different time periods in history where there were multiplying movements occurring in cultures that did not know the Gospel. The hope was to see if there were common practices in those different time periods which might be applied today. The presence of both formative (teaching) and generative (practices) elements were discovered that could be summarized in “curriculum-esque” ways. Additionally, it was discovered that the application of one framework (such as the APEST model) on another (such historical time periods) could be helpful in making new discoveries.

Another helpful development was the application of cross-disciplinary pursuits. For example, when applying something such as the concept of a wicked problem (a sociological problem) to the theological pursuit of discipleship, there were suddenly new possibilities to explore. The new insight that the application of a wicked problem approach to multiplying discipleship provided was to utilize a multi-dimensional solution. With such an approach, the development of multiplying disciples might occur not just through information, but rather through informational and experiential practices resulting in generative formation. The wicked problem application also led to the insight

that in a postmodern world there is not just one audience group to address, but rather many all at the same time. Today, in one church, there may exist those familiar with the Gospel, those not familiar at all with the Gospel, and everyone on the spectrum in between.

To be more specific, the wicked solution to the wicked problem in this instance was to apply not just a one-dimensional response of formal sharing in the discipleship process, but rather a dynamic two-dimensional proposal of formal and informal sharing in the discipleship process. Formal sharing focuses primarily upon information dissemination as the primary mode of learning. Informal sharing includes practices beyond receiving information such as modeling, apprenticeship, sharing the faith, service, exploration, experimentation, and concrete deeds. Both formal and informal components are needed and of value. The problem is that the majority of discipleship pathways that exist focus only on formal learning the exclusion of a combination of formal and informal learning together. Yet Jesus clearly modeled both.

In examining the attached artifact, it can be observed that steps one and two generally focus more on the formal side of discipleship. There is a lot of information being shared in these steps. In this way these first two steps are not that different from many other discipleship pathways used. The wicked solution can be noted more in steps three and four of this discipleship journey where many more practices and actions steps are implemented. In addition to the practices lifted up these steps take significantly longer to complete than other discipleship pathways often found. This mix of formal and informal, along with the length of time required to complete them, is much more similar

in format to the original catechesis used in the early church which God used to unleash a movement.

A wicked problem requires a wicked solution that, by definition, must involve multiple points of addressing the problem. The proposed artifact takes a significant step in that direction by moving from one mode of formation (formal) to two specific modes leading to generation (formal and informal). At the same time, this artifact offers a unique approach in that the four steps are offered not in a static, programmatic manner, but rather repeatedly over time. This approach allows individuals to move forward as led by the Spirit. One individual may go through steps one through three in a year. Another person may go through the same steps over the course of three years. This approach gives room and space for a dynamic interplay between participants and the Holy Spirit. In these ways, the proposed artifact begins to offer a wicked solution to a very wicked problem.

These realizations are partly what give me hope that the artifact developed for this dissertation can truly be different—and relevant. The realization of the adaptive context we are in led me to not simply pursue other discipleship curriculums out there. So many discipleship pathway models are only built to create more devoted church volunteers through a one-dimensional, “information only” approach. In a time of massive discipleship decline, the church does not need better informed volunteers. It needs missionaries and spiritual entrepreneurs who are properly formed in Christ and able to share that formation in a generative way with new disciples. That is what this artifact seeks to do.

The gains discovered in this dissertation work have been significant. It is easy to think that the current culture is alone in sharing the Gospel in a time when the world did

not know the Gospel. Yet history shows repeated instances where this was also the case. Thus, there is much to be learned from the examination of those times. There is even more to be gained when examining the issues through different frameworks such as the APEST model. Such an approach allowed for a multi-pronged proposal of a gathered (for formational purposes) and sent (for generative purposes) focus, which yielded much more direction for progress than historical study alone would have provided.

As a result of this research, there is much more research I would love to pursue. John Wesley introduced the concept of the Quadrilateral. Wesley believed decisions could be made by appropriately applying reason, experience, tradition, and scripture to any decision, but giving primary importance to scripture. As a result of the research for this dissertation, I would now argue that throughout the ages scripture has faced a primary rival at different times. During the time of Christ, the primary rival was tradition. During the age of the Enlightenment, the primary rival was reason. Today, in a postmodern world where our own experiences are most important, experience is the primary rival. This is one of the reasons I increasingly appreciate the curriculum developed in this artifact. It offers both information (addressing reason) and practices (addressing experience) through a scriptural focus.

Additionally, I was only able to scratch the surface of viewing various historical time periods through the APEST lens. I would love to dig much more deeply into this categorization and explore the full merit of each time period in light of the APEST model. I believe such a study could yield more insights for healthy, multiplying discipleship today.

Finally, the research in this dissertation had me explore the metaphor of “the Way” of Christ more thoroughly. Understanding Jesus as “the Way” is key to living the faith, as it was the primary metaphor of the early church. If there was a way to bring “the Way” to life more fully for the church, I believe it could be a great resource to offer (hopefully that has been started with the current artifact). Sweet suggests that the very idea of “following” Jesus inadvertently suggests space and distance from Jesus. But as I have heard Sweet note, the essence of the Gospel is Christ in us... the hope of glory. The way forward then is not outside of us, but Christ alive in us, right now, living His resurrection life in and through us. Thus, the real curriculum is not a discipleship path “out there” but rather imitating the Christ already in us.

Each of these elements would be ones I would love to explore further as a result of this dissertation work. Hopefully, with time, that is exactly what will happen.

APPENDIX A:

ARTIFACT

Disciple's Journey Overview

PREFACE

The Disciple's Journey Curriculum reviewed herein has been created in response to a specific time and place. The First United Methodist Church of Williamsport, PA has been utilizing this Disciple's Journey Curriculum with its congregants now for three years. Williamsport is a more rural city located in North Central Pennsylvania. It is a small city by most standards (the city proper is around 30,000 residents and the surrounding area includes another 40,000 residents). First United Methodist Church has historically been a vital and successful congregation by any normal church metric measurement. It has been one of the larger churches in its conference for many years (it is currently the largest church in its conference), but has experienced an attendance dip in recent years. First UMC began to discover that what had made it successful in the past was no longer "automatically" the case. Normal attractional elements (excellent worship, strong children and youth programs, strong leadership) no longer equated to continued growth. Simultaneously, it became evident that discipleship increasingly was viewed as optional and even consumeristic in nature. Consumption of Christian teaching was appreciated but resulted in little change or service outside of church life. The height of discipleship expectation was serving extensively within the walls of the established

church facility or church programs. Little effort was being given to discipleship that also focused on connecting with non-believers and helping them grow in Christian formation.

In searching for “answers,” the impetus for Disciple’s Journey was created when two items happened at almost the exact same time. The first was when an “excellent” church member asked this question: “Is this all there is to Christian discipleship?” The member who asked this question was in church nearly every Sunday, shared regularly in a small group, shared in church mission experiences, loved First UMC, and enjoyed church Bible studies. He was involved as much as he could be in what the church offered, and yet he felt like a glorified church volunteer. He wondered where the focus was for reaching new people, growing deeper in faith in a changing world, learning how to do ministry in new and relevant ways, and connecting with increasingly unchurched people in our community. This one question of “Is this all there is to Christian discipleship?” spurred an exploration to discover more.

At the same time, a seminary student asked if First UMC could be used as a case study for a finals project in a church planting class. The question of exploration was: What was the best way for an established church to multiply? Increase attractational growth to the point of needing to offer more services? Go multi-site? Seek to plant separate church plants? From this exploration a new concept emerged: In a more rural area where the culture was changing so significantly, what if the way to reach 1000 people was not in one, large, “mega-church-like” setting, but rather in 100 settings with 10 people each? Might it be possible to launch many micro-communities, who would network together through the same church so that discipleship could occur with a more

missional posture, outside of church walls, connecting with those who would never enter a church facility on their own?

These two elements served as the genesis for exploring and creating a Disciple's Journey curriculum. This is a curriculum designed to "work" in adaptively changing world for churches who no longer experience growth through strictly attractional means. The focus of Disciple's Journey is quality over quantity. It is believed that one committed disciple can help facilitate multiplying discipleship more than 100 consumeristic disciples. As a result, Disciple's Journey intentionally lifts up a high level of expectation. However, participants can move at the pace they are comfortable with and as God leads them. In this way, Disciple's Journey allows for a more customized approach for individuals. At the same time, it is designed to be repeated year after year so that individuals who may not take a step in one year, may take it the next year when they are ready.

Such an approach both allows individuals to do deep but also changes the culture of the entire church. It allows individuals to be vitalized in their faith journey resulting in multiplying discipleship in their lives, but also revitalizes the established church towards multiplying discipleship as the culture changes with each cycle of Disciple's Journey.

Disciple's Journey is designed like funnel. The most amount of people will go through Steps 1 and 2... with increasingly few in Steps 3 and 4. This format allows individuals to go as deep as God may lead them. Again, the goal is quality over quantity. To date, over 120 individuals have shared in Disciple's Journey Step 1 during the last three years, 111 have taken DJ2, 47 have taken DJ3, and 9 have done DJ4 (but year 3 for DJ4 has not yet occurred).

The Disciple's Journey process should not be done in isolation. Teams work best to make it happen. In particular, the Executive Pastor at First United Methodist Church, Janet Durrwachter, has been instrumental in the development of the Disciple's Journey process, especially with the formation of the various Bible studies. Also, Debbie Grove, a DJ 2 graduate herself, has served as the primary administrator of materials for participants.

The Disciple's Journey process curriculum created here can be used in any local church setting, regardless of size. Even if a handful of individuals complete Steps 1 and 2 and only 1 or 2 complete steps 3 and 4 the first time through, the potential for and impact of multiplying discipleship is great for both the individuals involved and the culture of which they are a part.



Disciple's Journey is a series of four learning experiences through which participants will both *learn about and participate in* the opportunity to *become multiplying-disciples for the Kingdom of God* in a local church setting.

Goal: *Create Multiplying-disciples of Jesus Christ*

Objective: To create multiplying-disciples in a local church context resulting in a dual expression of church that includes both Gathered Community and Sent Community.

Structure/Plan

Step 1: Connect God's People, 4 sessions, 1 hour each

Disciple's Journey Step 1 offers the opportunity to learn about the local church context of which it is a part and to build connections with the local Church family. Here the "gathered community and sent Community" DNA is introduced.

Step 2: Discover God's Call, 6 sessions, 2 hours each

Disciple's Journey Step 2 is a pathway to discover our spiritual gifts and talents and to explore ways we might use these to extend God's Kingdom. Specifically discipleship is explored in the context of the Kingdom of God in general, in the local church setting, and what it means for the individual.

Step 3: Embrace God's Call, 12 sessions, 2 hours each

Disciple's Journey Step 3 will delve more deeply into God's Call on our life and by exploring both practices and an APEST understanding that leads to becoming multiplying-disciples within the "gathered community and the sent community."

Step 4: Multiply Disciples, 3 sessions per year for 3 years, 1 hour 30 minutes each

Disciple's Journey Step 4 will provide an individualized apprenticeship opportunity (built on Calling, gifts and talents) in which multiplication is experienced with a trusted leader.

Disciple's Journey Step 1: "Connect God's People"

Goal: *Develop connections with God's people.*

Objective: At the conclusion of Step 1 participants may choose to connect fully (through membership) in a local church setting.

Content

Session 1: Who is God...to you?

Gain a deeper more personal understanding of who/what God is in our lives.

Session 2: Local Church Vision

Explore and understand church-based values and how they guide the Vision.

Session 3: Acts 2

Learn how the local church models beliefs/actions based on Acts 2.

Session 4: A dual expression church.

Discover the multiple ways in which the local church can be internally connected as a "gathered community" and externally connected as a "sent community."

Disciple's Journey Step 2: "Discover God's Call"

Goal: *Discover our gifts and God's unique Call on our life as a multiplying disciple.*

Objective: Participants learn more about how to discover and begin to live into their call.

Content

Session 1: What is the church?

Discover how we define "church" and understand the challenges that traditional churches are facing.

Session 2: What is the impact the local church can make?

Identify how individuals, as a church of multiplying-disciples, can make an impact through the ministries and lives in the church community.

Session 3: Your role in God's church

Learn/explore the gifts and talents God has given you and how to best use these to promote God's church.

Session 4: What does it mean to be a mature disciple?

Clarify and understand the characteristics that make someone a mature disciple.

Session 5: What does it mean to be a multiplying disciple?

Learn how Jesus developed multiplying disciples and explore ways we can become multiplying disciples for God's holy kingdom.

Session 6: Discerning God's Call in my life

Understanding the gifts and talents God has given us, learn how we can recognize what God is Calling us to do.

Disciple's Journey Step 3: "Embrace God's Call"

Goal: *Embrace God's Call as a leader.*

Objective: Participants will discover and commit to practices and experiences of a multiplying-disciple that tap into their unique gifts and talents.

Content

Session 1: Why Multiplication

Explore why it is essential for the church to be a multiplying church in our world.

Session 2: Creating a Disciple-making Culture

Learn how we can become the DNA of a disciple-making church and why this is needed in our culture.

Session 3: Embracing our Call to make disciples

Meet with our local church ministry leaders to discover how one's callings, talents and gifts can support the work in building multiplying-disciples.

Session 4: Disciples-makers are part of empowering systems

With the goal of expanding God's Kingdom, disciple-makers are crucial in guiding/empowering others to see/find/join God who is alive in our world.

Session 5: Embracing one's Call to make disciples with other ministry leaders, part 2

Continue discussions from Session 3.

Session 6: Disciple-makers become leaders of leaders

Explore and understand how disciple-makers generate more leaders for building God's Kingdom among our "gathered and sent" church communities.

Session 7: Disciple-makers live in an APEST atmosphere

Learn about APEST (apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, teacher) and how this calling will help one become a disciple-maker.

Session 8: Disciple-makers embrace five necessary shifts

To move from being a disciple to being a disciple-maker in a multiplying church, one must understand the five core paradigm shifts that will need to be made.

Session 9: Disciple-makers value being a hero-maker

Multiplication is crucial to building God's Kingdom and one of the best tools is learning to be a hero-maker, moving from a hero platform to encouraging others to step on the platform to become the heroes.

Session 10: Disciple-makers recognize they are part of a holy movement

As a disciple-maker, explore how God is calling one to partner with God, and carry the DNA of God's movement to impact the lives of many.

Session 11: Discernment of one's place in God's plan

After prayer, discussion, learning about the local church, focus will be given to identifying how God is calling one to use their gifts and talents to expand God's Kingdom.

Session 12: Embracing the Call as disciple-makers and multiplication DNA

Begin to build a plan to answer God's call to be a disciple-maker, creating more disciples.

Disciple's Journey Step 4: "Multiply Disciples"

Goal: Empower and send out leaders who are equipped to be Multiplying-disciples.

Objectives: Participants will partner with ministry leaders for mentoring purposes to lead as Disciple-makers. Participants will be released and commissioned to influence transformational movement in the kingdom of God that raises up other multiplying disciples.

Content

Session 1: Orientation and match with mentoring ministry leader

Learn the expectations for next steps and begin apprenticeship with a ministry leader.

Session 2: Check-in with apprenticeship learning

Meet to share how one is growing as a disciple-maker through the apprenticeship and discover support for the journey.

Session 3: Equipping with further tools and resources

Further tools and resources will be reviewed and shared with individuals as they continue to foster multiplying discipleship in specified contexts.

Length: Minimum three-year apprenticeship.

Disciple's Journey Step 1

Disciple's Journey is a series of four learning experiences through which participants will both *learn about and participate in* the opportunity to *become multiplying-disciples for the Kingdom of God* in a local church setting.

Goal: *Create Multiplying-disciples of Jesus Christ*

Objective: To create multiplying-disciples in a local church context resulting in a dual expression of church that includes both Gathered Community and Sent Community.

Learning Experience STEP 1: Connect with God's People at First Church²⁶¹

(4 Sessions)

Disciple's Journey Step 1 offers the opportunity to learn about the local church context of which it is a part and to build connections with the local church family. Here the concept of "gathered and sent community" DNA is introduced.

Many churches have membership classes. Step 1 of a Disciple's Journey either serves as or replaces that class/process. Each session is roughly an hour. Adjust time needs around each element depending on how many individuals are participating in step 1.

²⁶¹For purposes of illustration, examples from the context of "First Church" will be given. However, please insert the corresponding and appropriate information/documentation from your local context and ministry setting.

SESSION 1 OF STEP 1

Discipleship in the Context of God's Church

***Prep Work: Prepare notebooks for each participant with relevant information you want to share (vision statements, mission statements, definitions, church structure, etc.)*

WELCOME (5 minutes)

**Introduce the concept of: Steps on a journey. It is possible to proceed to Step 4 over time. Today begins Step 1.

**The purpose of Disciple's Journey Step 1 is to help you CONNECT

DEVOTIONAL (5 minutes)

**Scripture Reflection and Devotion on Romans 12:1-2²⁶² as well as Matthew 28:16-20.

Note: The term "disciple" as a verb is used in only a few places in the New Testament (see Matthew 13:52, Matthew 27:57, and Acts 14:21). A shift occurs from discipleship as exclusively associated with the inner group of 12 men who left all to follow Jesus to being open to people of all nations. People are not called to become simply individual believers but are to be enlisted as disciples with Christian community.

²⁶² Or the primary scripture related to your church's vision/mission.

Further, the goal is to experience the reception of the Christian message in faith but as actualized in their lives. Understand discipleship for a Jesus follower is not optional.

- What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ?
- What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus in our context?
- What did Jesus mean by making disciples of all nations? What is our role to play? How do we join this multiplying movement?

****Opening Prayer:**

“Lord, thank you for this opportunity to connect with you and each other in this place. Thank you for the invitation to join with you in sharing your love in this world. God, when you came to this earth you partnered with ordinary people as your disciples. You invited fishermen and tax collectors. You invited people of all personality types. You invited “everyday people” to join with you for holy purposes. Lord, you do the same thing now. So prepare us to journey now with you as your disciples so that we too may be part of your multiplying movement in this day and age in which we live. Amen.”

SELF INTRODUCTIONS (10 Minutes)

Go around and let everyone share their name and one of the things they like to do in their free time.

EXPLORING GOD AND DISCIPLESHIP (10 Minutes)

****Break into pairs. Share your top 3 words about who God is to you and why you picked those words:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

****Share responses with the large group.**

Disciples of Jesus:²⁶³

****Share in the Nature of God**

Loving: John 3:16

Omnipotent: Genesis 1

Merciful: Luke 6:36

Holy: Leviticus 11:44

Trinitarian: Matthew 28:19

Grace-filled: Ephesians 2:8-9

SHARE WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN YOUR CONTEXT (10 Minutes)

Grace is God's gift to us: Consider the metaphor of a house.

Prevenient grace can be thought of as the "porch" of grace. God takes the initiative in relating to humanity. We do not have to beg and plead for God's love and

²⁶³ Contextualize the following to your Church setting and doctrine.

grace. God actively seeks us! God has the welcome mat out but we have not yet responded in faith.

Justifying grace recognizes that Jesus is the one who saves individuals from sin. Justifying grace may be thought of as the “door” of grace. Sin is recognized as the problem. Accepting Jesus who sacrificed Himself on the cross is the solution. Romans 5:8 lays this concept out: “But God proves God’s love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” God has acted in Jesus Christ and humans need only respond in faith by repenting and placing trust in Christ alone.

Sanctifying grace recognizes that salvation is not a one-time only event in our lives. Salvation in Christ is an ongoing experience of living in God’s grace and growing more like Christ. This form of grace may be thought of as the “house” of grace. In this house we live into all of God’s means for us as maturing disciples of Jesus.

****Live in light of the Bible.**

- God’s living word among us.
- Reference the authority of scripture.
- Review the canonization process
- Scripture is seen as primary and authoritative. Scripture does not exist in a vacuum. Scripture interacts with reason, experience, and tradition to give us guidance and direction for our lives.

****Recognize the full Gospel:**

The gospel is a story of redemption

Creation

Fall

Redemption

Restoration

It is easy to focus only on “fall” (humanity’s sin) and redemption (Jesus dying on the cross), but God invites us to partner with God for the flourishing of creation and ultimate restoration of God’s creation.

****We were made to worship: John 4:24**

CONTEXTUALIZATION (10 Minutes)

***Share more about your local worshiping opportunities. Highlight why you do what you do, the meaning behind it, etc.*

At First Church this includes the recognition that First Church is one church with dual expressions of community. The **GATHERED** community is the established/inherited form of church and includes current Sunday morning worship experiences and most ministries (i.e. children’s ministry, youth ministry, life group ministry, outreach ministry, etc.). The **SENT** community is the pioneering/Acts Network form of church and is directed toward those who are unchurched and are not yet involved in the Gathered community. The primary emphasis for the Gathered community is to grow disciples by inviting people to join us. The primary emphasis for the Sent Community is to make new disciples by joining them. Only as gathered and sent can First

Church live into being the full church God intends. First Church is one church in two different forms.

GATHERED AND SENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORSHIP

Corporate worship opportunities at First Church

- 8:00AM Traditional First Evangelical Center (FEC)
- 9:30AM Blended First Evangelical Center (FEC)
- 11:00AM Modern Christian Life Center (CLC)
- 4:30PM Celebrate Recovery Fellowship Hall of FEC
- 5:00PM Wednesdays First Night free meal with music and five-minute message in CLC followed by children and student ministries
- Online worship of 9:30AM and 11:00AM services
- Acts Network Experiences. These are fresh expressions of worship occurring outside of Sunday morning, and outside of regular church sanctuary space—generally meeting in third space places.

TIME FOR QUESTIONS (5 Minutes)

PREVIEW FOR NEXT WEEK (5 Minutes)

Next week: We will focus more on the specific vision and purpose of First Church

Our vision is: “Transformation in Christ” (Romans 12:1-2)

Our mission is to: “Create multiplying disciples of Jesus by living into a gathered and sent expression of church” (Acts 1:8)

With your permission, we’ll take your pictures next week so that we can help our staff get to know you and so that we can be praying for you by name and face.

**Offer closing prayer of thanks for this group and the chance to become multiplying disciples of Jesus Christ as we partner with God.

SESSION 2 OF STEP 1**Discipleship in the Local Church Context******Prep Work:**

Bring handouts for anything you want to add to the participants' notebooks

Be prepared to take pictures of individuals

WELCOME (10 Minutes)

****With permission, take each person's picture as they arrive**

**** Getting to know each other**

Give your name and share who invited you to First Church, or how is it that you first came here?

Go around once more and share, what has kept you at First Church? Why are you taking Step 1?

****Prayer**

“Lord, thank you for each person here. Thank you for the gifts, abilities, passions, and interests that each one has. Lord, you invite us to live as your disciples right here in Williamsport, PA and through First Church. We invite your Holy Spirit among us tonight as we learn more about the context of this part of your church and what it means to live as your disciples. Amen.”

Share on the Vision of First Church (20-30 minutes)

This is the place to dig in and share about the heartbeat of the church. This is the place to inspire and invite folks to live as disciples in your context. Share relevant information about what makes your church unique, why it is relevant, and how it is making a difference in the lives of people. What would the community be missing if your church was not there? Make this time personal.

At First Church:

Vision: Transformation in Christ (Romans 12:2).

Share how Christ has changed and transformed lives not only in the Gospels but through your local church. Give examples of how primary ministries are touching lives. Share how financial support is used to transform lives. Make it clear that the “North Star” that guides all decisions at the church is this vision. If something is not going to foster transformation in Christ it will not be pursued at First Church.

What we do (the mission):

Create multiplying disciples of Jesus by living into a gathered and sent expression of church (Acts 1:8).

Recall from session 1, step 1:

At First Church this includes the recognition that First Church is one church with dual expressions of community. The gathered community is the established/inherited

form of church and includes current Sunday morning worship experiences and most ministries (i.e. children's ministry, youth ministry, life group ministry, outreach ministry, etc.). The Sent community is the pioneering/Acts Network form of church and is directed toward those who are unchurched and are not yet involved in the Gathered community. The primary emphasis for the Gathered community is to grow disciples by inviting people to join us. The primary emphasis for the Sent Community is to make new disciples by joining them. Only as gathered and sent can First Church live into being the full church God intends. First Church is one church in two different forms.

It is important to repeat this concept. This idea of "gathered and sent" is unique. People may be familiar with the idea of the gathered church, but they will not be familiar with the sent expression of church. The blending of the two is part of what makes First Church unique. Both forms of church are needed. Both make the other better. Both are of equal value.

Two key images to lift up:

- 1) A DNA double helix. Two strands of church (the gathered and sent forms of church) united and held together by the love of Christ.
- 2) A bridge. Bridges can only exist because of proper tension. Too much tension makes a bridge snap. Too little tension does not create a way across a chasm. But the right tension creates a new way forward. The same is true with the embracing of the gathered and sent forms of church.

Who We Are:

This is the opportunity to point out the unique characteristics of your church.

What are the “personality traits” that are both part of your history as well as who you want to continue to be? No church can be all things to all people. So what are the unique traits that most define who your church is and lifts up your personality that you would be excited to share with others?

At First Church the 3 primary personality traits that describe who we have been, who we are, and who we aspire to be include:

- 1) **Rugged Disciples** (Matthew 10:38): First Church has a long history of people doing whatever it takes to share the Gospel, including sacrificial giving (facilities were paid off during the Great Depression and new facilities were built in recent decades for the sake of the community) and deep commitment to personal disciplines. First church does not seek to be the “coolest” church around. It seeks to go deep in loving and serving.
- 2) **Beautifully Diverse** (Galatians 3:28): First Church has a long history of reaching across socio-economic divides, age barriers, racial barriers, gender barriers, etc. The church desires to continue to grow into and embrace this diversity. First Church believes the Gospel is reflected best when different people can unite in the common love of Christ.
- 3) **Humbly Powerful** (Ephesians 3:16): First Church recognizes that all good things that happen in and for God’s Kingdom are a result of God’s power, not

the abilities of individuals in the church. Therefore, First Church seeks to humbly pray and rely on God in order to see powerful results.

****Invite questions, comments, and feedback on the vision shared. Make sure people especially understand the concept of “Gathered and Sent.”**

HOW HAS GOD EQUIPPED YOU? (10 Minutes)

In light of living as a multiplying disciple in this context, consider how God has equipped you to live and serve.

****God’s Word teaches us to serve and the Holy Spirit equips us to serve.**

In 2’s or 3’s, share together your thoughts on **Romans 12:3-13**: ³ *For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.* ⁴ *For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,* ⁵ *so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.* ⁶ *We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your^[a] faith;* ⁷ *if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach;* ⁸ *if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,^[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.* *Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.* ¹⁰ *Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one*

another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

- What does this passage tell us about our attitudes in serving?
- What spiritual gifts do you think God has blessed you with?
- What equips us to serve?
- How do you see God's heart in this passage?
- How might God be asking you to respond to God's Word seen in this scripture passage?

PRIMARY MINISTRY REVIEW (10 MINUTES)

Review the primary ministries occurring and the staff who lead them:

First Church has the following primary ministry areas: These include: Acts Network (focus on "Sent"), Care ministries, Children's Ministry, VBS, College Ministry, Disciple's Journey, First Night, First Nursery School, FUSE Student ministry, Life Groups, Transform Mission Experience, Worship

REVIEW AND PREVIEW (5 Minutes)

****Based on your gifts/passions, what are some ministries you could CONNECT with to serve Christ?**

****Prayer focus for this week: How is God calling and equipping me to serve?**

****Preview for Next week: Growing deeper in discipleship through deeper community**

**Share Prayer concerns: How can we be in prayer for one another this week?

Closing Prayer: “Lord, thank you for the gifts and abilities you have given me. Help to realize how I can best leverage my passions, gifts, and abilities for you. Help me to realize where I can connect and serve to make the biggest different for you. Thank you that you give all of us different gifts and abilities to utilize for your Kingdom. Amen.”

SESSION 3 OF STEP 1**Steps to Foster Connection for Personal Discipleship**

Prep Work: Anything you may want to participant notebooks

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (10 Minutes)

“Lord we thank you for this day. We thank you for calling us as disciples in your church which you have used throughout time and history since the time of Jesus. We thank you for calling us as disciples here at First Church. We pray tonight you will teach and challenge us more on how we can foster discipleship in our own personal lives. Lord, use this church for holy and transformational purposes in your Kingdom... and use us however you wish in accordance with your will. Amen.”

**Share names and something fun for group to offer: Perhaps: “If you were an animal, which one would you be and why? Or favorite food? Or favorite place you have visited our would like to visit.”

**Quick Recap from last week:

- Vision of First Church
- What we Do
- Who We Are

STEPS TO GROW DEEPER IN PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP (10 Minutes)

****Review:** 1 Corinthians 12 (whole chapter)

- What stuck out to you in this passage?
- Realize that the body of Christ has many parts. All are needed. All are important.
- As you think about your gifts and passions, which would be the top 3 that you would lift up?

****Give everyone time to share 3 of their top gifts/abilities/passions (individuals can self-identify on these items)**

****Another way we connect and grow deeper in our own personal discipleship is through life groups.**

Explain life groups that exist at the church, review the list of available life groups, review why they are important, and how to get connected in them.

INVITATION TO FULL DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH MEMBERSHIP

(30 Minutes)

Yet another way to grow deeper in discipleship through connection is making a formal covenant commitment with your local church by joining as a member and a disciple.

Discipleship/Membership in a local church connection means:

- Participation rather than privilege

- A covenant with God
- A commitment to live out discipleship in the local church that you belong through your:
 - 1) Prayers
 - 2) Presence
 - 3) Gifts
 - 4) Service
 - 5) Witness

**Listen to Acts 2:1-4 and Acts 2:36-47

Acts 2:1-4

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues^a as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:36-47

³⁶“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

³⁷When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

³⁸Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

⁴⁰With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” ⁴¹Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

In groups of 2 or 3 discuss: Where in these verses do you hear aspects of:

- Repentance?
- Worship (being present)?
- Prayer?
- Witness?
- Breaking bread together? (Presence vow)
- Giving of resources?

Where in these verses do you notice aspects of being both Gathered and Sent?

Hint: Examine verse 46: Individuals met in the temple area (a more gathered space location) and in homes (a more sent location).

Further Highlight: Discuss how the covenant vows made to join the local church in the Gathered setting can also be described also as “tethers” that connect church expressions in the Sent part of the church. Point out that worship, prayer, sharing in witness, serving, and giving resources in the fresh expressions of worship in the sent community keep those communities tethered and connected to the Gathered setting (i.e. worship in the Sent communities can share the same themes or messages as the Gathered community, serving can be in connection with where the Gathered community is already serving in the wider community, finances can be offered to the church just as the Gathered community receives gifts, etc.).

CLOSING REFLECTION (5 Minutes)

The Apostle’s Creed is a reminder of the unity that Disciples of Jesus share everywhere. It connects disciples in belief.

Share together the words of the Apostle’s Creed:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth;
 And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the Virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, dead, and buried;
 He descended into hell.
 The third day he rose from the dead;
 he ascended into heaven,
 and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
 from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
 I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy catholic church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and the life everlasting. Amen.

PREVIEW (5 Minutes)

**For Homework complete and bring back the following forms:

- My Next Step
- Updated Biographical and Contact Information

SESSION 4 OF STEP 1**Practicing Discipleship**

Prep Work: Anything that may need added to participant notebooks. Make sure a next step form is completed by the end of this session Joining in full discipleship? Joining a life group? Moving on to Disciple's Journey Step 2? Choosing to serve in a new way? Etc.)

WELCOME (10 Minutes)****Opening Prayer:**

“Lord, thank you for the chance to connect with you and each other in this first step of Disciple’s Journey. As we near the end of this step, help us to discern our next step. Lord, are you leading us to take a more formal step of commitment and connection by making a covenant in this part of your church? Are you leading us to plan on taking step 2? Where are you leading us to use our gifts and passions in ministry for your honor? Lord, help us to be open to listen to and be led by your Holy Spirit.... Lead us and guide us now... Amen.”

****Share names once more and offer whatever “prompt” not used in session #3 (favorite destination spot either already visited or desire to visit, dream job, favorite sports team or artist, one thing on my bucket list is...etc.).**

REVIEW (5 Minutes)

Review and Remind: Step 1 is about connecting with God and God's people here at First Church. Remember, First Church is part of a larger connection, in this case the United Methodist Church (or whatever denominational/judicatory/affiliation connection a local church may have.

**Review basics of the local church connection to the wider church affiliation.

**In the case of the United Methodist Church a local church is part of a district, which is part of a local conference, which is part of a jurisdiction, which is part of the entire world-wide church.

CONNECTING PRACTICES (15 Minutes)

Part of connecting with other disciples of Jesus involve sharing in similar practices.

Consider the following practices. Which do you feel you need to explore most? Why?

- Serving
- Giving
- Fasting
- Journaling
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Other?

**Part of connecting with Jesus followers world-wide involves sharing in Holy Sacraments.

Sacraments involve: a holy means of connecting with God and with the Body of Christ.

A Simple definition of a sacrament is: An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace

In the protestant tradition two sacraments are shared.

1) Baptism (specify to your setting)

Declares:

You are God's

You are part of God's people

You have a future

Review methods of Baptism

Review what it means

2) Communion (specify to your setting)

Involves:

Confession and declaration of pardon

Acknowledging our need

Accepting God's authority and willingness to forgive

Great Thanksgiving (Eucharist)

Remembering Christ's sacrifice on the cross

Being thankful to be a people together with purpose

Giving the bread and cup

The presence of Christ

Connected with every believer now or who has gone before

Reconciled with God

Sent out to the world with a ministry of reconciliation

Our future; the heavenly banquet table

Involves sharing in bread and cup... either by means of

intinction of entire body sharing in bread at once and

sharing with cup at once

**Share in communion with the group

**The practices and sacraments of baptism and communion also act as tethers between the Gathered and Sent communities.

WHAT IS NEXT? (15 Minutes)

As you have prayed and discerned through this first step of Disciple's Journey, what have you determined is your possible next step?

Let individuals share what they have discerned

QUESTIONS/REFLECTIONS (10 Minutes)

Give time for questions and reflections on anything covered in Step 1 of a Disciple's Journey.

CLOSING (5 Minutes)

**Thank everyone for participating. Encourage folks to join the church in formal discipleship/membership and to go on to Step 2, but do not force.

**As a reminder of the connection shared with other disciples of Jesus, share together in the Lord's Prayer.

**Before people leave, please complete and turn in an evaluation form and "Next Step" sheet

DISCIPLE'S JOURNEY STEP 2

Disciple's Journey is a series of four learning experiences through which participants will both *learn about and participate in* the opportunity to *become multiplying-disciples for the Kingdom of God* in a local church setting.

Goal: *Create Multiplying-disciples of Jesus Christ*

Objective: To create multiplying-disciples in a local church context resulting in a dual expression of church that includes both Gathered Community and Sent Community.

Step 2: Discover God's Unique Calling on Your Life (6 sessions)

Disciple's Journey Step 2 is a pathway to discover our spiritual gifts and talents and to explore ways we might use these gifts to extend God's Kingdom. Specifically, discipleship is explored in the context of the Kingdom of God, in the local church setting, and what it means for the individual to live out their calling as a multiplying disciple.

Step 2 consists of 6 sessions and each session is 2 hours in length.

Prerequisite:

- Completion of Disciple's Journey Step 1
- Permission from local pastor

SESSION 1 OF STEP 2

Discipleship in God's One Church

Participant Preparation for Session 1:

- *Read chapter pages 1-8 of "The Inevitable" by Kelly*
- *Read pages 24-35 of "Canoeing the Mountains" by Bolsinger.*
- *Fill out the "Starting Point" worksheet and bring to next session*
- *Start reading Gospel of Luke, Chapter 1-4. Pace yourself to complete by end of DJ2.*
- *Also read Matthew 16:13-20 and Acts 2:1-41*
- *Read Nieuwhof: "3 Truths About the Accelerated Pace of Change and Leadership"*
- *Read Nieuwhof: "5 Disruptive Church Trends That Will Rule 2019"*

Leader Preparation for Session 1:

- *Except for the Gospel reading, the above materials will be distributed in a pre-made binder of information*

***Helpful Hints:*

- *A tool such as Planning Center can make the creation of agendas and time management much easier*
- *Consider using PowerPoint to highlight important concepts*
- *Aim to have TWO co-leaders lead the sessions if possible*

***Have a computer and screen set up if using PowerPoint*

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (25 Minutes)

Everyone go around and share name and WHY here... be specific. What prompted you to take this step? If you were invited, why did you accept the invitation?

****SETTING THE STAGE**

Ultimately, we believe God's church was always intended to be "more" than a consumer of religious goods. Disciples of Jesus Christ were always intended to partner with God in the world for the flourish of God's love and grace. In this way, disciples of Jesus are meant to be multiplying disciples. Each person has a calling. Each person has a way to join with God as a multiplying disciple. Session two is about discovering and unpacking that call.

This is step 2 in this journey. At this stage we anticipate Discovering God's PATH for our lives. We will get a sense of the call we have on our lives. We will look at what it means to be a disciple in the context of God's Church (history and world wide) and work down to what it means to be a disciple in at this time in history at this location.

We will explore spiritual gifts and passions. Top strengths and desires. And learn more about what Jesus meant by living as disciples.

Overview of Session 2:

Session1 = Discipleship in the context of God's catholic church
 Sessions 2-3 = Discipleship in the context of the local church
 Sessions 4-6 = Exploring how each disciple is wired in their calling

Disciple's Journey as a whole (steps 1-4) helps all of the church align around becoming multiplying disciples of Jesus Christ

How is Disciple's Journey different than other discipleship pathways?

Steps 1 and 2 are more information driven with some experiences included
 Steps 3 and 4 are more experience driven with some information included
 Disciple's Journey incorporates formal and informal discipleship elements
 Disciple's Journey takes a multi-layered approach
 Disciple's Journey is an attempt to move beyond good church volunteers
 Disciple's Journey is ultimately about multiplication, not addition
 Disciple's Journey responds to the context of the day we are in
 Disciple's Journey is not a magic bullet—but it will give us tools to grow
 as disciples of Jesus.
 Disciple's Journey is intended to start a movement

The church was God's idea not ours. It is God's plan A for the world to share Jesus. There is no plan B. We cannot be disciples OUTSIDE of understanding this context.

BIBLE STUDY (30 Minutes)

“What Is The Church?”

Matthew 16:13-20 and Acts 2:1-41

Explore what God intended with and for the church as the Body of Christ.

BREAK (10 Minutes): *Have water bottles and light snacks on hand for participants for all breaks at each session*

DISCUSSION: HOW IS THE WORLD CHANGING? (30 Minutes)

***See Suggested PowerPoints or place information below in PowerPoint form*

Acts 2:42-47

- Peter Drucker quote on adaptive shift happening now in culture

- Compare now to 1950 and how people communicate—from information to experiences—to not recognize this is to fail. Church has often not shifted from information to experience.
- Consider progression of music: From being played on a vinyl record to streaming devices. People still love music, but how they engage it has changed.
- Consider movies. Block Buster went from thriving to non-existent as Netflix took over. People still love movies but engage in a different way.
- People still wired for worship, but engage in a different way today than 50 years ago.
- Church will not continue to grow simply by attraction of “biggest” or “best.”
- Gone are the days when church opened its doors and people just came in because it was the thing to do.
- 6000-10,000 churches a year are closing in the US. Think about!
- Today 1 in 4 individuals have no church connection and never did. These folks NEVER had any connection. This has doubled over the last 20 years. These folks have no muscle memory of church or Christianity.
- Today 38% of the American population is post Christian (no church connection currently but did as children (VBS/Sunday school, etc
- The number of post-Christian Americans rises to 48% for those under 30—these are our children, grandchildren, neighbors

We are MORE like Biblical times now than perhaps ever before. Should be encouraged then with original Gospel which faced the same dynamics.

Key questions:

- What is the role of the church in this changing world?
- WHAT would it look like for the church to be PROACTIVE to trends rather than REACTIVE?

Review of 2 Nieuwhof articles:

- “3 Truths About The Accelerated Pace of Change and Leadership”
- “5 Disruptive Church Trends That Will Rule 2019 and 2020”

Thoughts?

Reactions?

What stuck out to you?

WHAT TO DO FOR NEXT TIME (5 Minutes)

- Everyone needs to order Strengthsfinders 2.0. Let us know if you need help with this.
- Read “So Beautiful” pages 17-52 by Len Sweet
- Read Luke 5-8 and Romans 12
- Listen to Andy Stanley Leadership podcast: “The Complexity of Purpose, Part 1” <https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/andy-stanley/the-complexity-of-purpose-k2UwyX7ZYM0/>
- Complete Discipleship Assessment
- Begin to reflect on your role in this church God has created

- Pray for your prayer partner

JOIN PRAYER PARTNERS (5 Minutes)

*** Randomly assign participants to join together before leaving, share prayer concerns, and commit to praying for each other until the next gathering of DJ2.*

*** Assign new prayer partners at the end of each session. This is one of the best ways to foster new relationships.*

SESSION 2 OF STEP 2

Discipleship at First Church

Participant Preparation:

Everyone needs to order Strengthsfinders 2.0. Let us know if you need help with this.

Read “So Beautiful” pages 17-52 by Len Sweet

Read Luke 5-8 and Romans 12

Listen to Andy Stanley Leadership podcast: “The Complexity of Purpose, Part 1”

<https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/andy-stanley/the-complexity-of-purpose-k2UwyX7ZYMo/>

Complete Discipleship Assessment

Begin to reflect on your role in this church God has created

Review Vision Document handout, Primary Ministries, Own-Bless-Catalyze,

Beaumont Chart

Leader Preparation:

***Computer and PowerPoint Set Up If Needed*

WELCOME (5 Minutes)

Offer opening Prayer

Shift from world-wide/historical church discipleship focus to discipleship in the context of First Church

BIBLE STUDY (20 Minutes)

Romans 12 focus

Unpack in scripture the core distinctive (see First Church's vision sheet) of "Humbly Powerful."

Examine the power of the church through the New Testament

REVIEW CORE DISTINCTIVES (10 Minutes)

All churches have some common elements that make them "church." Elements such as worship, prayer, serving, giving, are common to church wherever church is found. Each church also has its own set of distinctive features. It is important for each church to know its own identity. Core distinctives are those elements that the church celebrates from its history, while seeking to live more into them in the future. Core distinctives are first shared in Step 1. But they are reviewed in Step 2 as a way of instilling the church's DNA in its disciple's.

Review Church Vision Document

For Discussion: Which of these Core Distinctives most resonate with you? Which ones do not? How does recognizing these core distinctives equip or not equip us to the accelerating pace of change in our world?

REVIEW OF CHURCH PRIMARY MINISTRIES (10 Minutes)

Review Beaumont chart.

Primary ministries are those ministries that First Church is best and most uniquely equipped to offer.

Point out where First Church is on that chart... mix of strategic and matrix churches. Increasingly a focus on core distinctives, vision, etc. is carried out in primary ministries as they interact with each other. Matrix means decentralization, which means less silos and more DNA being sown. Over time a shift has occurred from 74 primary ministries to 13 at First Church which has resulted in simplification with more focus and better utilization of resources.

Review handout of the current 13 primary ministries. No church can be all things to all people. Primary ministries are a reflection of the core distinctives of the church as well as those ministries which allow the church to carry out its vision. The primary ministries should be familiar to participants from Step 1 but they are reinforced here.

BLESS/CATALYZE/OWN (10 Minutes)

In changing times, how does a church know which discipleship opportunities to pursue and which ones not to pursue?

See attached sheet

Owned Ministries are: ministries that First Church as a whole conceives, funds, and executes. Congregational members serve in and support these ministries, but the primary ownership, leadership, and responsibility lies with the church as a whole.

Blessed Ministries are: those that First Church “blesses” and are on the opposite end of the spectrum of owned ministries. These are ministries that First Church does not own. First Church functions more as cheerleaders (through word of mouth, Facebook, etc.) and prayer support for these ministries.

Catalyzed Ministries: Between “own” and “bless” are ministries First Church “catalyzes.” These are ministries that First Church supports, offers some resources, and has some “skin” in the game. These ministries are in alignment with the vision. These are ministries that may be brought by a congregant and “tried” for a season. If it lines up with the vision and “takes off” it will eventually become an owned ministry. If it does not receive much support, it eventually becomes a blessed ministry.

Why is this important? Why spend time focusing upon this? This lens keeps the church from trying to do everything and in turn doing nothing well. This focus allows for deeper instead of wider impact (think of the power of the focus of a laser beam).

Such a focus helps the church avoid distraction and honor its God-given gifts instead of pursuing that which it is not.

Jim Collins talks about the power of the fly wheel and Eugene Peterson talks about “Long Obedience In The Same Direction.” The focus of bless/catalyze/own allows for both of these important elements to occur.

BREAK (5 Minutes)

DISCUSSION on Sweet Reading: “So Beautiful” (10 Minutes)

- What stuck out to you? Why?
- What did you find most helpful? Most challenging?
- What does First Church have to be reminded of in this reading?
- Pick one or two favorite quotes to share from the reading
- What implications does this reading have for discipleship?

LIFECYCLE OF THE CHURCH (15 Minutes)

All organizations go through life cycles. All organizations eventually die. But Christians serve a God of resurrection!

See attached.

Review elements of:

- Vision = V
- Relationships = R
- Structure = S
- Programs = P

**The normal cycle goes: Vrps (Birth) then VRps (Infancy) then VRPs (childhood) then VRPs (adolescence) then VRPS (Adulthood) then vRPS (Maturity) then vRpS (Empty Nest) then vrPS (Retirement) then vrpS (Old Age) then s (Death)

DISCUSSION ON LIFE CYCLE (15 Minutes)

**Where is First Church on this life cycle would you guess?

**Note: The Sent side of the church in the Acts Network gives the church opportunities to jump the life cycle as it pursues a more blended ecology. Resurrection is possible!

DISCUSSION: IMPACT OF FIRST CHURCH (10 Minutes)

- How do you see First Church impacting the world through discipleship?
- Where does First Church need to grow in its impact through discipleship?

WHAT TO DO FOR NEXT TIME (5 Minutes)

- Read Matthew 28:16-20 and Luke Chapters 9-12
- Read in the Exponential Dream Book: Finding Your Pathway To Level 5 Multiplication, pages 28-42, “Purpose: Why Do We Exist?”
- Complete Spiritual Gifts Inventory
- Be praying for your prayer partner

PRAYER PARTNERS

Assign new prayer partners. Let them get together to share prayer concerns.

When they are done they are free to leave.

SESSION 3 OF STEP 2**How Has God Wired You to be a Multiplying Disciple (Part 1)?**

***Participant Preparation for Session 3*

Read Matthew 28:16-20

Read Luke chapter 9-12

Read in the Exponential Dream Book: Finding Your Pathway To Level 5

Multiplication, pages 28-42, "Purpose: Why Do We Exist?"

Complete Spiritual Gifts Inventory

WELCOME (5 Minutes)

Remind we are examining discipleship in light of God's church (historical), First Church (local), and now will be exploring how each individual is wired to be a multiplying disciple.

Offer opening prayer

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR ANY DISCIPLE (15 Minutes)

Use metaphor of preparing for a marathon and metaphor of practicing music. The more disciplined in the practicing the freer the performance becomes.

Give history of early catechesis. Rigorous expectation and preparation for baptism (3-year process) and early Christian disciples.

Give a quick overview of various spiritual disciplines

- Reading Scripture
- Sabbath
- Prayer
- Fasting
- Tithing
- Sharing Faith

Today this can sound overwhelming or only for spiritual elite—yet every Christian is called to this.

So important—let’s us walk in step with the Holy Spirit, keeps us in tune to the movement of the Spirit... to “hear” in surround sound.

Allows for multi-layered listening: As we recognize the information before us, we then decipher the meaning under that information, and then what God may have to say in that situation. Disciplines allow us to see people as God sees them and to see situations as God may see them.

Jesus exemplified (see Mark 1 for example)

This is our “norm” and not simply for spiritual giants.

DISCUSSION OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES (15 Minutes)

Break into pairs and talk about:

- 1) What spiritual discipline do you do best?
- 2) Which one do you feel you need to focus on the most? Why?
- 3) Name one change you can make to help you practice this discipline.

BIBLE STUDY (25 Minutes)

Matthew 28 as focal point.

The love of Jesus was always meant to reach all nations. This implies a multiplying movement.

BREAK (5 Minutes)**TEACHING—APEST and SPIRITUAL GIFTS (20 Minutes)**

Introduce the concept of APEST

A = Apostles P = Prophets E = Evangelists S = Shepherds T = Teachers

Based on the work of Alan Hirsch in *Forgotten ways*

Apostles and focused on Ephesians 4:11

Most churches WANT to grow but they do things that undermine that growth.

APEST= having the ministry capacity for movement

Apostles = Sent... try to extend the organization... pioneers

Prophets = keep you on cue in terms of God and God's message

Evangelist = (get rid of labeled meaning)—recruiter to the cause, get the buy-in to the Jesus story and this movement

Shepherds = bonding, healthy relationships and community

Teachers = Equip with knowledge

ALL 5 are needed (again a mixed economy)

As individuals we all need all 5 ministries operating, but we also recognize which one is our dominant trait

As the church we need all 5 ministries operating. Often churches are stronger on Shepherding and Teaching and not so much on Evangelists and Apostles and Prophets.

TO grow:

You need AE (generative) to grow with PST (formative) to make it better...

MOST places are in decline because they rely only on ST and APE is gone

KEY: All 5 components are of equal value.

At First Church Sent is heavy on Apostles and Evangelists and Gathered is heavy on Shepherds, Prophets, and Teachers. All are needed.

Exercise: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 7 for each of the 5 offices. On a blank note sheet create a graph: Center point with 5 lines spreading out (each line represents one element of APEST) and each line with 7 increments. Have each person identify how strong (1 not strong at all and 7 could not be stronger) and record on the graph. Once all have shared, see where the greatest cluster is on each line and place a big “dot.” Then go around the circle and connect all the dots. When done it should look like an oblong spider web. This will show you which traits your ministry group is strongest on as a group and which ones need growth.

Discuss: What does this graph/chart show us? Any surprises?

SHARE RESULTS OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS (10 Minutes)

Let each person go around and share their top 3 gifts.

Record gifts of each person

Which gift was your greatest surprise? Which did you most expect?

How can that gift be used for multiplication? Begin to pray about

DISCUSS EXPONENTIAL READING “PURPOSE: WHY DO WE EXIST?” (10 Minutes)**FOR NEXT TIME (5 Minutes)**

- Review Luke chapters 5, 6, and 10. Read chapters 13-16
- Make sure to complete the Strengthsfinders book if you have not done so
- Listen to Groeschel Leadership podcast “It’s About Time”
- Pray for your prayer partner

PRAYER PARTNERS

SESSION 4 OF STEP 2**What Does it Mean to be a Mature Disciple?***Participant Preparation:*

Review Luke chapters 5, 6, and 10. Read chapters 13-16

Make sure to complete the Strengthsfinders book if you have not done so

Listen to Groeschel Leadership podcast "It's About Time"

Pray for your prayer partner

WELCOME (5 Minutes)

We continue to narrow the funnel from exploring multiplying discipleship in God's Historical Church.... To First Church... to our role as individuals IN the church... to now what is a MATURE disciple in the church. Here we get very specific and personal.

Opening Prayer

WATCH VIDEO (3 Minutes)

"How To Start A Movement" Derek Sivers, Ted Talk February 2010

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qu3xpp5BbHU>

DISCUSS VIDEO (10 Minutes)

What stuck out to you about the video?

Biggest surprise?

Discipleship involves: Commitment, willingness to follow, willingness to take distinctive action, energy. It is also contagious!

BIBLE STUDY (25 Minutes)

Realize mature disciples multiply

Selections from Luke 5:1-11, Luke 6:12-16 and Luke 10:1-12

Concept of 3-12-70. What does this look like today?

Realize how maturity relates to sense of “Rugged Disciples” as reflected in Core Characteristic of First Church

DISCUSS PODCAST (15 Minutes)

Craig Groeschel—“It’s About Time”

- What are the things you value most that you are not doing?
- What can you do about that?
- What do you need to add to your “To Don’t List?”
- What are the three most important things that have been crowded out by urgent things?
- Sometimes to go deeper in one area we must do less in other areas

BREAK (10 Minutes)

TEACHING: THEOLOGY OF RELATIONSHIPS (25 Minutes)

Jesus modeled a theology of relationship through incarnation

Exercise: What are the most important lessons you have learned in life? Most likely you learned them through the example of someone else you were in relationship with rather than from a set of written instructions (i.e. how to drive a car, how to forgive, how to be a good leader, etc.)

Jesus was a master at this. We are never told he wrote down one thing. 3-12 70 model... invested in relationships... incarnational...be there/present

So many recorded discussions of Jesus... woman at well, Nicodemus, etc. In each instance Jesus read his context and shared in relationship in an appropriate way. For example, related to Nicodemus in John 3 through philosophy, theology, scholarly thought. Opened Nicodemus's eyes through concept of "Being born again." Very complex.

For woman at the well in John 4, Jesus asked very simple questions and engaged in direct dialogue ("I am thirsty, can I have a drink") to share the Kingdom of God with a nameless woman. Jesus was incarnational and shared in relationship based on the context he was in.

Could you learn to surf by watching a 3-minute video on it?

Formal vs. Informal Discipleship. Jesus taught more through mentoring/discussion/modeling than He did by didactic teaching (lectures and offering written exam).

In scripture: Greatest law is all about relationship: Jesus said greatest commandment was to love God and love neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:36-40)=
HERE is where maturity begins

Marks of a MATURE DISCIPLE... not just accept Jesus but grow in Jesus...maturity is marked by not keeping Christ to one's self

The power of relationship and incarnation must be reclaimed in today's world/context

Christian discipleship is not about the mastering of a set of beliefs but living out those beliefs in authentic relationship with others

In our souls, must love God and others. THIS is the missing element for so MANY... the relationship with Christ that spills into relationships with others. This makes all the difference. Offer own testimony as an example of a shift from knowing about to KNOWING in relationship.

Give example or two in your ministry setting where you have seen the power of informal discipleship

What would it look like to spend time on other people's turf? Meet them in their setting and at their time in order to foster relationship and authentic community as a way of discipling?

Avoid making people targets to disciple. Love them to share love of Christ

Many churches are filled with spiritually obese people. Must shift towards active, relational engagement to foster discipleship.

DISCUSSION (10 Minutes)

- What is exciting to consider discipleship through informal means rather than formal?
- What is intimidating?

- Does such an approach excite us or challenge us? Why?

STRENGTHFINDERS RESULTS (10 Minutes)

Share Strengthsfinders results with the group

PREPARATION FOR NEXT TIME (5 Minutes)

- Read Ephesians 4
- Listen to Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast #145 (Regi Campbell and Radical Mentoring)
- Read Hirsch pages 50-54 and 99-112 and 146-147
- Pray about who you can mentor and who can mentor you
- Begin praying about if Disciple's Journey Step 3 is for you

PRAYER PARTNERS

SESSION 5 OF STEP 2**What Does it Mean to be a Multiplying Disciple?***Participant Preparation:**Read Ephesians 4**Listen to Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast #145 (Regi Campbell and Radical Mentoring)**Read Hirsch pages 50-54 and 99-112 and 146-147***WELCOME (5 Minutes)**

Continuing to explore how God has wired us individually to become multiplying disciples

Opening Prayer

BIBLE STUDY (30 Minutes)

Ephesians 4

Explore Mentoring

Explore APEST

TEACHING AND DISCUSSION ON APEST (15 Minutes)

Explore chapter 8 of “Forgotten Ways” by Alan Hirsch. See chart giving overview of each office in particular (page 209).

Apostle = The steward of the DNA of the church. Apostles are “sent ones.” This office ensures that Christianity is faithfully transmitted from one context to another and from one era to another. Primarily “Sent” in nature (compared to Gathered).

Prophet = The person who has an ear toward God, acts as the mouth of God, and therefore speaks for God—often in tension with dominant consciousness. This person acts as a truth-teller to the believer. Primarily “Gathered” in nature (compared to Sent)

Evangelist = The recruiter, the carrier, and the communicator of the Gospel message. This person serves as a truth-teller to the unbeliever. Calls for personal response to life in Christ Primarily “Sent” in nature (compared to Gathered).

Shepherd = The Pastor who cares for and develops the people of God by leading, nurturing, protecting, and discipling them. Primarily “Gathered” in nature (compared to Sent)

Teacher = This person clarifies the revealed mind/will of God so that the people of God gain wisdom and understanding. Primarily “Gathered” in nature (compared to Sent).

Identify key tasks/practices with each office.

Apostles pioneer and carry Christ DNA to new places. Act as spiritual entrepreneurs

Prophets discern and communicate God’s will. Keep the body of Christ from becoming comfortable

Evangelists recruit folks to the cause

Shepherds cultivate spiritual maturity to make disciples

Teachers communicate the faith in a way to help others understand the mind of God

Discussion: Which office of APEST do you think you might be? Why?

Review how each fall into Gathered and Sent

BREAK (10 Minutes)

MENTORING TESTIMONY/INTERVIEW (30 Minutes)

A key practice for multiplication involves mentoring. Mentoring is a simple form of multiplying.

Do a live panel or one on one interview:

Share a bit of your testimony and what is it about Jesus that has filled you with such joy to desire to share Christ with others

You stand out as someone who hasn't just practiced Christianity as a personal way of life, but has shared Christianity by raising up other disciples. Do you consider yourself a "multiplying disciple?"

How do you "make disciples?"

Ephesians 4:11 says that Christ gave gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, and teacher to the saints to build up the body of Christ. Which one of these gifts do you think you are strongest in?

What is the greatest challenge you find in raising up disciples?

What is the greatest joy you find in raising up disciples?

Many people would name you as one of their mentors. What do you see as the role of a mentor? What encouragement would you have to people considering a mentoring relationship?

- Why did you decide to be part of a mentoring relationship?
- What has been most rewarding?
- Most challenging?
- What practices have been helpful to you?
- How are you building trust?
- How do you practice accountability?
- Is it a one-way learning?
- What is the role of the mentor? Advisor/Encourager/Sage???
- Why would you say others should do it?
- How has this relationship helped you grow in your faith walk?
- How do you believe mentoring leads to multiplication?

**Take questions/comments from the audience

GROUP SHARING: MORE REFLECTION ON STRENGTHSFINDERS (10

Minutes)

- Share the results of your Strengthsfinders assessments
- Which one of the results were you least surprised by?
- Which one were you most surprised by?
- Pray about what these results mean in relation to you discovering your call

WHAT TO DO FOR NEXT TIME (5 Minutes)

- Read Philippians 2 and 3 and Luke 21-24
- Read Erwin McManus Chapter 10 (in your notebooks)
- Continue praying about what God is calling or leading you to do. What might God be setting you free to do?
- Complete Worksheet: “What is your next Step?”
- Complete Evaluation of DJ2

PRAYER PARTNERS

SESSION 6 OF STEP 2**Discovering God's Call on My Life***Participant Preparation:*

Read Philippians 2 and 3 and Luke 21-24

Read Erwin McManus Chapter 10 (in your notebooks)

Continue praying about what God is calling or leading you to do. What might God be setting you free to do?

Complete Worksheet: "What is your next Step?"

Complete Evaluation of DJ2

Leader Preparation:

Have cookie bakers make and bring cookies for celebration (make them Christmas cookies if this is close to Christmas)

Set up communion elements

Prepare certificates of completion

Be prepared to take photo of whole group

WELCOME (5 Minutes)

Final session of Step 2.

Tonight's goal is more about interaction with each other rather than presentation of information. Therefore, after tonight's Bible study be prepared to share what God has been stirring in your heart in relation to discovering God's call on your life.

Offer opening prayer

BIBLE STUDY (20 Minutes)

Focus on Philippians 2-3

Discovering God's call on our life

DISCUSSION OF MCMANUS CHAPTER 10 READING (15 Minutes)

What stuck out to you in this reading? Let everyone share.

Why do you think we included this section of reading at this time? Talk about the power of passion and how God intended the church to be an unstoppable force. Part of the way this occurs is through multiplication. High-light elements that personally stick out to you.

BREAK (10 Minutes)

SHARING THE JOURNEY (20 Minutes)

Share with a partner first what God has been stirring in your heart in DJ2

- What has God challenged you with during DJ2?
- What might be a next step for you? Refer to the worksheet in the notebook
- What general reflections do you have over the last 6 weeks?
- Is God calling you to Step 3?

COMMUNION AND CONSECRATION (15 Minutes)

Invite participants, when they desire, to come forward and bring their “next step commitment” with them as an offering.

- Participants lay offering on altar table
- Leader(s) share communion with participant
- Leader(s) then lay hands on participant to commission for how God may use them as multiplying disciples in the Kingdom
- Have quiet, reflective background music on in the background or ask someone to lightly play music during this time.
- Those in seats remain in time of prayer and reflection

CLOSING CELEBRATION (20 Minutes)

Offer transitioning prayer

Ask participants to hand in evaluation forms

Celebrate with cookies and drinks

Let participants to share about their DJ2 experience

DISCIPLE'S JOURNEY STEP 3

Disciple's Journey is a series of four learning experiences through which participants will both *learn about and participate in* the opportunity to *become multiplying-disciples for the Kingdom of God* in a local church setting.

Goal: *Create Multiplying-disciples of Jesus Christ*

Objective: To create multiplying-disciples in a local church context resulting in a dual expression of church that includes both Gathered Community and Sent Community.

Step 3: Embrace God's Calling on Your Life

Disciple's Journey 3 will delve more deeply into embracing God's call on our life by exploring both practices and an APEST understanding that leads to becoming multiplying disciples within a gathered and sent context in the local church.

Prerequisite:

**Completion of Disciple's Journey Step 2

Shift:

Whereas Disciple's Journey Steps 1 and 2 focused more upon information presentation for formation, step 3 involves a shift to a more practice-based approach.

Bible study and informational learning will still occur, but more group discussion and learning along with shared practices will be used to foster a more generative formation.

While steps 1 and 2 involve unique elements (focus on APEST, focus on multiplication, original Bible study, the necessary foundation for step 3 etc.), those steps are not overly distinct from the way other discipleship pathways are designed or from the information they share. However, a significant shift occurs with step 3 that is quite distinct and cannot be found in most discipleship pathways. Step 3 involves more interactive facilitation than it does formal presentation.

The concept of multiplication will not require a shift from the Biblical norm, but rather from how we often practice Christianity in our current culture. The shift/challenge will be more in practice than in understanding. The Biblical book of Acts will serve as our guide back to what is mostly uncharted territory in today's culture.

Multiplication DNA applies at a micro and macro level. As we embrace our call as individuals (micro level of multiplication) it will enable First Church to embrace multiplication as an entire organization (macro level).

SESSION 1 OF STEP 3**Discipleship in God's Church****SESSION 1: Why Multiplication? Creating A Disciple-Making Culture***STAFF PREPARATIONS:*

PowerPoint capability—sections in bold can be used on PowerPoint

Nametags

Sharpies

Extra pens

Notebooks

PARTICIPANT PREPARATION:

Read “Canoeing The Mountains” Part 1

Prepare to share why you are taking step 3

WELCOME (10 Minutes)

Provide overview of where Step 3 fits in the overall Discipleship Journey
(connect, discover, EMBRACE, multiply)

Sessions one and two will be the heaviest teaching sessions of all of Step 3

Give summary---what to expect... HERE to EMBRACE our CALL (which we may be discovering) but in the context of becoming a Disciple-maker because that is what a natural/mature disciple of Jesus is (and does).

WHY multiplying? Must understand this first.

WHY is multiplication so important? Because in ROMAN 12:1-2 IN Jesus our MINDS (and hearts) are transformed. New way of viewing and understanding the world. Vision in action here! God gives us new mind, soul, heart, to perceive the world. SO what does this mean?

**Neil Cole shares... think of your dream... how many involved? Now multiply by 1000 or 100 or 10... how will this happen? NOT on our own strength. Drives us to our knees (Think Abraham and descendants as numerous as the stars—talk about a MIND SHIFT... MIND transformed... had to think and feel a whole different way). Must dream bigger dreams. EXAMPLE—What if First Church planted 100 churches in 5 years? 1000 in 10?

For me, the why of multiplication is that the church has only relied on addition for decades. We have “gotten by” with this strategy because our culture was basically Christian. Even First Church has done incredibly “well” with an addition/staff driven model. In the past this has worked well. But now that is no longer the case and it is getting harder and harder to keep growing by addition. Our leaders probably feel this, even if they haven’t put it into words. People’s expectations keep rising regarding facilities and programs. It is harder to recruit. We can no longer rely on addition. But we also need to continue addition. Addition is growth. Addition has worked for First Church. However we are entering a new era of “Both/and.” We need strong, growing

programs in the church—what we call the GATHERED church. We do not get rid of what we have—at least that which is working well and fostering discipleship in Christ...AND we need a culture of SENDING and multiplication outside the church to be all that God calls us to be in this time. We call this the SENT side of the church. To this end we cannot allow an addition model to override or be a barrier to a multiplication model. We embrace this both/and approach to ministry to blaze the trail for what this might look like.

Will get to WHAT and HOW later, but for now, here are some key definitions:

By multiplication we mean: Celebrating the transforming, exponential love of Jesus in such a way that disciples become disciple-makers to the third and fourth generation and beyond.

By Disciple we mean: Someone who is following Jesus and filled with Jesus, being transformed by Jesus, and is committed to the mission of Jesus (Matthew 4:19)

By Disciple-maker we mean: A Christian who enters into intentional, organic relationships with people to help them trust, follow, and know Jesus

A family example:

Provide picture of your own family. Begin with one generation and show multiple generations of the same family.

Now... picture this among disciples... and now churches...

Think: What makes us family even at multiple generations? Common DNA. How do we stay connected? Times like the holidays, birthdays, milestones, relationship, support, care, resources, prayer, intentionality, etc. We are connected, tethered, even as we grow and go and multiply

The “WHY” is the most important. And hopefully the most basic. The WHY... is because we have come to know the love, grace, beauty, and life in Jesus by which all else pales in comparison. And there is not anything we would not do to see others come to know that love, grace, beauty, and truth found in Jesus. Thus, JESUS is our WHY. Jesus drives everything else we talk about here and beyond. It all starts with JESUS as our WHY.

SO... before we go any farther, let’s share who we are and why we are here. And let me just say, I believe you are here because GOD has brought you here---“for just such a time as this.” God’s prevenient grace has positioned us for this very time.

GROUP SHARING (30 Minutes)

--Let everyone share why they are doing step 3 beyond “I was invited to come.”

What is the underlying reason you took this step?

GROUP LEADERS SHARE WHY THEY ARE PART OF DJ3 (10 Minutes)

BREAK (5 Minutes)

TEACHING ON MULTIPLICATION (30 Minutes)

Review local church history and begin to set context for how we fit into it today.

High-light power of the vision, alignment, and focus.

Multiplication grows out of these elements.

Remember THEOLOGICALLY: **Matthew 28:16-20 and Acts 1:8 and John 12** will function as Bible-study overview

Love Jesus. Want as MANY as possible to know Him.

A heart issue.

We need churches that not only survive but produce. Reproducing churches are needed to make up for the 6000 a year lost and Barna's prediction that by 2050 1/2 of churches will be closed.

80% of churches are in subtraction/plateau mode

16% of churches gain by addition

4% of churches replicate

Under 1% multiply

No accident we are here now.

You are here on purpose. Prevenient grace. God has been bringing us to this point.

You have the gifts and graces to move us forward. Do church differently.

If a church only exists it does not replace those lost. A population maintains by families replacing parents. It grows by families having more children than parents.

Our agenda over next 12 sessions...review overview sheets of DNA and culture Foster Intentional, generative habits. Practices lead to transformed lives. Practices help us live healthy lives.

Focus on practices for GENERATION and not just FORMATION

DJ3 Practices Leading To Generation

--Read selected pieces chosen

--Daily prayer around multiplication and opportunities to nudge

--Study assigned Bible readings from the Gospel of Luke and Acts. Keep a running journal and note every time you see a practice or concept related to multiplication (along with any other observations you may have)

--Plan on sharing your testimony sometime during this step

--Embrace the calling God has on your life for multiplication with a gathered and sent focus

--By the end of DJ3 be able to talk about someone you have nudged to come to know Christ or has grown closer to Christ

OTHER GENERAL PRACTICES:

****Commit to this community**

****Pray with each other**

****Discover new ideas, inspiration, and new relationships.**

**Walk with folks who want to have Kingdom Impact.

**Experiment

**Figure out together—please note: Janet and I are learning too. We are merely serving as guides in uncharted waters.

**Build bridge as we walk across it! Uncharted waters

**Draw wisdom and encouragement from one another

**Learn and all grow together. We need you to give us grace and honest feedback.

**Discover elements of a movement and how we are involved in that

**Celebrate “Gathered/Sent” model of church

**Multiplication is more impactful than addition over the long haul. (Multiplication does not pay off until 3rd generation! $3 \times 3!$ Is more than $3 + 3$.)

**Effort here is ORGANIC in nature. Not a top-down movement we hope. Which is why you--participants--are so important)

**Key for movement =Disciple to Leader To church to movement... (Wesley... Jesus...exemplified-

FINALLY...the ultimate goal here is:

To EMBRACE God’s call on our life. You have already connected with God and God’s people in Step 1. You have been discovering God’s path for your life in Step 2. Now we work on embracing God’s call on your life in step 3. The goal is to become multiplying disciples.

Now that you have a better idea of what this will involve, if you want to step out now, that is OK. We want you to feel like this is the next right step for you.

Multiplication EXAMPLE from a local missionary:

Mary was told by the angel Gabriele that God's Son Jesus was growing in her. Mary did not look different at first, but His growth within her soon showed. We trust that God within us is growing and showing more this advent season. We know He is growing within these young men who have recently given their lives' leadership to Jesus.

At a beginning discipleship class Phil asked them to share how their life is different since coming to know Jesus. The most frequent responses centered on loss of anger, meanness, fighting... one spoke of compassion for sick folks, one spoke of a sense of 'someone guiding me as I tend the cattle.' I, Phil, coached them in how to share their personal testimony in a simple story of "before I knew Jesus I was like..... then I came to Jesus... since then my life has changed like...." They practiced telling their stories in small groups of two. Phil challenged them to share this story with five people that week. At the follow up meeting one week later, one youth said he had shared with 20 people.

NOW start to unpack... addition vs. multiplication

Quick illustration of "addition" model vs. "multiplication" model.

WATCH VIDEOS

1) ***Watch Kevin Garnett Adidas commercial as model of addition (just google--Kevin Garnett Adidas commercial or use this*

*link: **<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mxgy8xR-dt0>***

What did you notice? How did people get involved? What was their role? Did Kevin go to them or them go to Kevin? Was there a limited to who could be reached? Why?

2) ***Watch multiplication commercial---**“Coca-Cola-Open Happiness” commercial: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqT_dPApj9U** OR...*

Not perfect but when with an overflow of "happiness/coke" (can we say Jesus) the natural response is to share it organically. In this commercial many different people are sharing the coke with others. Spreading it in a viral way. Granted the commercial does not show this to the 3rd and 4th generations. But repeatedly the first shares with many. I love the Coke commercial! So fun! And it does seem like multiplication to me. I get it that it isn't 4th generation, but it does show different “gifts” being shared leading to the spreading of happiness.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CHURCH? How do we live this out? Implications? Never ending source of Joy in Jesus! Always more to share. How do we get here?

Desire for maximum impact! God's church is plan A (no plan B)

DISCUSSION ON “CANOEING THE MOUNTAINS” (20 Minutes)

Points to emphasize:

- 1) “The world in front of you is nothing like the world behind you (pg. 14).” Do we see this?
- 2) Management cares for “what is.” Leadership focuses on “what can or must be (pg. 21).” “Any person who is willing to take personal responsibility, convene a group to work on a tough problem and persist in the face of resistance is a leader (pg. 22).”

Is God calling you to be a leader? What is the “tough problem” God may be calling you to work on?

- 3) Review the chart on page 43.

--Technical competence: What do we typically think of when we think “Leadership Development?” Usually basic skills like organization, dependability, knowledgeable, uses resources well, etc.

--Relational Congruence—consistent character, care and constancy.

Spiritually mature and emotionally stable

--Adaptive capacity—ability to help others grow and change. “Absolutely dependent on the leader’s own commitment to personal transformation (pg. 44)

TIME OF SILENT PRAYER/REFLECTION (5 Minutes)

PREPARATION FOR NEXT TIME (5 Minutes)

- Pray for Prayer partners
- Bible Reading Acts 1-2
- Review “How To Give Your Testimony” handout
- Get names of 2 people who will come prepared to share their testimony
- Start praying this week about who you can nudge or influence to know Jesus—be praying for that person to know/accept Jesus
- Read Multipliers chapters 1, 3, and 4

PRAYER PARTNERS

SESSION 2 OF STEP 3

Creating a Disciple-Making Culture

PARTICIPANT PREPARATION

--Read Acts 1-2

--Read "Multipliers" chapter 1: "Reality Check" and Chapter 3: "Activism" and Chapter 4: "Obedience"

--Review "How To Give Your Testimony" handout

--Be praying about who you can nudge or influence to know Jesus—be praying for that person to know/accept Jesus

LEADER PREPARATION:

--PowerPoint capability

WELCOME (5 Minutes)

--Offer opening prayer

TEACHING: MULTIPLICATION IN A SHIFTING CULTURE (35 Minutes)

How do we create a Multiplying/Disciple-making Culture?

1. Recognize the general culture we are in. Every day in our culture is increasingly similar to Biblical times when people did not know the Gospel.How do you share the Gospel in a world that does not know it? Jesus and Acts give us many clues.

Recognizing context is important. Jesus was a master at this. See John 3 with Nicodemus and John 4 with the woman at the well In both instances Jesus shared the Gospel message but in Nicodemus's case he did it with high theology/philosophy with the religious scholar and with the woman at the well he did it using very simple language and everyday objects. Same message shared while paying attention to the context.

SO what is our context? Watch any of the following videos:

Did You Know 2017

video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8IBMFw2xFA>

**Did you know in 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QpEFjWbXog0>

What did you notice?

WHAT is the church's response in such a time?

What else do you see going on in our world/culture? Discuss.

Examples include:

- Tech changes and social media
- Increased diversity
- Packed schedules
- Different family structures
- Sunday mornings are no longer "competition free" for churches
- Church is one of many options along with sports, music, jobs, traveling, etc.
- Power of experience over information

What does the church uniquely have to offer in this changing time?

- The experience of Christ/grace/love
- Relationships

- Authenticity
- Power to make a difference
- Discovery of true purpose and hope
- Able to belong to something larger than ourselves
- Transcendent experiences

Keys to creating an exponential movement:

Through habits. Practices. Incarnation. Not just principles shared. Action is needed.

Through planning. Intentionality.

--*Good To Great*—Jim Collins—Fly Wheel concept here. Explore the power of intentional repetition and not “once and done” attempts.

EXPLORE: Fly Wheel Concept from Jim Collins

Review the Multiplication Culture and Key Ingredients insert:

**OUR GOAL = to get this DNA into ALL of First Church, top down, bottom up...side to side, etc

Consider again the power of multiplication compared to addition:

See Page 52 of Multiplier book.

By embracing ONLY accumulation/attractational cultures, we MISS the abundance Jesus intends through multiplication

Compare: $1 + 1$ and $2 + 2$ and $3 + 3$ and $4 + 4$ to 1×1 and 2×2 and 3×3 and 4×4

Consider: $10 + 10 = 20$ but $10 \times 10 = 100$

Radical multiplication results in movements in an EXPONENTIAL way...

The phenomenon that occurs when multiplication hits a tipping point and becomes self-sustaining, even explosive, is sustained outposts. Exponential means to exhibit accelerating multiplication...

**-Remember or Watch Derek Sivers video again on how to start a movement. Started from the ground up. Foster organic connection.

Watch: *Derek Sivers Ted Talk "How To Start A Movement"*—notice tipping point

EXAMPLE:

World History and population---shows exponential affect of multiplication

Table 1. World population milestones. Source: United Nations Secretariat, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *The World At Six Billion* (1999), p. 8.

World population reached: Notice exponential impact

Time to add 1 billion

1 billion = 1804 = time unknown

2 billion = 1927 = 123 years

3 billion = 1960 = 33 years

4 billion = 1974 = 14 years

5 billion = 1987 = 13 years

6 billion = 1999=12 years

It's about Jesus math!

IMAGES TO CONSIDER: Where addition capacity focuses on increasing the capacity to grow trees in your own orchard, multiplication capacity focuses on planting new orchards. (We do need both)—addition systems DO enhance healthy multiplication. Both are good. Both are needed. But we do not just settle for addition model.

Exercise: 5 Stages of Churches

Subtraction, Plateaued, Addition, Reproduction, Multiplication

Where is First Church? Everyone mark. Have discussion

Which are we? Why?

Catch the magnetic pull of level 3—Addition-- (both ways from level 1 AND level 5)

We have tended to do church like the Garnett commercial of Session

1. Addition model. But there are many bystanders and they have to jump on. Come to us.

BUT how can we be incarnational? IN their space? Relational? Multiplication?

Desire to get to incarnational church. Jesus was incarnational.

WE want to be INCARNATORS... Jesus embodied... resulting in multiplication

DISCUSS: Name what is most exciting to you about moving towards multiplication from addition as you understand it. Name what is most challenging

Jesus could have held huge stadium events. Filled large churches (which is not bad) BUT this is the Kevin Garnett commercial model... Instead Jesus said GO and make disciples....connectional... For 3 years on earth Jesus modeled disciple-making and made disciple makers. And the world was changed.

WE believe our best chance to live into this way of being is through existence as a GATHERED and SENT church at the same time.

Matthew 28:19-20

C.S. Lewis: “You get to decide what legacy you will leave.”

What legacy do you want to leave?

What is your biggest question so far? Biggest concern?

SUMMARIZE WITH...

We are perfectly organized to achieve the results we are achieving

COME back to our VISION and as our minds are transformed that allows us to EMBRACE our call...

Part of your call is being a multiplying disciple because ANY disciple is meant to be a mature disciple and any mature disciples produces others ones...

How do you know when something has reached adulthood? Maturity?

It has the capacity to produce others. i.e. a tree... a human...animal... etc.

For example: This is our goal with discipleship as well.

TESTIMONY FROM GROUP PARTICIPANT (10 Minutes)

--All testimonies should be very close to 10 minutes (not longer)

BREAK (10 Minutes)**BIBLE STUDY (30 Minutes)**

--Acts 1-2

DISCUSSION OF “MULTIPLIERS” READING (15 Minutes)

--Respond to questions raised and what points stuck out for folks

PREPARATION FOR NEXT TIME (5 Minutes)

--Keep praying for someone in your sphere of influence to come to know
Christ

--Read Acts 3-7

--Read Nudge Chapter 1

--Complete the worksheet “Level 5 Multiplication Assessment in your
notebook (Dream Big Workbook pg. 52-64)

--Pray for your prayer partner

PRAYER PARTNERS

SESSION 3 OF STEP 3**Fostering Multiplying DNA: Engaging With Others To Discern Embrace***PARTICIPANT PREPARATION*

--Keep praying for someone in your sphere of influence to come to know Christ

--Read Acts 3-4

--Read Nudge Chapter 1

--Complete the worksheet "Level 5 Multiplication Assessment in your notebook (Dream Big Workbook pg. 52-64)

--Pray for your prayer partner

WELCOME (5 Minutes)

--Opening Prayer

--Reminder: DJ3 emphasizes doing to learn along with sharing information to learn. The desire is not to simply learn about multiplying disciples but to become one by practicing the skills along the way

--Watch video: "Discerning Your Call (Liz Bohanan)"

--<https://www.gisnext.com/welcome/videos/LS2017090>

--This video provides opportunity for continued reflection/discerning call

KEY LEADER SHARING (30 Minutes)

--Use meeting ministry leaders as an opportunity to explore EMBRACING Christ's call on our life and how you may begin to live into that calling

--Allow up to three staff or key ministry leaders to come and present general overviews of who they are as well as their ministry area. Encourage these leaders to speak into how their ministry area helps the vision of the church be lived into. Presentations should be 10 minutes depending on number of individuals sharing. Make presentations concise and compelling.

--Participants take notes to fill out "Meeting With Staff" sheet

--This sheet allows participants to rank in order of preference which ministry area leaders they are most interested in talking with or feel most called to share in

BREAK (10 Minutes)**PARTICIPANT TESTIMONY (10 Minutes)****BIBLE STUDY (25 Minutes)**

--Acts 3-4

DISCUSS NUDGE CHAPTER 1 AND/OR LEVEL 5 MULTIPLICATION**ASSESSMENT (20 Minutes)**

- Allow leader to share a few points that stuck out to them from the reading
- Allow participants to share what they learned and ask any questions

PREPARATION FOR NEXT TIME (5 Minutes)

- Read Acts 5-7
- Read Nudge chapter 2
- Take a concrete step with the person you are praying for and be prepared to share that step with the DJ3 group at the next meeting.
- Pray for prayer partners

PRAYER PARTNERS

SESSION 4 OF STEP 3**Fostering Multiplying DNA: Belonging To Empowering Systems***PARTICIPANT PREPARATION*

--Read Acts 5-7

--Read Nudge chapter 2

--Take a concrete step with the person you are praying for and be prepared to share that step with the DJ3 group at the next meeting.

--Pray for prayer partners

WELCOME (5 Minutes)**KEY LEADER SHARING (30 Minutes)**

--Use this time for any other key ministry leaders to come and share who did not get to share in Session 3

--Use meeting ministry leaders as an opportunity to explore EMBRACING Christ's call on our life and how you may begin to live into that calling

--Allow up to three staff or key ministry leaders to come and present general overviews of who they as well as their ministry area. Encourage these leaders to speak into how their ministry area helps the vision of the church be lived into. Presentations should be 10 minutes depending on number of individuals sharing. Make presentations concise and compelling.

--Participants take notes to fill out “Meeting With Staff” sheet

--This sheet allows participants to rank in order of preference which ministry area leaders they are most interested in talking with or feel most called to share in

BREAK (5 Minutes)

BIBLE STUDY (20 Minutes)

Utilize PowerPoint slides 2-5 during the Bible study.

Slide 2 “The word of the Lord spread.” The first time this phrase is heard is in Acts 6. This phrase indicates the spread, expansion and multiplication of the Gospel.

Slides 3-5 represent Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (at least of the known world at that time). In Acts it is clear that the Gospel is intended to spread and multiply. It begins in Jerusalem but as Acts progresses, so does the Gospel. These pictures summarize Acts 1:8. The author Luke continues to widen the circle through all of Acts in which the Gospel is shared.

PARTICIPANT TESTIMONY (10 Minutes)

EXERCISE: EXAMINE STRENGTHS OF CENTRALIZED AND DECENTRALIZED (20 Minutes)

Slides 6 A reminder of the DNA we want to foster for multiplying discipleship—this is a DNA celebrating the strengths of the gathered and sent church held together by the love of Christ.

Slide 7 2 marriage rings. The metaphor of marriage is helpful to remember here. The best marriages include two individuals with their unique strengths and abilities being united in love. The marriage is better because of what both individuals bring to the marriage. The same is true when it comes to the multiplying DNA discovered in the strengths of the Gathered and Sent church.

Slides 8-11 These slides provide an opportunity to summarize the gathered and sent church DNA as witnessed in Acts and the strengths of both the gathered (existing) and sent (new and fresh expressions of church) church.

Slides 12-15 These slides provide specific picture examples today of what the gathered church may look like (slide 12) and what forms of the sent church (slides 13-16) may look like.

Slide 16 This slide is a reminder again of the Word of the Lord spreading where Gathered and Sent Church occurs.

--Review the centralized vs. decentralized categories below and then break into groups of 3 or 4 and come to consensus on where your local church is on each of the following 7 categories when it comes to a culture of multiplying discipleship

Slide 17:

Centralized vs. Decentralized:

Never—Bias to Yes—Always

Staying—Sending Impulse—Leaving

Complex—Accessibility—Simple

Fear of Failure—Risk Taking—Embrace possibility of failure

Hard to Change—Adaptation—Easy to Change

Managerial—Pioneering—Apostolic

Never—Financial Independence--Always

--Discuss results from groups and record to compare the responses of all the groups. This exercise will give insight to which area(s) the local church most needs to work on.

--To become a movement... a multiplying entity... normally we have to move towards more decentralization (move farther on the spectrum). Most local churches are heavy on centralized forms of church.

--Most expressions of church in local church settings are not set up to support movements. The local expression of church we have inherited often does not support movements.

--The focus of Gathered and Sent church creates the opportunity for a multiplying movement to occur in a local church setting in the today's context.

DISCUSSION: WHO HAVE YOU NUDGED? DISCUSS “NUDGE” BOOK**(20 Minutes)**

--Give time for each person to share how and who they have been nudging

--Spend time discussing points from Nudge chapter 2. The leader can point out what sticks out to them and the also allow time for those in DJ3 to share.

PREPARATION FOR NEXT TIME (5 Minutes)

Slide 18 Put this slide up during the closing announcements as the session comes to an end.

--Read Acts 8-9

--Read Nudge Chapter 2 ½

--Read Multipliers Chapters 5-7

--Complete worksheet “Centralized vs. Decentralized Ministry”

--Pray for prayer partners

PRAYER PARTNERS

SESSION 5 OF STEP 3**FOSTERING A MULTIPLYING DISCIPLESHIP DNA: EMPOWERING***PARTICIPANT PREPARATION*

--Read Acts 8-9

--Read Nudge Chapter 2 ½

--Read Multipliers Chapters 5-7

--Complete worksheet “Centralized vs. Decentralized Ministry”

--Pray for prayer partners

WELCOME (5 Minutes)

--Opening Prayer

**RECAP OF CENTRALIZED VS DECENTRALIZED IN CONTEXT OF
GATHERED AND SENT UNDERSTANDING (10 Minutes)**

--Highlight what is needed for Empowering systems:

--A bias to yes

--A sending impulse

--Easy accessibility

--Minimal ecclesiology

--Willingness to risk

--Strengths of Gathered:

--Stable, Strong Discipleship, Comprehensive Ministry, Highly Visible,
Centralized

--Strengths of Sent:

--Nimble, Strong Evangelism, Specialized ministry, able to get into places
gathered church cannot in community/society, decentralized

VIDEO (3 Minutes)

--What does a movement filled with apostolic DNA look like?

--Video from Exponential on Recovering the Apostolic DNA of the Early
Church

--*Winfield Bevins uses Wesleyan revival as example of lay people*

recovering apostolic role Part 2: Recovering the Apostolic DNA of the Early Church

<https://exponential.org/marks-movement/>

DISCUSSION OF MULTIPLIERS READING (15 Minutes)

--Review Reading

--Brainstorm imaginative metrics for new types of scorecards

(I.E. Number of prayer walks in community, number of conversations
with non-believers, number of gatherings outside of church facility walls, etc.)

--Introduce importance of Hero-making. Turn focus to importance of
making heroes instead of seeking to be a hero

BIBLE STUDY (20 Minutes)

--Acts 8-9

BREAK (5 Minutes)**PARTICIPANT TESTIMONY (10 Minutes or 20 Minutes)**

--Allow one or two individuals to share testimony based on number in the group

INTERVIEW ON NUDGING (10 Minutes)

--Bring someone to come and share how they have worked on nudging someone closer to Christ in the past. Allow them to share how they nudged and what results occurred that brought the person being nudged closer to Christ.

DISCUSS NUDGE CHAPTER 2 ½ (15 Minutes)

--What does it mean to " Watch?" Show up, Slow Down, Shut up, Listen, Wake Well

--What does it mean to " Witness?" Storycatcher

--What does it mean to "Bear Witness?" Only Jesus will do

--Prayer partner discussion: What step do you need to take to be a more faithful nudger? Ask your prayer partner to pray for you about this.

PREPARATION FOR NEXT SESSION (5 Minutes)

--Read Acts 10-14

--Read Bolsinger, Part 2, "On the Map Skill Set" p. 49-83

--Read Collins, "Good to Great" Chapter 2, "Level 5 Leadership"

PRAYER PARTNERS

SESSION 6 OF STEP 3

FOSTERING MULTIPLYING DISCIPLESHIP: KEY CONVERSATIONS

PARTICIPANT PREPARATION

--Read Acts 10-14

--Read Bolsinger, Part 2, "On the Map Skill Set" p. 49-83

--Read Collins, "Good to Great" Chapter 2, "Level 5 Leadership"

WELCOME (5 Minutes)

--Opening Prayer

KEY LEADER AND DJ3 PARTICIPANT CONVERSATIONS (30 Minutes)

--During this time DJ3 participants will have the opportunity to talk with those key ministry leaders whose ministry areas they feel most called to explore for their area of multiplying discipleship focus.

--It can be decided how much time to give to this. The goal here is more a quick orientation rather than deep exploration. This is a first conversation on the matter, not the last. Allow 10 minutes each for three possible conversations or 15 minutes each for two possible conversations.

-- Potential Key Questions For Conversation:

--Where in ministry do you serve that you love?

--What most helps you come alive?

--In this particular moment what do you sense is God's next step for you?

--What “new thing” might God be calling you to do?

--Where are you feeling called to go deeper?

--What dreams do you have for an area of ministry near/dear to your heart?

--What needs to change so you can pursue this call?

--How can we as key ministry leaders help you live into this stirring?

--What might you need to say “no” to in order to say “yes” more to this calling?

--What barriers/fears do you have about God’s calling?

--If you do not know what your calling is, what are your passions? Spiritual gifts?

--What have you learned so far in DJ3 about multiplication that we can live into?

--For you, what does it mean to be empowered to live more into your calling?

PRAYER BETWEEN KEY MINISTRY LEADERS AND DJ3

PARTICIPANTS (5 Minutes)

--Give time for key ministry leaders to pray for DJ3 folks they spoke with

BREAK (5 Minutes)

PARTICIPANT TESTIMONY (10 Minutes)

BIBLE STUDY (25 Minutes)

--Acts 10-14

GROUP DISCUSSION ON READING (20 Minutes)

--Discuss Bolsinger “Canoeing the Mountains” Part 2 and Collins “Good to Great” Chapter 2

--What stuck out to you in either reading?

--What does it look like to be a leader of leaders?

--How do you define a leader of leaders?

--What is the process for becoming a leader of leaders?

--What do you have to give up to be a leader of leaders?

**Look what the original disciples of Jesus had to leave behind

--What does this mean for those who may not be leader of leaders?

PREPARATION FOR NEXT SESSION (5 Minutes)

--Read Acts 15 and Ephesians 4

--Take the APEST survey at: <http://www.fivefoldsurvey.com/>

--Be prepared to share updates on progress with who you are nudging

--Who can you be apprenticing? Who can you encourage to be a part of DJ1, DJ2, or DJ3 in the future?

--Read Hirsch, 5Q, Chapter 1

--Be praying for prayer partners

PRAYER PARTNERS

SESSION 7 OF STEP 3**FOSTERING MULTIPLICATION DNA: AN APEST ATMOSPHERE***PARTICIPANT PREPARATION*

--Read Acts 15 and Ephesians 4

--Take the APEST survey at: <http://www.fivefoldsurvey.com/>

--Be prepared to share updates on progress with who you are nudging

--Who can you be apprenticing? Who can you encourage to be a part of

DJ1, DJ2, or DJ3 in the future?

--Read Hirsch, 5Q, Chapter 1

--Be praying for prayer partners

WELCOME (5 Minutes)

--Opening Prayer

BIBLE STUDY (25 Minutes)

--Acts 15

TEACHING ON APEST (30 Minutes)

--Examine Ephesians 4:11-12

--Review each APEST role

--What current questions do you have about APEST?

--High-light how Apostles and Evangelists fit more into the SENT side of the church and how Prophets, Shepherds, and Teachers fit more into the GATHERED side. Most churches tend to be short on A and E. All 5 offices are needed/essential for Gathered and Sent focus. Gathered and Sent are equally important. Synergy between Gathered and Sent is key and the goal.

--Let DJ3 participants share the results of the APEST survey. Which one are they?

--Record results.

--Be thinking how your APEST role can be leveraged for multiplication

BREAK (5 Minutes)

PARTICIPANT TESTIMONY (10 Minutes)

DISCUSS BOLSINGER PART 3 READING (15 Minutes)

--Allow space for questions and observations on the reading

CONVERSATION #1: BRAINSTORM WAYS TO FOSTER DNA (10 Minutes)

--Brainstorm ways to help increase ownership of vision, APEST DNA, and Gathered/Sent culture at First Church

CONVERSATION #2: WHO ARE YOU NUDGING? (10 Minutes)

--Who are you nudging? Share.

--What is exciting to you in this nudging process? Challenging? What progress are you seeing?

OFFER TIME OF SILENT PRAYER FOR THOSE YOU ARE NUDGING (5 Minutes)

PREPARATION FOR NEXT SESSION (5 Minutes)

--Read Acts 16-20

--Read Dream Big Workbook Handout: Chapter 4 “Paradigm: Count the Cost.”

Answer question on pages 77-80

--Listen to Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast “Anticipatory Leadership Part 1”

--Pray for Prayer Partners

PRAYER PARTNERS

SESSION 8 OF STEP 3**FOSTERING MULTIPLICATION DNA: 5 NECESSARY SHIFTS***PARTICIPANT PREPARATION*

--Read Acts 16-20

--Read Dream Big Workbook Handout: Chapter 4 "Paradigm: Count the Cost."

Answer question on pages 77-80

--Listen to Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast "Anticipatory Leadership Part 1"

--Pray for Prayer Partners

WELCOME (5 Minutes)

--Opening Prayer

PARTICIPANT TESTIMONY (10 Minutes)

--Do 1 or 2 testimonies depending on how many are in DJ3

BIBLE STUDY (25 Minutes)**BREAK (5 Minutes)****WATCH VIDEO: "5 Shifts For Multiplication" by Dave Rhodes (11 Minutes)**

--<https://exponential.org/5-shifts-multiplication/>

DISCUSSION AND TEACHING ON 5 SHIFTS (30 Minutes)

--Shift 1: **Shift in hero-story for the primary leader.** The leader needs to stop being the hero and become the hero-maker—the mentor who creates heroes that become mentors.

--Shift 2: **Shift in expectation for every believer:** Believers are not converts who become consumers. Believers must become disciples who make disciples to the fourth generation and beyond.

--Shift 3: **Shift in opportunity for every disciple.** Disciples are not volunteers. Disciples are pastors with a parish waiting to be declared or missionaries with a mission field waiting to be identified.

--Shift 4: **Shift in organization for the system.** Shift from a bias of “no” to a bias of “yes.” Shift from controlling disciples to empowering disciples. A movement becomes bottle-necked when everyone thinks they need permission for everything.

--Shift 5: **Shift in numbers for the scorecard.** Don't count the number of people coming to the church, count the % of population being changed in our community. Is the gospel infecting our community?

Discuss:

--Which of these 5 shifts do you find most challenging?

--Which one needs more explanation?

--Take a poll: Rank these 5 shifts from “1”—the shift that is easiest for one’s specific local church to embrace--- to “5” the shift that is hardest for your specific local church to embrace. Record responses from the group.

--Then discuss:

What makes the number “1” shift the easiest for the church? Has it always been this way? Is it a recent development? How can the church build on this strength as it relates to multiplication.

What makes the number “5” shift the hardest for this church? What can be done to address this shift to encourage more multiplication.

REVIEW AND DISCUSS: GROESCHEL “Anticipatory Leader” Podcast. (15

Minutes)

--What does the Groeschel quote: “The difference between a good leader and a great leader: one learns to anticipate rather than react” mean to you?

--Points to review:

--The lifespan of our current systems/structure/strategy is diminishing.

What we do now will not work forever (consider Kodak, Polaroid, and Blockbuster).

--We outgrow our systems, structures and strategy.

--When it comes to the future, there are 2 things to continuously work on:

--Solve problems before they are big problems. Most big problems were small problems that a leader did not address.

--See potential others overlook. Great leaders see possibilities before others see them.

--Keep in mind the prediction paradox: If we think we are good at predicting the future, we are not likely to be. Instead of confidence about the future, we should operate out of a posture of humility. Pride blinds.

--Looking ahead, what future problems can you/we solve early?

--What theories do you have about the future? What are you going to do about them?

PREPARATION FOR NEXT TIME (5 Minutes)

--Read Acts 21-24 and Luke 18-20

--Complete the handout on "Calling and Scoring"

--Read the Scorecard chapter 6 from the "Multipliers" resource

--Be thinking and praying about what is your next step? DJ4? Apprenticing someone? Being an apprentice? Invite someone into DJ?

--Important: Commit to which key ministry leader you want to explore multiplication with and bring that name/area to next session

--Be Praying for prayer partners

PRAYER PARTNERS

SESSION 9 OF STEP 3**FOSTERING MULTIPLICATION DNA: THE POWER OF HERO-MAKING***PARTICIPANT PREPARATION:*

--Read Acts 21-24 and Luke 18-20

--Complete the handout on "Calling and Scoring"

--Read the Scorecard chapter from the "Multipliers" resource

--Be Praying for prayer partners

--Important: Come prepared to commit to which key ministry leader you want to explore multiplication with and bring that name/area to next session

WELCOME (5 Minutes)

--Opening Prayer

BIBLE STUDY (20 Minutes)

--Acts 21-24

TEACHING AND DISCUSSION ON NEW SCORECARDS (30 Minutes)

--Review scorecard metrics (see page 88 of Dream Big Workbook)

--Build on previous conversation about imaginative metrics. Brainstorm possibilities. Break into groups of 3 or 4 and come up with at least 3 possibilities.

Examples might include:

--What % of the population are we reaching/impacting

--Measure engagement over attendance

--How many new leaders have been raised?

--How many conversations are happening each week?

--Where are multiple generations being reached?

--How can we celebrate failures? What can be learned for the next initiative?

--In “Canoeing the Mountains” Part 4, what stuck out to you?

--Observations?

--Biggest challenge?

--What gives you hope from this section?

--What is the biggest point of application you see for our local setting?

BREAK (10 Minutes)

PARTICIPANT TESTIMONY (10 Minutes)

--Have one or two participants share their testimony

VIDEO: “What It Means To Be A Hero-Maker” by Dave Ferguson (10 Minutes)

--<http://exponential.org/5-practices-hero-making/> (Watch the first video “Introduction”)

--If you do not have time to watch this during the whole group session the link can be emailed to participants

DISCUSSION ON “HERO-MAKER” Concept (15 Minutes)

--Remember, hero-makers have the following mindset:

--They think multiplication, not addition

--They are permission givers

--They are intentional about being disciple-makers

--They activate other people’s gifts

--They are about building the Kingdom, not just their local church organization

--How will you multiply by inviting someone to be a part of DJ1? Or DJ2?

--How will you replace yourself by encouraging someone to be a part of DJ3 next year?

--Write 1 name of a hero you think God can use you to raise up

TURN IN NAME/AREA OF KEY MINISTRY AREA YOU WANT TO EXPLORE FOR MULTIPLICATION (5 Minutes)

PREPARATION FOR NEXT SESSION (5 Minutes)

--Hand in “Calling and Scoring” before you leave today

--Read Acts 25-27 and Luke 21-22

--Read Meeder Article: "5 Keys To Having A Meaningful Conversation With Non-Christians" in notebook.

--Watch 7 minute video that will be sent to you of Alan Hirsch ("Overview Of The DNA Of Movements"---<https://vimeo.com/14089638>)

--Make plans to attend final dinner celebration (Session 12). Will need to RSVP. (Date should have been established by session 1 of DJ3).

--Pray for Prayer Partners

PRAYER PARTNERS

SESSION 10 OF STEP 3

FOSTERING MULTIPLICATION DNA: BELONGING TO A MOVEMENT

PARTICIPANT PREPARATION:

--Read Acts 25-27 and Luke 21-22

--Read Meeder Article: "5 Keys To Having A Meaningful Conversation With Non-Christians" in notebook.

--Watch 7 minute video that will be sent to you of Alan Hirsch: "Overview Of The DNA Of Movements"---<https://vimeo.com/14089638>

--Make plans to attend final dinner celebration (Session 12). Will need to RSVP. (Date should have been established by session 1 of DJ3).

--Pray for Prayer Partners

WELCOME (5 Minutes)

--OPENING PRAYER

KEY MINISTRY LEADER CONVERSATION (45 Minutes)

--Expect to meet for a while with the key ministry leader/area you have identified. Only key ministry leaders whose area has been identified need to attend this evening. DJ3 participants will spend time with the key ministry leader they have identified as being the area they feel most called to explore multiplication in. It is fine if a key ministry leader has one DJ3 participant in their area to explore or many DJ3 participants.

--Time here should be spent exploring:

--Getting to know each other better

--What is the idea/calling that is emerging in the life of the DJ3 participant?

--Explore how this can be incorporated into the ministry area

--Set up expectations for what this looks like

--Establish mentoring guidelines

--Dream of possibilities

--Spend time in prayer together

--Address key questions that each person has

--What is the DJ3 participant willing to commit to at this point?

--Set up a timeline for how the DJ3 participant will begin to embrace their call

BREAK (5 Minutes)

DISCUSSION OF VIDEO (20 Minutes)

--Discuss Alan Hirsch Video: "Overview Of The DNA Of Movements"---

<https://vimeo.com/14089638>

PARTICIPANT TESTIMONY (10 or 20 Minutes)

--Share 1 or 2 Depending on how many DJ3 participants there are

BIBLE STUDY (20 Minutes)

--Acts 25-27

PREPARATION FOR NEXT SESSION (5 Minutes)

--Read Acts 28 and Luke 23-24

--Be praying on if DJ4 is for you

--RSVP for Session 12: Special session. Will celebrate dinner together and come prepared to share a very brief testimony on how DJ3 has helped you embrace God's call on your life to become a multiplying disciple

--Plan on being prayed over and sent out in upcoming worship service

--Pray for Prayer Partners

PRAYER PARTNERS

SESSION 11 OF STEP 3

FOSTERING MULTIPLICATION DNA: SHARING IN THE JOURNEY

PARTICIPANT PREPARATION:

--Read Acts 28 and Luke 23-24

--Be praying on if DJ4 is for you

--RSVP for Session 12: Special session. Will celebrate dinner together and come prepared to share a very brief testimony on how DJ3 has helped you embrace God's call on your life to become a multiplying disciple

--Plan on being prayed over and consecrated in upcoming worship service (determine the date that works best for the church and DJ3 group)

--Pray for Prayer Partners

WELCOME (5 Minutes)

--Opening Prayer

BIBLE STUDY (20 Minutes)

DJ4 DISCERNMENT (15 Minutes)

--Review: Is DJ4 your next step?

--Outline expectations of DJ4 Overview (handout)

--Ask group to complete DJ4 Discernment

BREAK (5 Minutes)**FLEX TIME (45 Minutes)**

--Most likely you will not have had a chance to get to everything you wanted throughout the previous 10 sessions. Or perhaps you want to spend more time on something that your group needs to better explore or has questions about. This time in this session is built in so that you can address such issues. Feel free to go back and review whatever you think is most helpful or would be most beneficial for your group. Or feel free to simply ask what questions people have about anything they might be unclear on.

--Open up the floor for questions in general. What do people want to talk more about? What questions do they have in related to multiplication and them embracing their calling?

PRAYER REFLECTION TIME (5-10 Minutes)

--Give 5-10 minutes of silence to allow DJ3 participants to reflect and pray on the experience of DJ and consider again what their next step may be.

PREPARATION FOR NEXT SESSION (5 Minutes)

--No assigned scripture reading

--Complete and bring evaluation form

--Complete DJ4 Discernment form (this and the evaluation form are your tickets for a free dinner in your honor!)

--Come to dinner prepared to share a brief word about how DJ3 has helped you embrace God's call on your life to be a multiplying disciple

--Be sure to come to the worship service where you will be consecrated in front of the congregation

--Pray for Prayer Partners

PRAYER PARTNERS

SESSION 12 OF STEP 3**EMBRACE YOUR CALL: A CELEBRATION***LEADER PREPARATION:*

- Secure a nice location for a meal of celebration for all DJ3 participants
(make as nice as possible with location, decorum, music, etc.)*
- Make arrangements to provide a free, but nice meal to DJ3 participants*
- Bring personalized prayer cards of blessing for each DJ3 participant*
- Bring a gift for each participant (maybe a book on multiplication, maybe a memento, maybe a reminder, whatever is meaningful to the group)*
- Be prepared to record brief testimonies and take a group photo*
- Be prepared to serve meal to DJ3 participants*

PARTICIPANT PREPARATION

- No assigned scripture reading*
- Complete and bring evaluation form*
- Complete DJ4 Discernment form (this and the evaluation form are your tickets for a free dinner in your honor!)*
- Come to dinner prepared to share a brief word about how DJ3 has helped you embrace God's call on your life to be a multiplying disciple*

WELCOME (5 Minutes)

--Offer welcome and invite people during the meal to share brief testimony on what DJ3 has meant to them in designated area so that testimonies can be recorded

--Opening Prayer and Blessing of Meal

DINNER (30 Minutes)

--DJ3 participants should be served dinner

--As they have time, DJ3 participants should go record brief testimony

GROUP PHOTO (5 Minutes)**DEVOTION TIME (10 Minutes)**

--Leader share brief devotion related to God's call on our life. Personalize this to the group.

HOW HAS GOD SPOKEN TO YOU THROUGH DJ3? (30 Minutes)

--Allow each person to share a bit of their journey to answer this question in front of the whole group

SENDING FORTH (10 Minutes)

--Share what we hope God will use the DJ3 folks to do and accomplish in God's Kingdom in and through this local church setting

WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT (5 Minutes)

--Hand in DJ4 discernment sheets if not already done. For those who have expressed an interest to share in DJ4 we will be in touch.

--Give one final reminder of the worship service that DJ3 folks will be consecrated at.

--Give group gift

INDIVIDUAL PRAYER FOR EACH PARTICIPANT (15 Minutes)

--Lay hands on each DJ3 participant and pray personally for each one. Make sure prayers reflect the gifts, passions, etc. of the person being prayed for. These gifts/passions will be known based on all the work that each DJ3 participant did and turned in throughout DJ3.

CLOSING GROUP PRAYER (5 Minutes)

--Stand. Join hands. Share in the Lord's prayer.

LEADER FOLLOW-UP

In the next 3 weeks, plan on sending a personalized letter to each DJ3 participant. That letter should include:

- 1) A thank you for completing DJ3*
- 2) A summary of that person's gifts and passions as understood from the DJ3 experience*
- 3) An understanding of that person's next steps with a given ministry area*
- 4) A confirmation if that person is or is not intending to do DJ4 based on what the DJ3 participant shared on their "Next Step" sheet*

IN PREPARATION FOR DJ4:

And individual who feels called to move on to DJ4 must have a one on one meeting with one of the Key Leaders to discuss how what the DJ participant is feeling called to do will specifically lead to discipleship multiplication in a Gathered or Sent setting. If the person cannot answer this, they should not move on to DJ4.

This one on one meeting allows for the inner call of the DJ participant to be affirmed outwardly.

Responses of the leader to the DJ participant should be one of the following:

- 1) Yes—I believe God is calling you in this direction which will result in multiplying discipleship. I affirm your calling. Plan on joining us in DJ4.*
- 2) I believe God is calling you, but I do not believe now is the right time. Let's revisit this in a year.*
- 3) No—I believe you are feeling called to serve (which we affirm), but it is not in a multiplying discipleship type of manner. DJ4 is not your next best step at this time.*

DISCIPLE'S JOURNEY STEP 4

LEADER PREPARATION:

One of the key leaders should have met with each DJ participant one on one to ensure that DJ4 is for them.

Those pursuing DJ4 should already be connected in a mentoring relationship with a key ministry leader in connection with the Gathered or Sent area of ministry they are feeling called to foster multiplying discipleship.

Disciple's Journey Step 4: "Multiply Disciples"

Goal: Empower and send out leaders who are equipped to be Multiplying-disciples.

Objectives: Participants will partner with ministry leaders for mentoring purposes to lead as Disciple-makers. Participants will be released and commissioned to influence transformational movement in the kingdom of God that raises up other multiplying disciples.

Disciple's Journey Step 4 is different than steps 1-3 in a number of ways:

****Step 4 is designed to be heavily practitioner-oriented and to explore multiplication in deeper ways.**

**Rather than prescribing specific lessons to be carried out/reviewed, leaders should instead focus on gathering those involved in Disciple’s Journey Step 4 and review/offer what is most helpful.

**Step 4 is a three-year (minimum) commitment. There is no reason why individuals have to stop after 3 years if they do not want.

**Step 4 involves gathering three times/year over three years—usually once in the Fall of the year, once in the Winter, and once in the Spring

**Step 4 should offer significant encouragement and accountability for those living into it

**Step 4 should be responsive to exploring the needs and questions raised by DJ4 participants

Primary Objectives To Be Covered In Gatherings Include:

Content:

Orientation for mentoring relationship between DJ4 participant and Ministry

Leader

--Provide Guidelines of Mentorship expectations

Check-in with apprenticeship learning

Meet to share how one is growing as a Disciple-maker through the apprenticeship and discover support for the journey.

Equipping with further tools and resources

Further tools and resources will be reviewed and shared with individuals as they continue to foster multiplying discipleship in specified contexts.

Length: Each session should be approximately 90 minutes long

Each session should provide a combination previously cited content. Different amounts of time should be given to each item depending on what is needed for the group.

Potentail Resources To Utilize:

Bolsinger, Tod. *Canoeing The Mountains: Christian Leadership In Uncharted Territory*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015.

Hirsch, Alan. *5Q: Reactivating The Original Intelligence And Capacity Of The Body Of Christ*. Columbia: 100 Movements, 2017.

Mancini, Will and Todd Wilson. *Dream Big Workbook*. Grand Rapids, MI: Exponential Series Resource, 2017. <https://exponential.org/resource-ebooks/dream-big-workbook/>.

Wilson, Todd. *Multipliers: Leading Beyond Addition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Exponential Series Resource, 2017. <https://exponential.org/resource-ebooks/multipliers/>.

Note: The resources listed here are ones used through DJ1-3. However, little time is given in those steps to dig deep into these resources. DJ4 allows time and space for more discussion, digging deeper, and sharing in many exercises for which there was not sufficient time in earlier sessions. DJ4 seeks to explore more deeply rather than introduce many new concepts.

Suggested (Examples only) Agendas for meetings would include:

Year 1

Session 1:

****Gathering and Opening Prayer (2 minutes)**

****Review Expectations for DJ4 participant and mentoring guidelines (10 minutes)**

****Update On Progress (45 minutes)**

What have you been working on in your DJ4 Experience?

Have you been a multiplying disciple? How? What barriers are you facing?

Who have you recruited to be involved in ministry with you?

Who is mentoring you? Who are you mentoring?

How can we resource you better?

Discussion: What are you finding most exciting?

What problems are you encountering?

What would be helpful to review in future sessions?

How is your Disciple's Journey Focus fostering multiplication in the Gathered side of the church or the Sent side of the church?

****The Disciple's Journey Experience (10 minutes)**

How can we encourage greater participation in the DJ experience in the future?

Thoughts? Ideas? Who would be good future DJ participants to invite?

****Prayer and Connecting with Ministry Leader (15 Minutes)**

Pray for each DJ4 participant and ministry leader and give them time to connect/pray

****Wrap-Up (5 Minutes)**

Provide Dates for future meetings

Be Reading Canoeing the Mountains in a thorough way (Part 1)

Session 2 (of Year 1): (roughly 3 months after Session 1)****Gathering and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)******Updates On Progress: (30 minutes)**

--Give each person time to share what they have been working on, how they have been living into their call, how multiplication is occurring, etc.

--At this stage, what are you finding most exciting?

--What is your greatest challenge?

****Discussion on Canoeing the Mountains Reading (20 minutes)**

--What most stuck out to you? What did you learn reading it this time?

--Where do you feel challenged?

--Ask questions from Part 1 and Part 2

****Teaching/Resourcing Time (20 minutes)**

Leader shares a resource around questions or barriers from last time.

Base the content on what is most needed for your group.

Suggestions:

--Go deeper in the 5Q content

--Do some exercises from the Dream Big Workbook

--Choose a component from DJ2 or DJ3 to review

--Utilize Multipliers: Leading Beyond Addition

****Time of prayer (10 minutes)**

- Give mentors and mentees time to pray together
- Pray for entire group

****Wrap Up (5 minutes)**

- Give date for next gathering
- Be praying about names to invite into the DJ experience
- Read Canoeing the Mountains Parts 3-5

Session 3 (of year 1): (roughly 3 months after Session 2)

**By this point, sessions will start to look similar but will need updated and customized depending on the needs and progress of the DJ4 participants.

**Sessions should begin to allow for time to truly celebrate multiplication that is taking place

**Adjust readings/topics to cover based on barriers DJ4 participants are experiencing

**Also begin to utilize this group as a “sounding board” regarding the general church direction. These are individuals who have exemplified their discipleship commitment and are significantly spreading the DNA of the church.

****Gathering and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)******Updates On Progress: (30 minutes)**

--Give each person time to share what they have been working on, how they have been living into their call, how multiplication is occurring, etc.

--At this stage, what are you finding most exciting?

--What is your greatest challenge?

****Discussion on Canoeing the Mountains Reading (20 minutes)**

- What most stuck out to you? What did you learn reading it this time?
- Where do you feel challenged?
- Ask questions from Part 3, 4, and 5

****Teaching/Resourcing Time (20 minutes)**

Leader shares a resource around questions or barriers from last time.

Base the content on what is most needed for your group.

Suggestions:

- Go deeper in the 5Q content
- Do some exercises from the Dream Big Workbook (many to choose from)
- Choose a component from DJ2 or DJ3 to review
- Utilize: Multipliers: Leading Beyond Addition by Todd Wilson

****Time of prayer (10 minutes)**

- Give mentors and mentees time to pray together
- Pray for entire group

****Wrap Up (5 minutes)**

- Give date for next gathering
- Which specific names would you suggest for DJ1? Who will you invite?

Years 2 and 3

Utilize a similar outline as year 1 with three sessions each for years 2 and 3.

DJ4 participants come to every session. Mentors come as needed/decided.

**Choose a different book as a whole to review for each year (possibly 5Q or Forgotten Ways by Alan Hirsch) because each year will bring in a new set of DJ4 participants. For example, year 2 will have DJ4 participants from year one AND a new group from year 2.

**Give time to discuss how culture continues to change. What are the biggest challenges each group is facing? What is the best response?

**How can multiplying discipleship be encouraged in the culture of the local church as a whole?

**Keep using different exercises to cover (from new metrics, to creating new scorecards, to offering suggestions on material for future Disciples Journey experiences, to more fostering of APEST DNA, to practical applications of APEST, etc.).

**Offer prayer and encouragement regularly.

After years 2 and 3, participants may or may not continue based on conversation with the leaders. However, as new DJ4 participants enter into the journey, previous DJ4 participants can begin to serve more as mentors themselves. They see the value in continuing to share and celebrate with new DJ4 participants. In this way a continued multiplication culture may be encouraged. Ideally DJ4 gatherings can become places where those sharing in the DJ4 experience can be encouraged, equipped, inspired, and reminded they are not alone. At this stage, DJ4 participants shift from gathering to “complete the DJ process” to mutually seeking to edify one another at an organic level. Once this shift occurs, a multiplying movement is underway.

APPENDIX B:

MATERIAL SUPPORTING THE DISCIPLE'S JOURNEY CURRICULUM

A curriculum of this nature requires many supporting documents, PowerPoint presentations, visuals, handouts, etc. I have created or pulled together the following materials to support the Disciple's Journey curriculum. Below is a short description of each of the items that are available for the leaders/facilitators of the sessions. The items are listed in relation to each session that they would be used.

DISCIPLE'S JOURNEY STEP 1

Session 1:

Dual Expression (What We Do) Description: This document is one page long. It gives a summary and description of what it means to be a church with a “gathered” and “sent” focus.

Scripture Reflection on Romans 12:1-2: This scripture reference supports the vision of First Church. A scripture focus should be used that supports your church's vision.

Session 2:

Church Vision Sheet: Create your own vision sheet as a way to introduce and discuss the vision of your church.

Primary Traits (Who We Are) Sheet: Create your own “primary traits” sheet to which describes the DNA of your church. At First Church these traits include being “rugged disciples,” “beautifully diverse,” and “humbly powerful.”

Session 3:

Key Scriptures To Review: 1 Corinthians 12, Acts 2:1-4 and Acts 2:36-47. Discuss what sticks out to you in these passages and how it relates to God’s Church.

A Copy Of The Apostle’s Creed: The Apostle’s Creed is a reminder of the unity that disciples of Jesus Christ everywhere share.

Session 4:

Evaluation and Next Steps Sheet: Create a sheet where you ask participants to highlight what was most helpful in Step 1, what was not helpful, and what their next step will be. Will they go on to Disciple’s Journey Step 2, join a life group, start serving somewhere, officially join the church, or something else?

DISCIPLE’S JOURNEY STEP 2:

Session 1:

Starting Point: This document is one page long. It is to be used as needed in DJ2 as a record of what the individual has been involved in within the church to date.

3 Truths About The Accelerating Pace Of Change and Leadership (by Carey

Nieuwhof): This blog post is three pages long. It is to be referenced as needed in DJ2 and DJ3 as a supplement and stimulant for conversation.

5 Disruptive Church Trends That Will Rule 2019 (by Carey Niuwhof). This blog post is three pages long. It is to be referenced as needed in DJ2 as a supplement and stimulant for conversation.

Disciples' Journey Overview Graphic: This is a one page graphic giving a visual overview of the four steps of Disciple's Journey. This document also cites the primary goal of this curriculum.

DJ2 Welcome: This document is one page long. It provides language to set the tone and expectation of what the DJ2 experience will be like.

PowerPoint Presentation: 1) Acts 2:42-47 2) Peter Drucker Quote 3) 1950 Car Ad 4) Contemporary car commercial based on Jurassic Park 5) Picture of music devices in recent decades 6) Picture of Blockbuster Video Store 7) Graphic of Netflix "eating" Blockbuster 8) Current attitudes towards church in the U.S. 9) Nones are a growing population 10) 1/3 of Millennials are not affiliated with any faith 11) Projections for 2050 12) Rising population but less folks who identify as Christian 13) Picture of my kids 14) Recognize the great opportunity 15) "Gathered" and "Sent" chart 16) Bridge crossing 17) DNA picture

Bible Study on Matthew 16:13-20 and Acts 2:1-41: This Bible study focuses upon what discipleship in God's historic, world-wide church.

Session 2:

Alignment: Bless, Own, or Catalyze: This is a one-page document. It provides a description of how a church can relate to particular ministries and how to categorize the level of ownership of the church to a particular ministry.

Beaumont Church Size: This is a two-page document. It summarizes different church dynamics operating within different size churches. It is to be referenced as needed in DJ2 and DJ3 in order to better understand what factors contribute to success at different church sizes. This summary comes from Susan Beaumont's Book, Inside the Large Church (Alban Institute, 2011).

Discipleship Assessment: This is a one-page document. This document is used to help individuals begin to identify their areas of strength out of which to operate and how strongly they see themselves as a leader.

Primary Ministry Focus: This is a one-page document. It provides an example of how one church has categorized the primary ministry areas that it seeks to focus upon. Each church should also share its own vision statement/documents as well.

Bible Study on Romans 12: This study focuses upon the impact of multiplying discipleship at a local church level as well as what discipleship in Christ means as a result of a transformed mind.

Session 3:

Leader Expectations: This is a one-page document. It provides one church's list of expectations for every leader in that congregation. This commonality of expectation fosters the DNA of a local ministry setting.

Spiritual Gift Inventory Results: This is a one-page document. This document is used to record the results of spiritual gift inventories taken and turned into the DJ leaders. These results are then factored into discernment for next steps for those who complete steps of DJ.

What We Do: This document is two pages long. It is used to discover where DJ2 participants are in their service to the church and how they become involved with the church.

PowerPoint Presentation: 1) Why does the church exist? 2) Video on complex gymnastics 3) Video on simple gymnastics 4) 3 spiritual discipline questions 5) Blank 6) Ephesians 4:11 7) APEST offices 8) APEST descriptions 9) Rating each office in the church as a whole 10) More formational offices and more generative offices 11) Seeing APEST offices in Gathered and Sent categories

Bible Study on Matthew 28:16-20 and Daniel 7:13-14: This Bible study focuses upon the understanding that belonging in Christ comes before discipling in Christ. This study also explores how God has wired you personally to be a multiplying disciple.

Session 4:

Strengthsfinders Results: This document is one page long. It is used to record the results of completing the Strengthsfinders assessment (see Strengthsfinder 2.0 by Tom Rath to take the assessment). These results are given to DJ leaders to use in discernment for next steps for those who complete DJ steps.

Powerpoint Presentation: 1) Show Ted Talk video by Derek Sivers: “How To Start A Movement” 2) How we think about discipleship 3) Discipleship is not a class, it is a lifestyle 4) Marks of formal discipleship 5) Marks of informal discipleship 6) Video on how to learn to surf 7) Picture of guy surfing big wave 8) Practical forms of informal discipleship 9) How to offer informal discipleship in an organic way 10) Blank for anything you wish to add

Bible Study on Luke 5:1-11; 6:12-16; 10:1-12: This Bible study explores how multiplication is part of a mature discipleship mindset.

Session 5:

Bible Study on Ephesians 4:1-16: This Bible Study focuses on the offices of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds, and Teacher in relation to creating a culture of multiplying discipleship.

Session 6:

DJ2 Evaluation: This document is two pages long. This evaluation is to be completed by those who finish DJ2 in order to give constructive feedback for the next round of DJ2.

DJ2 Next Steps: This document is one page long. It provides some practical suggestions of next steps for those who have completed DJ2 as well as some space to share personal reflections.

Bible Study on Philippians 2 and 3: This Bible Study focuses the importance of relationships with God and others as a way of discovering God's call on our lives.

DISCIPLE'S JOURNEY STEP 3

Session 1:

PowerPoint Presentation: 1) Overview slide of Disciple's Journey Step 3: Embrace 2) Romans 12:1-2 3) Picture of Williamsport 4) Definition of multiplication 5) Definition of disciple 6) Disciple-maker definition 7) Family generation picture 8) Family generation

picture 9) Family generation picture 10) Family generation picture 11) Generation diagram 12) Why are you here? 13) Law of Diffusion of Innovation 14) Transformation In Christ/Vision Slide 15) Primary Ministries slide 16) First Church Vision/DNA/Traits 17) Matthew 28:19 18) Acts 1:8 19) Church growth patterns 20) Practices 21) Goal of nudging by end of step 3 22) Steps 1-3 of Disciple's Journey 23) "all to become disciple-makers" 24) Kevin Garnett commercial 25) Coca-Cola commercial 26) Overview slide of Disciple's Journey Step 3

Session 2:

How To Share Your Testimony: This document is two pages long. It provides some helpful and practical tips on how to share your testimony and walk with God. This document is especially helpful in DJ3.

What Is Church?: This document is one page long. It is to be used as needed in exercises and discussion in DJ3 to begin to understand and discern what is essential for church to exist.

PowerPoint Presentation: 1) Disciple's Journey Step 3 Overview slide 2) 1975 Kinney Shoe Commercial 3) Current Nike Shoe Commercial 4) Transformational time in human history 5) Picture of ancient well 6) Ted Talk: "How to start a movement" Derek Sivers 7) Fly Wheel Concept 8) Fly Wheel of consistent church practices 9) Fly wheel of consistent church practices 10) Graph of world population 11) Generational Picture 12) Generational Picture 13) Generational Picture 14) Generational Picture 15) Picture of

Orchard 16) Subtraction, addition, or multiplying church 17) Matthew 28:19-20 18) C.S. Lewis quote: You get to decide what legacy you will leave 19) We are perfectly organized to achieve the results we are achieving 20) Pictures of acorn and tree 21) Picture of calf and cow 22) Picture of puppy and dog 23) Picture of seeds and melon 24) Workbook exercise 25) Disciple's Journey Step 3 overview slide

Bible Study on Acts 1-2: The Bible Study of Step 3 involves an exploration of the entire book of Acts to observe how Christianity became a multiplying movement. This Bible study explores the author and context for the book as a whole.

Session 3:

Level 5 Multiplication Assessment: This document is three pages long. It provides an example of an assessment for individuals to take of their local church. It includes 10 categories to rank from "0" (not likely) to "5" (very likely) to discern how much of a multiplication culture exists in an individual congregation. This particular document reveals the results of one group of people who completed the assessment.

Bible Study on Acts 3-4: The Bible Study of Step 3 involves an exploration of the entire book of Acts to observe how Christianity became a multiplying movement. This Bible study highlights the progression from one leader to an explosive addition of disciples which will lead to a multiplication of churches.

Session 4:

PowerPoint Presentation: 1) Disciple's Journey Step 3 overview slide 2) "The word of the Lord spread" 3) Replica of Jerusalem 4) Map of Israel 5) Map of ancient world 6) Picture of DNA 7) Picture of two rings 8) Two Forms Of Church 9) Strengths of the Existing/Gathered Church 10) Strengths of Sent/Fresh Expressions forms of church 11) Picture of DNA 12) Picture of typical church 13) Picture of sent form of church 14) Picture of sent form of church 15) Picture of sent form of church 16) "The word of the Lord spread" 17) 7 categories to discover sending impulse 18) Overview slide of Disciple's Journey step 3

Bible Study on Acts 5-7: The Bible Study of Step 3 involves an exploration of the entire book of Acts to observe how Christianity became a multiplying movement. This Bible study reveals how the Christian movement grew in the Jerusalem area as disciples continued to teach God's word and performed miracles even while dealing with conflict.

Session 5:

Centralized Vs. Decentralized: This document is one page long. It is used to help discern the sending impulse of a particular ministry context. Some ministry settings need more centralization. Some ministry settings need more decentralization. This document helps participants discover which direction may be needed.

PowerPoint Presentation: 1) Overview slide of Disciple's Journey Step 3 2) Empowering Systems 3) Overview slide of Disciple's Journey Step 3

Bible Study on Acts 8-9: The Bible Study of Step 3 involves an exploration of the entire book of Acts to observe how Christianity became a multiplying movement. This Bible study focuses on the Christian movement moving beyond Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria.

Session 6:

PowerPoint Presentation: 1) Overview slide of Disciple's Journey Step 3 2) To keep track of the right things, we must ask the right questions 3) Key questions for multiplication legacy 4) People do not resist change they resist loss 5) Overview slide of Disciple's Journey Step 3

Bible Study on Acts 10-14: The Bible Study of Step 3 involves an exploration of the entire book of Acts to observe how Christianity became a multiplying movement. This Bible study focuses on the expansion of the Christian movement among Gentiles in places such as Antioch while raising questions as to what must be considered holy.

Session 7:

Bible Study on Acts 15: The Bible Study of Step 3 involves an exploration of the entire book of Acts to observe how Christianity became a multiplying movement. This Bible Study explores how early Christians dealt with sharing the Gospel in different cultural circumstances. In this chapter the issue is whether a Gentile needed to become a Jew before becoming a Christian.

Session 8:

PowerPoint Presentation: 1) Overview slide of Disciple's Journey Step 3 2) 5 Shifts for multiplication by Dave Rhodes 3) What must change picture 4) A shift in the hero story for the primary leader 5) A shift in expectation for every believer 6) A shift in opportunity for every disciple 7) A shift in operation for the system 8) A shift in the scorecard 9) Rank each shift for how far along you personally are with each shift (1 represents far along in the shift and 5 represents not far along in the shift) 10) Overview slide of Disciple's Journey Step 3

Bible Study on Acts 16-20: The Bible Study of Step 3 involves an exploration of the entire book of Acts to observe how Christianity became a multiplying movement. The focus of this Bible study is primarily on Acts 17:16-34 to explore how Paul interacts with a pagan crowd.

Session 9:

Calling And Scoring: This is a one page document designed to help participants think in a specific way about what ministry area they are being called to embrace. In addition to helping them identify a particular area of ministry, they are encouraged to think outside the box and come up with imaginative metrics that would indicate whether healthy multiplication DNA is taking shape in a particular ministry.

PowerPoint Presentation: 1) Overview slide of Disciple's Journey Step 3 2) Being a hero-maker 3) Video from Dave Ferguson on being a hero-maker 4) Overview slide of Disciple's Journey Step 3

Bible Study on Acts 21-24: The Bible Study of Step 3 involves an exploration of the entire book of Acts to observe how Christianity became a multiplying movement. This Bible study focuses upon what happens when Paul returns to Jerusalem and must answer for the faith he professes. These chapters emphasize how the gospel is for everyone—Jew and Gentile alike.

Session 10:

DJ3 Ministry Leader Conversations: This document is a one page guideline for conversation between ministry leaders and DJ3 participants. It is to be used as part of the discernment process for DJ3 participants concerning which ministry area they will live out their calling.

Bible Study on Acts 25-27: The Bible Study of Step 3 involves an exploration of the entire book of Acts to observe how Christianity became a multiplying movement. This Bible study focuses on how Paul shares the gospel through testimony with a focus on getting to Rome.

Session 11:

Bible Study on Acts 28: The Bible Study of Step 3 involves an exploration of the entire book of Acts to observe how Christianity became a multiplying movement. This Bible study focuses on realizing that Paul is understood to be going to Rome so that the Christian witness can spread “to the ends of the earth.” What began with a focus in Jerusalem has now become a multiplying movement across the Roman empire.

Session 12:

DJ3 Evaluation: This document is two pages long. This evaluation is to be completed by those who finish DJ3 in order to give constructive feedback for the next round of DJ3. This form can be adapted from the DJ2 Evaluation sheet. Participants should also indicate their discernment on if they will or will not be taking DJ4.

DJ3 Summary Sheets: This document is fourteen pages long. It provides a generic example of items to be discovered for each individual during DJ3. There are also numerous examples of what this summary looks like for real individuals.

In the two weeks after the completion of DJ3 participants should be sent summary letters:

DJ3 Discernment Letters: This document is two pages long. It provides an example of the type of letter sent to those who have concluded DJ3 and what possible next steps await them.

DISCIPLE'S JOURNEY STEP 4

No specific documents are needed for Disciple's Journey Step 4 because it is more of a check-in process. Please see the specific curriculum for guidance on each session for this step.

APPENDIX C:
SAMPLE BIBLE STUDIES FOR STEP 2, SESSIONS 1-6

The following six Bible studies are for use in Step 2 of the Disciple's Journey. There is one Bible study for each session of Step 2. A key concept of Step 2 is for each participant to begin discovering their unique calling as disciples of Christ. The Bible studies provided offer a framework for understanding Christian discipleship at three levels. Bible study one focuses on discipleship in the context of the historic and universal church. Bible study two focuses on discipleship in the context of the local church. Bible studies three, four, five, and six unpack the implications for mature discipleship at a personal level leading to multiplication.

These Bible studies have been included for a number of reasons. First, Scripture is always of the utmost importance for God's people. While elements such as tradition, reason, and experience help individuals make decisions in the context in which they live, these elements must always be viewed in light of the authority of scripture.

Second, in order to carefully understand how discipleship has always been meant to have a multiplying component to it, it is important to discover this firsthand from scripture rather than simply assuming it is there.

Finally, God's Word is living and active. Individuals are changed as they interact with scripture. No curriculum is as powerful or transformational without deep scripture study and reflection. Thus, these Bible studies are essential for individuals both discovering and then applying the practices of multiplying discipleship in their lives.

SESSION 1: Discipleship in God's Church

Goal of Disciple's Path: Create "multiplying" disciples

Goal of Step 2: Discover God's path

Objective of Bible Study Session 1:

1. Participants will be able to give a biblical description of "the church"
2. Participants will begin to consider how God is calling them to be a servant leader in the church.

Scripture:

- Matthew 16:13-20
- Acts 2:1-41

Prayer

Expectations

1. Some know a lot about the Bible and some are just beginning to study Scripture. If you are a person who has been studying Scripture for a while, I hope that my questions make you think, dig out the cobwebs, and make some connections. If you are just beginning to study Scripture, be bold. Ask questions. Make observations. You have the gift of fresh eyes. I find that the hardest questions and some of the most insightful observations come from people who don't know how we are supposed to interpret Scripture but who simply read God's Word and let the Holy Spirit guide you as you think about it and try to figure out how it applies to you and to us.
2. We will have Bible Study time every week. During our Bible Study time, I will attempt to introduce you to new tools, some different ways of studying Scripture. So, we will not just learn what a particular passage says but we will learn how to interpret any passage of scripture. The fancy word for that is "Exegesis." It means to draw out or interpret Scripture. Draw out, not read in. Temptation to make Scripture say what we want it to say. We all come with preferences and pre-conceived ideas. We will work to let Scripture speak into our lives, rather than allow our lives to determine how we interpret Scripture.

Bible Study Technique: Step 1 "Begin the Journey at Home." What do I feel? What do I know? What experiences do I have that influence how I approach the Scripture. Put it on the table.

Chose Matthew 16:13-20 and Acts 2:1-41 for us to focus on because these scriptures relate to the start of the church. Start our Bible study by talking about what you know, what you feel, and what you've experienced regarding "Church."

Take 5 min and talk with a partner about what "CHURCH" means to you. Go.

Why start with the “church?” This is Disciple’s Journey. Why not start with the disciples?

We can only understand what it means to be a disciple in the context of the church.

Disciples exist in community, not in isolation.

Theology of church ecclesiology.

Desert Fathers. Holy people who live in wilderness. Hermits. Don’t need people. No relationships required.

Not Methodist theology. John Wesley, found of Methodism, rejected HOLY SOLITARIES, people who sought to be holy in isolation from other Christians.

Methodists believe that the only way you can become like Christ is by living in community.

We need each other.

Methodists also believe that Scripture is the primary source and standard for informing our faith.

Look for “Church” in Scripture.

Go to www.biblegateway.com and do a search for the word “church.” List the books in the Bible that use this word.

Matthew 16 “You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church.”

Matthew 18 “If your brother sins against you, go to the church.”

Not in Mark Luke or John.

Found throughout Acts and the rest of the NT.

Church formed after Jesus’ death and resurrection.

READ MATTHEW 16:13-20

Jesus said, “You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church.” (See Matthew 16:18). In Scripture, the meaning of a name is often significant.

What does the name “Peter” mean?

Play on words. You are “rock” *petros* and on this “rock” *petra* I will build my church.

Why did God call Peter? Peter is famous for his impulsive and unwise actions and words. Peter is many people’s favorite disciple because we can relate to someone who failed so spectacularly. He is full of bravado but just can’t seem to deliver. Yet, the one very significant thing Peter has going for him is that he knows who Jesus is.

Who does Peter say Jesus is?

“You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.” (Matt 16:16)

What does Jesus say in response?

“Blessed are you Simon, Son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.” (Matthew 16:17).

God equipped Peter. “God does not call the qualified. God qualifies the called.”

Peter was the first to see Jesus for who he really was. Once you see Jesus for who he really is, God changes your life. We cannot find our call until we see Jesus for who he really is.

Compare Peter’s response to the other disciples’

How do the other disciples answer Jesus’ question, “Who do you say that I am?” With what other people are saying. That is always the easy way out. My mom and dad said this. My small group leader said this. My pastor said this. All 12 disciples were living with Jesus, seeing him do miracles and listening to him teach. It is no coincidence that the leader of the church was the first person to see Jesus for who he truly was. He was the rock upon which the church would be built.

“Rock” in OT – Word rich in meaning

Go to [www.biblegateway](http://www.biblegateway.com) and do a search for the word “rock.” In the Old Testament, who is often called a “rock?”

Read

- Deuteronomy 32:4
- 1 Samuel 2:2
- Psalm 18:31

Given the OT perspective on “rock,” this is a huge responsibility that Jesus is giving to Peter. What does it mean that “on this rock I will build my church?”

- Catholic perspective (ecclesiology)

This passage is the foundation for the authority of the papacy. Since Peter was given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, he was understood to have the power to admit or exclude a man from heaven. Therefore, he must have the power to absolve or not absolve a man from his sins. Because he had such rights, he became the Bishop of Rome (pope) and these rights were handed down to all Bishops of Rome. In the Catholic perspective, the power that Jesus gave to Peter in this passage is now held by Pope Francis (papal succession).

- Protestant perspective

Peter as the first stone in the building. The church started with Peter (Read Ephesians 2:19-22)

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in

him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Peter is not the rock on which the church is founded. Jesus is the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). God is building His house on that cornerstone. God laid the foundation with the apostles and prophets. Peter is the first stone to be placed to build this holy temple.

Church is a building. Not a brick and mortar building. A building of people who are cemented together and in whom the Spirit of God dwells.

Church isn't born in the gospels. Matt 16:18 is the only reference to church. See Matt 16:20. Jesus told them not to tell anyone. Why? It was too soon. Jesus had not yet rose from the dead and the gift of the HS had not yet been given. Peter did not yet have the power to do the work Jesus had for him to do. God often reveals to us our call before He wants us to act on our call. (Give biblical examples like Samuel, David etc.) We need time to prepare ourselves. Relate to today – yearnings and sense of call in prayer time long before you act on that call.

When was the church born? Why did you pick this answer?

Turn to Acts 2

God birthed the church. Who is the one God uses to bring others into the church? (Peter the rock, the first stone)

“about 3,000 were added to their number that day” (Acts 2:41) The group of disciples became a “congregation”

The church is the people in whom the Spirit of God dwells (See Eph 2: Church is born when God gives the gift of the HS. (Eph 2:22)

Ekklesia = Not a new word. Political term at that time used to describe a political assembly. (See Acts 19:32, 41). Congregation. Called out. Not a building. But a people.

Summary

1. The church is an *ekklesia*, a congregation. A group of people called out to serve a different kingdom.
2. The church is a building. Jesus is the cornerstone. The apostles and prophets laid the foundation. Peter is the first stone.
3. The church is a group with political power (but power not in this world, but in the kingdom of God.) Power provided by the Holy Spirit.
4. The church grows as a result of the power of God.
5. The church is led by people who are called and equipped by God.

Apply Scripture to my life

1. McManus states that in our culture, “megachurch” is often a derogatory term and that most people prefer small over large churches. In Acts 2:41, a megachurch (over 3,000 people) is born in 1 day. Does Scripture present exponential church growth as a concern? How do I feel about “adding to our number?”

Cite other passages in Acts when the church grew.

2. One of the trends that Carey Nieuwhof identifies in the church today is “consumer Christianity will die faster than ever.” Nieuwhof observes that the early church was marked by how much they gave *to* God, not how much they got *from* God. Is First Church a consumer-oriented church? Why?

3. God called Peter to be the first leader of the church. What call is God stirring in your heart?

Acts 5:11 First use of the word “Church” in Acts.

SESSION 2: What Is the Impact of Multiplying Discipleship at First Church?

Goal of Disciple's Path: Create "multiplying" disciples

Goal of Step 2: Discover God's call

Objective of Bible Study Session 2:

- Exegete Romans 12, a key passage upon which the vision of First Church is based.
- Teach Bible Study methods by "unpacking" Romans 12 verse by verse and word by word.
- Participants will understand the communal perspective of Romans 12. To belong to the church is to belong to "the body of Christ."

Need to bring: flour, sugar, baking powder, egg, chocolate chips, chocolate chip cookies

Key Scripture:

Romans 12

Pray: God, help us to hear your call on the body of believers that you call "First Church" and help each of us to hear your call on our lives and how together we can fulfill your mission.

Introduction

Paul does not use the word "Church" in this passage (only in Romans 16 when giving greetings).

What word does he use instead of "church?" (See 12:5) Body in Christ. The Body in Christ rivets Paul's attention, sparks his passion and calls forth the best effort he can give.

Background

Romans is a letter that Paul wrote.

3 Parts: Ch 1-11 theological; Ch 12-15 behavioral; Ch 16 Personal greetings

1-11 This is who God is, who you are and how you relate to God. You were captive to sin. A slave. You did terrible things (Read Ch 1-2). God gave us the Law so we would know right and wrong. But the law was powerless to save us. So God sent Jesus. And Jesus defeated Sin, with capital S (cosmic power). Not just Jesus paid your debt for the wrong things you did. Jesus set us free from the bondage of sin. Us being EVERYONE-- And this vision of Jew and Gentile being brought into the family of God is exhilarating and also motivating.

Look at 11:36. Seems like it ends. "Amen." Note that Paul is so captivated by how God is at work that he breaks into praise.

This is what God has done. Paul turns to how we respond.

Ch 12-15 This is how you live that out.

Unpack Chapter 12 with special attention to verses 1 and 2. Follow along in your Bible.

Read Romans 12:1 (volunteer) WRITE VERSE ON FLIPCHART

12:1 “Therefore” Seems like an insignificant word, but it indicates a significant transition.

12:1 “in view of God’s mercy.” Everything I am going to tell you to do is based on knowing who God is and what God has done for you. [e.g., “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace...” (3:23, 24) And “But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (5:8)]

12:1 “Present your bodies.” Christianity is an embodied faith. Not just a spiritual faith. It is more than a way of thinking. It’s more than a positive attitude, peaceful spirit, and a forgiving heart. It is flesh and blood. Practical. Monday morning life. And it’s not compartmentalized. It is all of who you are.

Contrast 12:1 (body is offered to God) with 6:13 (body is offered to sin)
[“13 Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. 6:13]

Does the phrase “living sacrifice strike you as odd?

12:1 “living sacrifice” Oxymoron. Sacrifices were dead. Throat slit. Blood drained. Not hopping off the altar. But Paul says that we are “living sacrifices.” We squirm. We wrestle with being a sacrifice. And we are not a “one and done” offering. Offering better word than sacrifice. Offering that is made over and over.

12:1 Note that bodies = plural and sacrifice is singular. You offer your body. I offer my body and together we offer a sacrifice as the body of Christ. We do Bible Study with an individual perspective. What is God saying to me? Paul has a communal perspective. He is writing to US. Appropriate that we are studying this in a group, not as individuals. Paul would like that!

12:1 “Spiritual worship” Why did Paul include “spiritual.” Isn’t all worship “spiritual?” Anyone have another word in their Bible for “spiritual?” We think of Spiritual as “holy” or “spirit filled.” Spiritual can be translated “reasonable” or “rational” In extra-biblical lit, “Rational worship” is connected to moral behavior. This is your practical, make a difference kind of worship. Not your “Sunday morning worship.” This is your all of life worship.

Read Romans 12:2 (volunteer)

12:2 Change starts with the mind. Contrast Rom 12:2 with 8:6-8 (life vs death).

Volunteer read 8:6-8

6 The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. 7 The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8 Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

12:2 Notice that "mind" is singular, like "sacrifice." You may find this surprising, but Paul can use the singular form of mind because he imagines that the body of Christ will be "of one mind," the mind of Christ. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil 2:5, KJV)

When your mind is renewed, you think differently. 12:3 "think" occurs 3 times. 12:2 is connected to 12:3

12:4, 5 "one body" connects to 12:1 "offer your bodies"

What does it look like to have a "renewed mind" and "offer your body as a living sacrifice?" Read rest of the chapter. Two major ways that your life will be transformed
You will use spiritual gifts to contribute to the body of Christ.
You will demonstrate genuine love.

Spiritual Gifts - Evidence of a renewed mind and a living sacrifice.

12:6 "Gifts that differ according to the grace in us." The gifts you have are a manifestation of God's grace. Do Spiritual Gifts inventory for next time.

Paul names Spiritual Gifts: Prophecy, service, teaching, encouragement, giving, leadership, mercy. Other passages list other gifts. Not meant to be exhaustive. Not like 10 Commandments (only 10. Can't add another one.)

Cookie Metaphor

Flour – like giving. It is a basic component.

Sugar – like mercy. Sweetens even the most sour of life's circumstances

Baking soda – like gift of prophesy. Tastes bitter. But necessary.

Egg – like encouragement. It keeps things held together, especially when the heat is turned up.

Chocolate chips – like leadership. You don't know who you are and what you are to become without the gift of the leader. These other ingredients could be used to make a cake or brownies or even pancakes, but once you add the chocolate chips most of us probably had a pretty good guess what these ingredients might become.

These ingredients are not meant to be separate. They only fulfill their purpose when they are put together. Show chocolate chip cookie.

12:4 Paul does not see believers as individuals, but as a community. You can't be whole apart from those in your community.

Genuine Love - Evidence of a renewed mind and a living sacrifice.

Compare to 1 Cor 12 and 13. 1 Cor 12 Paul describes spiritual gifts. Then 1 Cor 13 writes about love. Same pattern in Romans.

Verses 9-21 have more “love” words than we see in English translations. E.g., 12:10 is “In brotherly/sisterly love be lovingly affectionate.”

12:13 may include hospitality, but Paul uses “love of stranger”.

This section is about LOVE.

12:9-21 is the reverse of 1:18-32. When we offer our bodies as living sacrifices and have a renewed mind, this is the difference it makes.

12:13 “contribute to the needs of others” literally means “participate in the needs of others.” You don’t just throw in a little money when the hat is passed. You give yourself.

12:21 “heaping burning coals” (Proverbs 25:22) makes people red in the face. Paul is saying, that when we treat our enemies well, we make them red in the face. We make them embarrassed for their poor behavior.

Purpose of showing love is to move people toward God. Genuine love is not just being nice to people. For Paul, love is not a feeling. Genuine love has a moral orientation toward the good. What does that mean? When we show love toward someone, we are moving them toward God's goodness. To love someone is not simply to cater to specific likes and dislikes of that person. It is rather to act toward them in ways that help them experience more of God's goodness.

Paul is describing one of our Core Distinctives. We seek to be a church that is humbly powerful. Not out to get what’s ours. Not seeking to draw attention to ourselves by showing off our spiritual gifts and promoting what we can do. Not insisting on our own way but seeking to outdo one another in showing honor to others. That is humility. But we also see power in this chapter. See verse 12:19. We can trust that we don’t have to get vengeance when we are wronged because God will make all things right.

Paul reminds us that we have done wrong and we have been shown mercy. So we are to be a people who extend mercy to others. Because ultimately, evil will be overcome by doing good. Paul isn’t hoping that will happen. He knows it will. Because the death and resurrection of Jesus has already proven that it is true!

SESSION 3: How has God Wired You to be a Multiplying Disciple?

Goal of Disciple's Path: Create “multiplying” disciples

Goal of Step 2: Discover God's call

Objectives of Bible Study Session 3:

- Recognize that the 4 gospel accounts are intentionally different but are consistent with regard to the most important elements of the story of Jesus.
- Connect Matthew 28 with Daniel 7
- Understand that discipleship is a key theme in Matthew's gospel.
- Belonging comes before believing

Small Group Activity (groups of 3): What did Pastor Matt preach about on Sunday? What do you remember?

You all heard the exact same sermon, but you heard it differently because you are different. Same is true for the gospel writers. We have 4 gospels and they are different.

If you are wondering why do we need 4? Doesn't that just confuse things? What's the point of duplicating stories? Wouldn't it be better to have an “official” account? You're not the first person to think that. Tatian thought of that in the 2nd century. He harmonized the gospels to create a writing called the Diastessaron. Anybody ever hear of that? Obviously, it didn't go too far. It was deemed heretical and no one reads it anymore.

Difference between a gospel and a biography. A biography presents the facts. The gospel writers had an agenda. Not scientific, fact-based writing. This was writing to make a point. And if you have read the gospels carefully, you know that they don't always agree on the details. Gospel writers took the liberty to share the details in order to communicate the message. That might be hard for us. Because in our modern way of thinking, we see that as “messing” with the story or even worse, being untruthful. But that was not how biblical authors thought. They were concerned with character, not detail. They were concerned about the forest. Not the trees.

Commissioning the Disciples –

- Matthew 28:16-20 [DON'T READ]

¹⁶Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

- Mark 16:15-18 VOLUNTEER READ

¹⁵ He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸ they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”

- Luke 24:44-49

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for^[a] the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

- Acts 7-8

⁷ He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

- John 20:19-23

¹⁹ On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” ²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”

In all 4 gospels, Jesus sends the disciples out. We are “Here for those not yet here.” Core Distinctive. Body of Christ doesn’t exist for its own benefit. Disciples have been with Jesus so that they can share Jesus.

In all 4 gospels, the disciples are sent with power.

[MAYBE SKIP.] Canon within a canon. "Go to" Bible passages.

- At Christmas we read Luke “She wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were shepherds...”
- At Easter we read John “Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.”

- Commissioning of the disciples we read Matthew

Listen to Matthew's account. Close your eyes and "see" it as I read it.

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Features of Matthew's account:

28:17 "When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted."

- How could they doubt? They saw it with their own eyes! "Seeing is believing" isn't true. They all saw him. But some doubted.
- Doubted= edistasan= of two minds; ambivalent.
- Believing is seeing.
- Example: True story about a church with a financial problem. Church Council had the financial reports in front of them. Ministry was growing so financial needs were increasing but giving was lagging and it was obvious that the Council could not count on sufficient income to meet expenses. The gap was pretty wide. When it came to budget time, they had to either choose to "see" a significant financial shortfall and make significant cuts. Or choose to "see" the needs of a vital and growing ministry and move forward in faith. Both realities were true. See what it is like to be "of two minds?" What they saw was dependent on what they believed. Seeing isn't believing. Believing is seeing. If they believed that God was "in this" they would see possibility, be courageous and build a budget on faith. And if they believed that God was not a part of the process, they would see a shortfall and would have no choice but to make painful cuts to a growing ministry.

The disciple's ambivalence is contrasted with Jesus' certainty. No "two minds" in what Jesus says. Red letter Bible

28:18-20 Strong theme of completion and totality

- All Power (v. 18)
- All nations (v. 19)
- Everything (v. 20)
- Always (20)

QUESTION - How many of you pictured Jesus speaking those words from the clouds when I read the passage from Matthew? Take a look at your Bible. Is there ANY reason to think that Jesus was in the clouds? On the mountain-- so if it was a high mountain they might have ALL been in the clouds. Did you picture the disciples in the clouds? Why did you picture Jesus in the clouds?

VOLUNTEER READ Daniel 7:13-14

¹³“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

This passage is connected to the Daniel passage. Matthew was writing to a Jewish audience. The Jews knew their OT well. They would have connected what Matthew wrote to a key passage in Daniel 7:13, 14. You may not have known that but you’ve seen artists renderings, maybe you watched “The Greatest Story Ever Told” and that’s how they show it, so that is what is in our minds.

Jews believed that the “Son of Man” would come and bring the kingdom of God to earth. Come in the clouds. Matthew is making it clear that Jesus is the divine “Son of Man.” The one whose kingdom will never be destroyed. We could say a lot more about that, but I refer you to a Bible Dictionary if you want to read up on “Son of Man.”

28:19 “Go and make disciples of all nations.” Two verbs. Sentence structure makes it clear that “make disciples” is the main verb. What that says to us -- We are “here for those not yet here” not just to hang out with them and help them live better lives. “Going” isn’t the important part. “Making disciples” is. We “go” in order to “make disciples.”

28:19-20 Baptize then teach. Look at the cover of your binder.

DJ1 Connect to God and God’s people. Baptism is initiation into the community of faith. Connect. Become a part of the community. Baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. “In” is a tiny word with a lot of significance. Baptized INTO the possession of” God. Belong to God.

After baptism--

DJ2 Discover God’s Path. Teach what it means to follow God.

“Belong” comes before belief.

“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

Teach in the context of community. Like last week – Paul sees believers not as individuals but as a community. Spiritual gifts are to be used as a whole body, not as one person. Remember our chocolate chip cookies. Matthew has a similar perspective. It is only when you belong to the community that you can be taught and grow in your discipleship.

I think Matthew would be very glad that you are here tonight. Teaching was very important to Matthew. Which gospel collected Jesus’ teach and included a sermon in his gospel? Trick question—both Luke and Matthew. But Matthew’s is longer so that is the answer I was looking for. Matthew has the sermon on the mount in Ch 5-7 and Luke has the sermon on the plain in Ch 6

Discipleship is a key emphasis of this gospel. Fits well with Pastor Matt's discussion of spiritual disciplines. Matthew wants us to obey ALL Jesus had commanded. So we have to know what Jesus commanded.

Matthew doesn't end with commandments, but with a promise. A promise that the teacher, the source of power and wisdom will be with you. Always. That is how Matthew began.

VOLUNTEER READ Matthew 1:23.

²³ "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

Immanuel is with us. And that is how Matthew ends. Because that is how we make disciples!

SESSION 4: What Does it Mean to be a Mature Disciple?

Goal of Disciple's Path: Create “multiplying” disciples

Goal of Step 2: Discover God's call

Mature disciples multiply

How did Jesus raise up leaders? 3-12-70 model

Luke 5:1-11; Luke 6:12-16; Luke 10:1-12

Core Distinctive: Rugged Disciples

Objectives of Bible Study Session 4:

- Understand how Jesus started a movement.
- Apply Jesus' model of ministry (3-12-70) to contemporary ministry.

Jesus' Model of Leadership 3-12-70 (or 72)

How Jesus started a movement with almost no money, no facilities, no political influence (in fact he had negative political influence) and no ad campaign (actually, he often told people to keep it quiet and he frequently tried to escape the crowds who sought him),

Lead yourself well. Flip page in Bible back to Ch 4. Before Jesus called his first disciples, he was tested. Tested better word than tempted. Tempted seeks failure. Tested seeks success. Discover how strong you are when you are tested. This is where all leadership starts. Self-leadership precedes team leadership and public influence. If you can't lead yourself, you can't (and shouldn't) lead others. Last week Spiritual disciplines. Start with grounding and strengthening your spiritual life.

We will look at Luke. Notice that first disciples aren't called until Ch 5. Not the case in Matthew and Mark. In both Matthew and Mark, Jesus is tempted in the desert; Jesus starts preaching; Jesus calls the first disciples (See Matthew 4:18-22 and Mark 1:16-20.) But in Luke things happen in between Jesus starting his ministry – Jesus is rejected in his hometown after audaciously proclaiming that he has come to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah. Jesus heals people. And Jesus deals with opposition. (They tried to hurl him off a cliff! Luke 4:29)

Recruit 3 (inner circle.) Luke 5:1-11

Simon Peter first disciple in Luke. Also brothers James and John.

Matthew and Mark identify Peter and Andrew as first disciples.

John identifies Andrew, not Peter as first disciple. (1:40)

Which one is right? It doesn't matter.

Remember Gospels were not written to document facts and details. They were written as persuasive literature. To convince you who Jesus is. Luke wrote this account so that we would see Peter's call as a conversion experience.

(5:1) Jesus teaching on the shore, but Peter wasn't one of the crowd pressing in on him. *What was he doing?* He was working, washing his nets. Jesus' teaching had no impact on him – even though Jesus he has just witnessed a miracle. *Look at 4:38, 39.* Jesus healed his mother-in-law. Miracles do not always result in faith.

(5:4) Jesus speaks to Peter personally. Peter is confused, but obedient. Perhaps he obeyed because he “owed” Jesus or because he knew Jesus. *What does he call Jesus?* “**Master**” *epistata* (5:5), a word Luke uses sparingly. Only for Jesus. Disciples use it when scared or confused. (8:24, 45; 9:33,49).

Peter obeys. Putting out the net was hard work. Used a trammel net up to 100' long. Gourds on top. Weights on bottom to keep it in place. Set it out parallel to the shore then positioned boat closer to the shore and beat the oars to drive the fish into the net. Net hauled onto shore by fishermen.

Large catch! Jesus reveals his power in the miraculous catch. Peter is amazed. *What does he call Jesus?* “**Lord**” *kyrios* (5:8).

Master vs. Lord is important. Luke doesn't want us to think that Jesus just happened to see a school of fish and the disciples got lucky. Peter's response shows us the Jesus used divine powers to bring in the catch of fish. **Theophany** – “sees” God.

What is Peter's response? **Repent.**

First act of the first disciple in Luke is repentance.

Last disciple in Luke, is also one who repents (criminal on cross “We are getting what we deserve” 23:43)

Session 1 we saw that Matthew describes Peter as “the rock on which the church would be built” (Matthew 16:18). Peter, James and John will be with Jesus when he is transfigured (another Theophany). Peter and John were the disciples sent ahead to prepare the Passover meal the night before Jesus died. And the trio kept watch with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

What do we learn about being in the inner circle

- **Unmerited** by Peter, James, and John. Who would choose to start a movement with fishermen?
- God's call didn't come in a “**holy place**” to “**holy people.**” It came to regular people in the midst of daily work.
- Came with a **cost**. “Left everything.” Huge catch of fish. Boats. Wife.

Rugged disciples. Worked. After working all night, they went back to work at Jesus' command. 5:11 “They left everything and followed him.” Peter, James and John left all those fish. Left their boats. Peter left his wife.

Recruit 12 (Small Group) Luke 6:12-16

Jesus' followers were growing. More and more disciples (learners).

(6:12) Jesus goes to a mountain and spends all night praying. Signal that something important is about to happen. Also, reminder that Jesus didn't make a mistake in choosing Judas. In Luke, every time Jesus prays, something important happens (3:21, 9:18, 9:28, 11:1, 22:40-46)

(6:13) *Disciples, the 12, apostles.* Jesus chooses 12 to be sent.

Apostle = Sent one. Disciple becomes an apostle. Relate to APEST. All apostles are disciples but not all disciples are apostles. Apostles are not limited to the 12. Paul calls himself an apostle (Romans 1:1, 1 Cor 1:1)

Who were the 12? Matthew, Mark, and Luke have very similar lists. Not identical. (Luke 6:14-16; Mark 3:16-19; Matthew 10:2-4.) All have

Why is 12 significant? 12 tribes of Israel was the old structure of the people of Israel. The 12 disciples would form the nucleus of a new structure of leadership. As Jesus has just said, "New wine must be put into new wineskins." (5:38). Luke makes this clear in 22:29-30. Evidence of **continuity** with Israel, not break away.

Chosen. Jesus chose the 12 apostles, just like God chose the 12 tribes of Israel (Deut 4:37, Acts 13:17) and Paul (Acts 9:15) No merit.

First thing Jesus does with his 12 apostles? Teaches them. Luke 6:17-49 "Sermon on the Plain." They have much to learn.

What was their #1 job? 9:1-9 Sends them out to proclaim the KOG and to heal. Rugged. Take nothing for your journey.

Mobilize the 70/72 Luke 10:1-12

Instructions to 70 are very similar to the instructions to the 12.

Why 70? Maybe based on # nations in Gen 10 (list of every nation on earth after the flood.) 70 indicates that Jesus is sending people out to every nation on earth. *Apostles or disciples?*

May be based on Moses calling 70 elders to assist him in his work of leading the people. (See Numbers 11:16-25)

70 almost certainly included women. Throughout Luke, women are mentioned as Jesus' disciples, esp Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna 8:1-3, women at the tomb 24:10, and women in the upper room after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 1:14).

What is their first instruction? Read 10:2. **Multiply!** The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. You will need to multiply.

_____ the Lord of the Harvest to send out laborers. Most translations have "ask." Might be more accurate to translate "beg." "Pray earnestly."

10:4 Bring nothing with you and "Greet no one on the road." Urgent mission. No time to waste.

10:5 "Whatever house you enter." Go to people's homes. Not public places. Not crowds. One on one mission.

10:5 "If anyone is there who shares in peace." Person of Peace. Look for people who are receptive.

10:8 “Eat what is set before you” Understood as a rejection of OT dietary laws. No longer need to keep kosher.

The 70 are to do what Jesus did. Eat with sinners, heal the sick and proclaim that the KOG has come near.

If we use the 70 as our model for what it means to be a rugged disciple, I would conclude that a rugged disciple

- Multiplies
- Has a sense of urgency
- Isn't burdened by possessions
- Offers peace
- Receives hospitality
- Serves where they are welcomed

Call of Peter is attached to a miracle. First miracle in Luke that is a provision miracle, rather than a healing or exorcism. Work of the kingdom will usher in a time of abundance and blessing.

In OT “Fishing” is a metaphor for gathering people for judgment. (See Amos 4:2; Hab 1:14-15; Jer 16:16) Similar to the preaching of John the Baptist 3:7-9

[John doesn't have a list of apostles. But does name a disciple who isn't listed by the synoptic writers (Nathanael – John 21:2)]

SESSION 5: What Does it Mean to be a Multiplying Disciple?

Bible Study

Session 5: What does it mean to be a multiplying disciple?

Ephesians 4 (esp 4:1-16)

BRING: Partially completed knit dishcloth

Let Scripture interpret Scripture. Scripture is its own best interpreter.

Focus will be on Ephesians 4:11 and the spiritual gifts (APEST). To interpret this verse we will use:

1. Ephesians (rest of chapter and rest of letter)
2. Psalms
3. Romans
4. 1 Corinthians

Purpose of Ephesians:

- Ephesians is a circular letter (not just to Christians in Ephesus)
- Paul explains the high goals that God has for the church.

Session 1: Matthew 16:18 “You are Peter and on this rock I will ____ [build] my church.”

Church = Ekklesia = congregation; gathering of people

Paul uses a building metaphor in Ephesians 4. (see 4:12)

Goals of the church:

1. Reconcile individuals to God. 2:1-10
2. Reconcile individuals to each other 2:11-22, esp 2:14
3. Create unified body of Christ 3:6

Ephesians 1-3 is like Romans 1-11 – Theological foundation.

Clues that Paul is making a transition:

- “Amen” (3:21) like Rom 11:36. Paul is moving to the “how to” part.
- “Therefore” (4:1 NRSV) Paul is about to relate behavior to theology of first 3 chapters. Remember, we saw the same word in Romans 12:1.

4:1 and 4:4 Calling. Called. Called. We hear “calling” and we think “job.” What task do you have for me God?

What is the primary calling? Unity. “one is used 7 times in 4:4-6. In Greek, 4:7 begins with “One.” Ends with God. We are one to reflect the unity of God (trinity).

UNITY is a key theme in Ephesians - Unity of the church foreshadows the unity of heaven and earth under Christ (1:9, 10)

4:7-10 Confusing digression, but only because we don't know our Scripture (pesher)
If you have a Study Bible might see a note for Psalm 68:18.

READ Psalm 68:17, 18

Psalm 68 refers to God's triumphant ascension to the temple throne. Presence of the Lord filled the temple. Celebrates the expansion of God's kingdom. God had a home among the people.

Paul connects Jesus' ascension after the resurrection to God's ascension to the temple throne.

Paul implies that Christ's ascension was a continuation of the establishment of God's kingdom.

Descended refers to incarnation, not to descended into hell.

Connects to the practice at the time that when a king wins a battle, the king would take captives and receive gifts from the conquered people.

Notice the twist that Paul makes. The practice of the day was for the conquering king to *take* gifts from the people. What does Paul say that Christ did? *Gave* gifts to the people.

Different gifts than in 1 Cor 12 or Rom 12.

READ 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (Note that gifts are paired. Corinthian church was facing divisions. Paul showed them that God designed them to need each other.)

- message of wisdom AND message of knowledge
- faith AND healing
- miraculous powers
- prophecy AND distinguishing between spirits (discernment)
- speaking in different kinds of tongues AND interpretation of tongues

1 Corinthians - Emphasis is to work together

READ Romans 12:6-8 Paul urges church to use their gifts.

- prophesying
- serving
- teaching
- encourage
- encouragement
- giving
- lead
- mercy

Romans - Emphasis is to Do it!

READ Eph 4:12 What is the purpose of the gifts according to Ephesians?

12 “to equip his people for works of service.” Not to do the work themselves, but equip others to do it.

- Unity is not uniformity. Different gifts. BEAUTIFUL DIVERSITY.
- Unity is not kumbaya feeling.

READ 4:13 We reach unity “in the knowledge of the Son of God.” Unity in TRUTH. Remember Romans 12 “transformed by the renewing of our *minds*.”

Many commentators interpret the Ephesians list as the gifts that are given to the leaders or equippers. Romans 12 and 1 Cor 12 list of gifts is for the whole body. Includes service, hospitality, faith, encouragement, giving.

Apostle

- First gift listed.
- Order matters. See Eph 2:20 Apostles and Prophets form the foundation of the church (2:20, 3:5). See 1 Cor 12:28.
- Apostle not used in Greek at the time. Unique to Christianity. Apostle is a pioneer. Paul even uses a pioneering word to describe this gift.
- Apostle – sent one
- Paul identifies himself as an “apostle” (1:1)
- 4:1 Paul, the apostle of Christ is in prison. Circumstances would indicate he can’t be an apostle. He is not a prisoner. He is a prisoner for the Lord. Great example for us. Are you a ___ for the Lord?

THEME = Unity and Maturity

To be fully mature is to be **Christ-like**. (4:13). Church is body of Christ. Christ, the head of the church is mature. Church is growing into its body. Like a puppy with large feet, growing into its paws.

To be fully mature is to be **stable** (4:14) no longer tossed back and forth.

To be fully mature is to live in **loving truthfulness** (4:15) *truthing*

Paul is seeking a mature *body* (church), not mature *individuals*. See 4:15 “We will grow to become in every respect, the mature body of him who is the head.”

Romans 12:1,2 “Present your bodies (pl) as a living sacrifice (singular). Also “renewing of your mind” (singular). Paul does not think of the body of Christ as a group of individuals. Paul thinks corporately. 4:16 NRSV “the whole body joined together and knit together by every ligament” (show dish cloth being knitted. Drop one stitch and the dishcloth unravels.

NOTES

Ephesus is an important city Major commercial center. Temple of Artemis is one of the 7 wonders of the world.

Ephesus is base of Paul's missionary outreach to Asia Minor for 2 years (See Acts 19:10)

Letter is not written to correct heresy, Ephesians were good at identifying false apostles (See Rev 2:2. But later, needed warning for forsaking 1st love (Rev 2:1-7)

SESSION 6: Discovering God's Call on My Life

Disciple's Journey Step 2
 Session 6: Discovering God's Call on My Life
 Philippians 2 and 3

Step 1. Read the Scripture. Prayer of illumination then let God's word speak to you before you read what other people have to say about it. What do you notice? What questions come up? The word of God is living and active. God speaks into your current life reality through God's word.

What I noticed reading this passage— RELATIONSHIPS

Relationship with God

2:1 United with Christ
 2:1 Fellowship with Spirit
 2:14 Children of God

Relationship with others

2:19 send Timothy (See 1:1 Timothy is with Paul in Rome)
 2:20 "no one like him" (Timothy)
 2:25 send Epaphroditus, my brother
 3:17 follow my example (mentor)

Paul writes to the Philippians while in jail "I am going to hear about you. I want a good report." Look at 1:27 "Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ."

What is Paul looking for?

READ 2:1-4

1 long sentence in Greek. Humility and unity are inseparable.

2:1 "encouragement" means both comfort and exhortation.

2:2 "like-minded" not "same-minded." Like minded with one another. Same minded with Christ. Mind of Christ. (like Romans 12) How we think profoundly influences how we live.

This is what it looks like to put those words. 2:5-11

"Christ Hymn." Poem. May have been used in worship in early church. May appear in your Bible as a poem.

- Christ was God but did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped (2:6)

- Humility – Incarnation “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.” (2:7). We regard humility as a virtue. Ancients regarded negatively.
- Extreme humility – crucifixion. Humbles himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (2:8) Nothing more humiliating than death on a cross. Not only excruciatingly painful, but also taunted, naked, shamed. Only slaves and traitors were executed by crucifixion.
- Exalted – name above every name...every knee bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

[Use “V” diagram]

Christ is our example. Christ humbles himself and is exalted (2:8, 9) and he will do the same for us. READ 3:21

End of Christ Hymn is 2:11 doxological. Give God some glory!
Paul writes theology then doxology then ethics.
Like Romans 11:36 and Ephesians 3:21.

2:12 “Therefore” Paul does his characteristic switch from theology to ethics.

Important to start with theology: Live a Christian life “in Christ.” It isn’t about following rules. Or being good. That gets us into trouble.

2:13 Can be translated “God is the one working in you both the willing and the working.” God is providing the *energeo*, the energy, power to do the work God has called you to do. God energizes your work. Don’t worry where are you going to get the energy to answer the call God has on your life. God will provide the energy.

2:25 Epaphroditus is sent to Philippians. “messenger” can be translated “apostle.”

READ 2:29 Epaphroditus is honored because he is totally devoted even willing to risk his life. Paul isn’t the only one totally devoted. Epaphroditus isn’t famous, but he is faithful.

Some Philippians got into trouble, so Paul had to warn them to beware of the dogs (3:2) False teachers who were teaching that you had to follow the Jewish law to be a Christian. Paul corrects the Philippians by focusing them on Christ, not on the law.

READ 3:9 “not having of righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ.”

Primary relationship is relationship with Christ. But Paul also provides mentors to the Philippians church.

READ 3:17 “imitate me” Could you say that? If not, what do you need to change so that you could? McManus makes point that church doesn’t need superstars. It needs every ordinary person to faithfully live out their calling. You need to say “imitate me” to someone.

Disciple’s Journey is about being a multiplying disciple.

2:2 “Make my joy complete” Paul’s exhortation is relational.

2:16 “It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.” Their success is Paul’s success. Body of Christ, not individualistic.

READ 2:22 Timothy worth is based on how he *serves* like Jesus *served* 2:7

READ 3:7-11 Paul is totally devoted.

⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in^[a] Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

When a church believes that. It is unstoppable.

Written by Paul while in prison. (like Ephesians)

Not a circular letter but written to thank the Philippians church for their monetary to gift to Paul in Rome.

Philippi is a prosperous city and is a Roman city. (They considered themselves Roman citizens, not heavenly citizens (3:20). Few Jews there, so no OT ref in Philippians.

Letter of “JOY.” Joy occurs 16 times.

Paul appeals for unity and humility. 2:1-4 is one long sentence in Greek. Reason: Show that humility and unity are inseparable.

Question: Does lack of unity in our world imply a lack of humility.

2:17 “drink offering” refers to OT sacrifices. (Ex 29:38-41)

APPENDIX D:

POWERPOINT SLIDES FOR STEP 3, SESSION 4

The following are images from the PowerPoint presentation developed to accompany Session 4 of Disciple's Journey Step 3. The PowerPoint slides are designed to aid the facilitator. For corresponding text/teaching material for each slide please refer to pages 181-185 of the artifact. On those pages there is text which goes along with each slide as well as a clear indication of where and when the slide should be put up for display.









Two Forms of Church

Temple Worship
(Established Church)

House Worship
(Fresh Expressions)

Book of Acts

Inherited Church
(Jerusalem)

Fresh Expressions of church
(Antioch)

Strengths of the Existing Church



Discipling those who are already here



Engaging in outreach and inviting people into what is *already* happening



Releasing pioneers to engage in incarnational ministry in the midst of culture

Strengths of Fresh Expressions



Reaching out to those currently beyond the church's reach



Creatively engaging the culture in the timeless message of God's love



Learning to experiment







| | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| BIAS TO YES | NEVER | ALWAYS |
| SENDING IMPULSE | STAYING | LEAVING |
| ACCESSIBILITY | COMPLEX | SIMPLE |
| RISK TAKING | FEAR OF FAILURE | EMBRACE FAILURE |
| ADAPTATION | RESIST CHANGE | EMBRACE CHANGE |
| PIONEERING | MANAGERIAL | APOSTOLIC |
| FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE | NEVER | ALWAYS |



APPENDIX E:
RESULTS OF THE GATHERED AND SENT DANCE

The disciple's journey described in this dissertation is an approach that is not just planned for the future, it is currently in its third year of existence. Since its introduction at First United Methodist Church of Williamsport, PA, the congregation has been learning how to dance as both a gathered and sent church as defined in this dissertation. Following are some of the results over the past three years from 2017 until the present (March 2020).

Disciple's Journey Step 1 has been offered three times a year each of the last three years.

Those who have CONNECTED in that time are 145 individuals.

Disciple's Journey Step 2 has been offered each fall over the last three years.

Those who have DISCOVERED a sense of their call are 140 (Please note, this number does not necessarily include 140 from the 145 mentioned for DJ1. Many individuals who were already members of the church prior to the creation of this Disciple's Journey also participated in DJ2 and beyond).

Disciple's Journey Step 3 has been offered each spring of the last three years.

Those who have EMBRACED their call and begun living into it are 50 (this includes 12 in a current group who are currently exploring what that embracing of call looks like).

Disciple's Journey Step 4 has been started each summer over the last three years.

Those who have moved into MULTIPLYING through their call are 14 (this does not include individuals from this current year because DJ3 is still going on and folks have

not had a chance to discern if DJ4 is their next step). The goal is quality of discipleship at this level, not quantity.

Examples of the type of multiplying work that DJ4 participants are engaging in include:

Gathered Side:

- Creating new life groups for the explicit purpose of multiplying
- Creating new children's devotionals designed to engage the whole family
- Engaging in new forms of justice (such as fighting sex trading)
- Taking hospitality to radical new levels through meal sharing as needed
- Working on creative elements in worship to engage and raise up committed

disciples in new ways

--Committing to blogging and documenting stories of transformation to inspire and equip the rest of the congregation

- Creating a Code Blue warming center in a traditional worship facility

Sent Side:

- Leading a new Fresh Expression of church in a local pajama factory
- Leading a new Fresh Expression of church in a local nursing home
- Exploring a new Fresh Expression of church around hiking/outdoors
- Connecting with local, at-risk girls in an intermediate school and mentoring

them

- Raising up IF table leaders to lead Fresh Expressions of ministry in homes

- The creation of a "Faith Zone" in a local middle school over the lunch period

(averaging over 60 kids each gathering)

--Leading a new Fresh Expression of church in a local pub

Disciple's Journey has helped foster an understanding and exploration of the dance between gathered and sent in the congregation as a whole. As a result (either directly or indirectly from the influence of Disciple's Journey), First Church currently has 12 Fresh Expressions of church occurring and is evaluating how to take traditional experiences and reimagine them. For example, last year instead of a regular Holy Thursday service occurring during holy week in the traditional sanctuary, the church was invited to meet in homes and third space places to share in a meal and communion. As a result, 28 groups gathered in different locations to eat and then each group shared communion together at the same time as one of the pastors led via a livestream feed during the communion time. Of these groups, 24 were more gathered in nature and 4 were more sent in nature.

PRIMARY LESSONS LEARNED:

1) **Repetition is essential.**

Jim Collins notes the power of the fly wheel concept. We have found this concept to be invaluable. In any given year, not everyone is ready to take a next step in the disciple's journey. However, with time, hearts and circumstances change. What is not possible one year is possible the next. Therefore, by offering Disciple's Journey on a repeating, yearly basis, it allows for people to engage when they are ready.

2) **A Macro and Micro approach is helpful.**

As appropriate, we communicate the different steps of Disciple's Journey to everyone via the public, macro approaches of communication in the church. Thus newsletters, public verbal announcements, sermons, worship services, Facebook, and leadership gatherings are all used to encourage people to participate. At the same time micro approaches of shoulder tapping, looking for "shining eyes," and asking those who complete Disciple's Journey steps to personally invite new people into steps are also all utilized. In this way both institutional and personal efforts have yielded positive results.

3) While apostles and evangelists may be initially needed, shepherds and teachers cannot be forgotten.

At first, we noticed we needed more apostles and evangelists (we had plenty of teachers and shepherds). It was thought the answer to more growth/vitality was finding those apostles/evangelists. While this initially proved true, what we are now discovering is that it is essential after apostles or evangelists help to get new endeavors started, we must bring in shepherds and teachers into those new spaces to foster community and discipleship in those new places or the new places remain shallow. Thus it was reinforced that all the offices of apostle, evangelist, prophet, shepherd, and teacher are all of equal importance.

4) Cultures take time to develop

We are now in year three of exploring this dance of gathered and sent. We still have a long way to go, but only now are words like "sent" and

“gathered” beginning to take root in the common language of the entire congregation.

In a world of either/or (Democrat or Republican, Pepsi or Coke, dogs or cats), the power of both/and in this gathered and sent dance of church becomes all the more distinctive. While the steps of this reclaimed dance are still being worked out in this present age, the future is bright with possibility for multiplying discipleship if examples of the past are any indication.

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