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## Cultivating a Disciple-Centric Growth Culture in the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

CULTIVATING A DISCIPLE-CENTRIC GROWTH CULTURE IN THE  
INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF THE FOURSQUARE GOSPEL

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

BY

TAMMY DUNAHOO

PORTLAND, OREGON

FEBRUARY 2021



Portland Seminary  
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DMin Dissertation

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This is to certify that the DMin Dissertation of

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has been approved by  
the Dissertation Committee on February 12, 2021  
for the degree of Doctor of Ministry in Leadership & Global Perspectives

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## DEDICATION

To my husband Gary, my soul mate and example of life-long growth,

who sees more in me than I see in myself,

AYL and 143 forever.

To my children Josh and Alyssa, Ashlee and Alex who gave up time with their mom so I

could accomplish a dream. To Eli, Josie, Mateo, and Willa,

the little joys who affectionately call me “Gigi.”

To my Foursquare Church family who made room for me to learn and lead. I hope this

work contributes to a flourishing future for emerging generations.

I pray you all live with a Spirit-filled growth mindset, intentional relationships, and

reflective practices, to become like Jesus for the sake of the world around you.

Most of all to my Loving God in whom my loves are reordered, my character reformed,

and my purpose realigned that my life may reflect the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of

the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

To you be all honor.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In memory of my father, Harvey Daniel, who taught me about selflessness and kindness,  
and inspired me to pursue education that was not afforded to him.

In memory of my mother-in-law, Maxine Dunahoo and spiritual mom, Diana Gee, both  
of whom modeled how to pray, grow, love, and be loved.

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## ABSTRACT

Jesus said to his followers, “Go, make disciples of all nations,” and, “I will build my Church.”<sup>1</sup> Through fifty years of emphasis on church growth, it would seem these roles have been reversed with pastors more focused on building big churches than equipping “the saints for the work of the ministry.”<sup>2</sup> It begs the question, “Do we use people to grow the church instead of the church to grow the people?”

This dissertation focuses on the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel (ICFG) which has been affected by this mindset and now faces an aging ministerium and fewer potential young leaders for the future. The opportunity before the ICFG is to realign the organization to its founding missiology of discipling and equipping people over a lifetime to be on mission with God through the cultivation of a growth culture.

Section one describes the historical narrative of the ICFG and the problem facing the denomination. Section two describes other proposed solutions that have been discussed during various reformation processes the ICFG has engaged. Section three proposes a culture shift with five collective culture markers and three individual culture markers. Section four describes the artifact, an implementation strategy for the ICFG project, *Cultivating a Disciple-Centric Growth Culture*, objectives and outcomes. It provides actions steps, resources to be utilized, and a timeline for implementation. Section five articulates the specifications for the artifact. Section six summarizes this research and recommends further areas of study. It reflects on how the dissertation

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<sup>1</sup> See Matt. 28:19 and Matt. 16:18, respectively. Biblical references are taken from the NET unless specified otherwise.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. 4:12, NRSV.



process encouraged and clarified this dissertation author's personal growth and sense of assignment.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> My current role in the ICFG is Vice President – Sr. Director of Leader Culture + Care

## SECTION 1:

### THE PROBLEM

#### **A Story of Re-Culturing**

The International Church of the Foursquare Gospel (ICFG) elected a new president who studied ministerial data of the last fifteen years and considered the trends of an aging demographic and declining engagement of younger leaders. The president and lead team believed creating a long-view, holistic culture of people growth, rather than a leadership development initiative, would provide the environment needed to realign the ICFG to its founding DNA of making disciples and developing growing leaders to be sent out on mission. As a result, ICFG hired a consultant to research and design a plan for re-culturing.

The consultant did the following research: examined the history of education and leadership development in the organization; surveyed historic and current data; interviewed credentialed ministers regarding their personal growth process, their attitudes toward cultivating leaders, and how they develop leaders locally; interviewed employees in the national and district offices to assess the current culture; and formed a task group to analyze the research. The consultant then presented a proposal to the lead team outlining eight markers of a growth culture with implementation steps for realignment.

The president and board of directors approved the proposal and appointed a V.P. of Culture and Development to execute the plan. The V.P. is responsible for implementation and continued adjustments and improvements. She is accountable to the

president and board of directors with annual reporting to the denomination at large with regard to the culture shift and resulting outcomes.

## **Introduction**

In recent years, the ICFG has had an acute concern regarding its aging ministerium, the need for healthy, well-equipped younger leaders, and a clear and effective development pathway for emerging leaders. As the historical narrative will reveal, Aimee Semple McPherson, the founder of ICFG, demonstrated a disciple-centric growth culture in her ministry from the beginning. Her central focus was people. Over the decades, there was an evolution in emphasis from disciple-making to the organization of local churches, to the institutionalizing of the denomination. This resulted in more attention on the survival, health, and multiplication of local churches and denominational structures than making disciples and developing leaders to be sent on mission. In his book, *Future Church: Seven Laws of Real Church Growth*, Will Mancini claims, “...it took one generation in time (from 2000 to 2020) for every generation of church leader in every faith tribe to feel the same primary problem – namely, that the church in North America is dramatically overprogrammed and underdiscipled.”<sup>4</sup> The challenge which this dissertation describes as culture, Mancini describes as patterns, and both are hard to change. The answer is found in strategic intentionality. In the forward of Mancini’s book Ed Stetzer states, “Movements seem to spread out of nowhere, but their flood is preceded

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<sup>4</sup> Will Mancini and Cory Hartman, *Future Church: Seven Laws of Real Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020), Kindle Loc. 218.

by tributaries preparing the way. What started as local change then becomes widespread in its impact.”<sup>5</sup>

The first year of my research looked at other denominations and their discussions about or attempts to renewing themselves.<sup>6</sup> This work informed the power of culture in reforming an organization which led to the focus of this dissertation. Through academic and field research, this dissertation demonstrates the opportunity the ICFG has to re-culture itself and experience renewal as it enters its second century. A significant portion of the field research observed three local churches, including extensive staff interviews and immersion into their respective church cultures. The churches’ stories are woven throughout this work. The churches included in the field research are Fellowship Northwest AR, Community Christian Chicagoland, and Dios Restaura in Glendale, CA.<sup>7</sup> These churches were selected through relationship providing an early understanding of their approach to growth and development.

Through the bodies of work studied I formed a framework for an organizational and personal growth culture that includes five collective markers and three individual markers.<sup>8</sup> The framework was then tested through the research. Each of the three churches embodied all eight markers within their varied context. Other aspects of the study specific to the ICFG included denominational archives, a survey of Foursquare

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., Kindle Loc. 167.

<sup>6</sup> See further comments regarding denominational reform in Appendix B.

<sup>7</sup> Demographic and historic information regarding these churches in Appendix B.

<sup>8</sup> The academic bodies of work studied included human development, leadership theories, organizational designs, denominations, current books on church trends, and scripture. These are referenced in the bibliography.

credentialed ministers under the age of forty with one hundred fifty-four respondents, and annual church two years of annual reports of U.S. churches in the ICFG with an average of 1,000 churches reporting.

An important factor to consider is all three churches studied were launched with characteristics of a growth culture. Two of them are still led by the founding pastors. The third church is in its second generation of leadership with a team-based model mirroring the first. The generational transition included an intentional succession plan for continuity of culture and mission. Founding pastors have an advantage in setting and sustaining culture. Fellowship NWA is an example of how intentionality is critical to culture continuity through generational change. The ICFG finds itself in need of a culture shift. In order to re-culture a ninety-eight-year-old denomination a strategic plan which focuses on new people groups is essential as described in the artifact in Appendix A.<sup>9</sup>

### **Contributors to the Problem**

#### *Historical Narrative*

Research of the historical narrative of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel revealed the founder held a high value for generational discipleship and leader education and training. Beginning in 1923, soon after the launch of Angelus Temple, the Angelus Temple Training Institute began. In the 1926 yearbook of the institute, the founder, McPherson, describes how she received hundreds and thousands of letters

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<sup>9</sup> <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/reculture> defines “reculture” as “changing the culture of a social institution.” See ICFG’s strategic plan in Appendix A.

“beseeching meetings and prayers” and how it grieved her knowing she could not fulfill the need. She states her response again and again was quoting the scripture, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”<sup>10</sup> She recalls, “Suddenly one day, the Master spoke to our hearts saying: ‘Why not help answer your own prayer? Gather together those who have consecrated their lives to the service and give them the benefit of your fourteen years of practical training. Then send them out to answer these calls.’”<sup>11</sup>

On the opening day of the institute, fifty students registered, and it quickly outgrew its building with a burgeoning student body of eight hundred students just five years after launch. This statement in the yearbook reveals the foundational mission of the institute:

The purpose of the Institute is two-fold: the preparation of Evangelists and Missionaries for the field; and a thorough Bible instruction for those not expecting to enter the field, but desiring knowledge of the Word of God. Its purpose is to fit men and women to be practical winners of souls, able to cope with the most difficult situations and to come out more than conquerors by the power of the Holy Spirit; to give a thorough understanding of the Foursquare Gospel and the knowledge of how to impart it to others.<sup>12</sup>

The founder’s intergenerational value was evident as she began a children’s ministry and a preparatory school for high school students as part of the institute. Her model was also clear: bible education, mentoring, and experiential training. She states, “A principal part of the training is the practical work that the students participate in - hospitals are visited, shop meetings held, and work I carried on at County Farms,

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<sup>10</sup> Matt. 9:37-38

<sup>11</sup> Roderick H. Morrison and Roy Gray, eds., *Carry On* (Los Angeles: The International Institute of Foursquare Evangelism: 1926), 17.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

asylums, jails and everywhere else a tent or portable organ can be set up.”<sup>13</sup> She tells the story of the students’ anticipation to go to the most needy area of the field by describing their sacrifice for the sake of the mission,

Some of the students are giving up splendid business opportunities to take up the work of the Lord, such as a man with a license to run the largest steamships across the Pacific Ocean, a doctor, a young attorney, several who until recently have been actors and actresses, several school teachers – some have bachelor of arts degrees and splendid college records.<sup>14</sup>

As a result of these early graduates, 29 branch churches were opened in the U.S., and missionaries were sent around the globe.

Within fifteen years, the institute became L.I.F.E. (Lighthouse of International Foursquare Evangelism) Bible College. The branch churches’ Sunday schools gave graduation certificates to the children, provided by the college, as a signpost for them to understand the pathway to ministry training was through L.I.F.E. In 1959, a second campus, Mt. Vernon Bible College, was opened in the East. Every credentialed minister was required to be a graduate of one of these ministry training centers. The culture of these schools embodied the values, beliefs, mission, and vision of ICFG so that students were enculturated into the ethos of what it meant to be Foursquare. This culture and strategy for making disciples and developing leaders continued for fifty years.

In 1973, in the midst of the Jesus Movement and at the urging of several local church pastors, Foursquare eliminated the denominational bible college graduation requirement for licensing. ICFG launched many local institutes to emulate the early days of Angelus Temple’s training of leaders. The plan was to multiply education efforts in

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 19.

churches throughout the U.S. and license ministers through the district offices. Though the intention was to decentralize for greater multiplication, giving more authority to the district offices, since 1973, each decade has produced a decline in leader development and sending. ICFG's archived narrative indicates trends that include decreasing enrollment in the colleges, the need for intentional training, several strategies outlining education requirements for ministers, and concerns regarding doctrine, values, and mission drift. Through various changes in national leadership and strategic priorities, continuing education and training programs were launched only to be discontinued. Local church institutes slowly lost sight of a collective vision of training and sending ministers. Instead, they mainly filled the second purpose of the founding institute, providing "thorough Bible instruction for those not expecting to enter the field, but desiring knowledge of the Word of God."<sup>15</sup>

As the ICFG nears its centennial celebration, an important season of reflection and evaluation is underway as the church's landscape is shifting. The ICFG has recorded over six hundred church closures in the last decade, over six hundred senior pastor transitions, and over six hundred new churches and congregations planted during this same period.

There is a growing number of leaders interested in leading unique expressions of faith communities that would not fit the traditional model of church. In 2012, the ICFG validated these as "Congregations," giving opportunity for innovative gatherings to be counted and celebrated.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, the ICFG has experienced an increased

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 18.

<sup>16</sup> 2019 National Church Report, denominational internal document.



deployment of chaplains and Foursquare Missions International workers. A large number of leaders are also moving into workplace ministry and desire validation as ministers in these contexts. These paradigm changes in ministry focus and the historical research have prompted the current lead team to establish the following collective target: “more and growing leaders together on mission.” This reorients the ICFG to its founding focus on people.

At the time of this research, the statistics of the ages of the ICFG credentialed ministers reveals 256 leaders in their twenties, 773 in their thirties, 1,127 in their forties, 1,379 in their fifties, and 3,149 are over sixty. Of the U.S. senior pastors, 7 are in their twenties, 130 are in their thirties, 320 are in their forties, 416 are in their fifties, and 560 are over sixty.<sup>17</sup> Both nationally and internationally, the trend is clear. The average age of credentialed ministers is rising significantly, and not enough younger leaders are entering vocational ministry to continue the movement’s historical growth patterns. The target will require a complete culture shift and realignment, and the team is using the historical narrative and data to demonstrate the urgency.

#### *Insufficient Number of Healthy, Well-developed Credentialed Ministers*

This last forty-seven-year journey of locally autonomous leadership development has left the ICFG with an insufficient number of potential ministers. It is not feasible to revert to a central denominational university as the sole place for ministry preparation. Conversely, decentralizing to local church responsibility is not creating a collective culture or strategy for training and deploying pastors and missionaries. Informal research,

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<sup>17</sup> Denominational census report, June 1, 2020, denominational internal document.

conducted by ICFG's district supervisors in 2017, concluded that one thousand new credentialed ministers were needed just to maintain the succession of senior pastors in current churches due to age. This did not include the growing number of church planters, chaplains, and FMI workers to advance future vision of the denomination. Between the years 2015-2019, the ICFG credentialed 678 new ministers between the ages of 18-39. During this period, there was no culture nor strategic plan for insuring holistic development, Foursquare enculturation, nor deployment from the local church.

During the same period, Foursquare suspended or revoked 228 credentialed ministers due to improper conduct as outlined in the Foursquare bylaws.<sup>18</sup> These were ministers whose behavior proved unhealthy and unfit for leadership at the time of the board's decision. The denomination must consider the deficiencies in its development of healthy leaders to strengthen preventative measures in light of these numbers. The president has highlighted health, discipleship, and prayer as his top three priorities.

### *Lack of Effective Enculturation and Preparation for Credentialing*

Within the ICFG today, the only education requirement for credentialing is the denominational licensing course, which instructs in the basic doctrine, ethos, heritage, and polity of the denomination. The ICFG has utilized the course to process licensure of new pastors but with little intentionality toward enculturation and preparation. When the ICFG instituted the latest credentialing method, the course was supplemented with relational learning through a mentor/coach who helped prepare candidates for their

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<sup>18</sup> "International Church of the Foursquare Gospel: Corporate Bylaws, 2019 Edition," accessed May 10, 2020, [https://foursquare-leader.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/about\\_us/business/Bylaws\\_English\\_2019.pdf](https://foursquare-leader.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/about_us/business/Bylaws_English_2019.pdf).

licensing interview. Over time, the coaching component of the process has lost its intended purpose and now many candidates receive little to no mentorship prior to their interview. After more than a decade with this approach, the effects are evident. There are growing numbers of ministers whose doctrinal viewpoints do not align to Foursquare's positions. There are ministers who have no value for relationship apart from their local setting, resulting in a lack of cohesion in the denomination. Though diversity is celebrated in these matters, it can dilute the Foursquare identity and cause a lack of commitment to one another.

Additionally, the denomination's Philosophy of Education states that ordination candidates must have an A.A. or equivalent with two years of mentorship.<sup>19</sup> However, there is no value statement to qualify the requirement and no accountability system to reinforce it. The expectations for ministry preparation and why this matters must be clearly defined and systemically supported.

### *Lack of Purposeful Discipleship of Children and Youth as a Pathway to Leadership*

Foursquare Churches in the U.S. report over 50,000 children and youth among their adherents, yet there is no collective focus to engage these toward discipleship and ministry preparation. The ICFG history reveals intentionality in discipling children and youth both locally and with denominational emphasis. Traditionally, there were natural systems in place to encourage children and youth to prepare for ministry. Yet the last two decades have left that work to the local church without denominational emphasis and

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<sup>19</sup> "Philosophy of Education, The Foursquare Church, accessed May 10, 2020, [https://foursquare-leader.s3.amazonaws.com/education/Philosophy\\_of\\_Education.pdf](https://foursquare-leader.s3.amazonaws.com/education/Philosophy_of_Education.pdf).

with no linkage to future leadership. In recent meetings, the district representatives for Next Gen (cradle to college-aged) decried this reality and reminded the denomination of its history and DNA. They have called on the leaders to make this an urgent priority.

With regard to a pathway of ministry preparation for emerging generations, there are many streams of education and equipping in the local churches, districts, Life Pacific University (formerly L.I.F.E Bible College), Life Pacific University/Virginia and several affiliate colleges, but the organization lacks a cohesive education strategy and a culture of development and deployment.

Statistics and commentary on Generation Z (those born since 1996) urge the church to pay attention to the mindset and beliefs of this emerging generation of leaders. Pew Research states, “Members of Gen Z are more racially and ethnically diverse than any previous generation, and they are on track to be the most well-educated generation yet. They are also digital natives who have little or no memory of the world as it existed before smartphones.”<sup>20</sup> The following is a critical Barna statistic to which the church must be attentive: only 16% of Gen Z’ers ranked “to become more mature spiritually” as a priority.<sup>21</sup> The church must be astute and repentant in its approach to this generation. GenZ’s attitude toward spiritual maturity is most likely due to not seeing attractive Christlikeness modeled in their forebears, given the lack of emphasis on disciple making. It is imperative that the ICFG focus its attention on cultivating a desire for spiritual

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<sup>20</sup> Kim Parker and Ruth Igielnik, “On the Cusp of Adulthood and Facing an Uncertain Future: What We Know About Gen Z So Far,” Pew Research, last modified May 14, 2020, <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/essay/on-the-cusp-of-adulthood-and-facing-an-uncertain-future-what-we-know-about-gen-z-so-far>.

<sup>21</sup> David Kinnaman, Roxy Lee Stone, and Brooke Hempell, “What will it take to Disciple the Next Generation?,” Barna, last modified August 27, 2019, <https://www.barna.com/research/disciple-next-generation/>.

maturity in this generation. Gen Z's posture toward inclusivity and education, if formed through Christ followership, has the potential to be the fulcrum of the ICFG shift to a growth culture.

### *Failure to Understand Human Development Realities*

Foursquare churches in the U.S. are asked to complete an annual report with numerical, financial, and narrative information regarding discipleship, leader development, church multiplication and local, national, and global missions. The 2019 annual report reveals that out of the 857 churches reporting, most discipleship and leader development approaches are program driven. Churches are dependent upon weekend messages, bible studies and classes, with some reporting small groups and one-on-one discipleship. Some report relationships as important, and others describe leader development simply as serving in ministries within the church.

The ICFG lacks an understanding of human development over the lifetime which leaves leadership with a false assumption that people are growing because they have participated in discipleship programs and leader development classes or have served in some ministry capacity. Though the organization has found some components of human development incidentally, none of the churches reporting described intentional stratagem gained from understanding what people need to mature holistically. In *Human Growth and Development across the Lifespan: Applications for Counselors*, the authors describe the various factors involved:

Human development is multidimensional and systemically oriented... Development is continuous, discontinuous, multidimensional, multidirectional, and plastic. Modern science has uncovered important findings about how humans change over a lifespan and how some changes are unique and personal, whereas

others are shared in common as a result of sociocultural, historical, hereditary, and environmental influences.<sup>22</sup>

Human development includes “growth, maturation, and importantly, learning.”<sup>23</sup> James Fowler, designer of the *faith development theory* (FDT), defines faith as “a person’s or group’s way of ‘finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces that make up our lives. Faith is a person’s way of seeing him- or herself in relation to others against a background of shared meaning and purpose.’”<sup>24</sup> He merges thought in practical theological experience and developmental psychology. He draws from Paul Tillich who stated that faith is “that which holds a person’s ultimate concern in life and the beliefs and values that then emerge.”<sup>25</sup> He argues that it is far more than alignment with a doctrinal or creedal statement; rather, it is a “state of being.”<sup>26</sup> The ICFG would do well to engage social science and do the deeper work of understanding how “fearfully and wonderfully” God has made humans to grow into their best selves in order to create a culture of holistic development and discipleship over a lifetime.

### *Lack of Continuity and Culture*

The ICFG’s statistics indicate that the potential population of future Foursquare leaders is plentiful, however, its uneven history of implementing and sustaining

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<sup>22</sup> Dave Capuzzi and Mark D. Stauffer, eds., *Human Growth and Development across the Lifespan: Applications for Counselors* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley, 2016), 8, 21.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>24</sup> James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1981), 4.

<sup>25</sup> Capuzzi and Stauffer, eds., 58.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

leadership development reveals a lack of continuity and culture. As a result, the outcomes are clear.

With the opportunity before the ICFG, the denomination must address the cyclical challenges in disciple-making and leader development throughout its past forty-seven years. Geiger and Peck argue that in order for leadership development to move from well-intended conversations to effective action, the organization must continually stir its conviction, continually manage its culture, and continually implement its constructs.<sup>27</sup> The operative word in their premise is “continually.” The ICFG must use every communication medium at its disposal with continuity to express the urgency and conviction regarding the current trajectory. Programs and initiatives will not be sustainable to do the deep work that is needed to change this organization’s future. A long-term commitment to a complete culture change is needed.

Culture in society at large is defined as “the language, beliefs, values, norms, behaviors, and even material objects that are passed from one generation to the next.”<sup>28</sup> In his book, *Culture Making*, author Andy Crouch posits, “Culture is not just what human beings make of the world; it is not just the way human beings make sense of the world; it is in fact *part of the world* that every new human being has to make something of...our cultural products become part of the world that a future generation must make something of...”<sup>29</sup> Each generation must soberly assess what it has created of the world and what it

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<sup>27</sup>Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2016), 203.

<sup>28</sup>James M. Henslin, *Sociology: A Down to Earth Approach* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003), 39.

<sup>29</sup>Andy Crouch, *Culture Making* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press), 25.

has become as a result. The next generation deserves the inheritance of a culture it wants to be part of.

Organizational culture determines whether individuals have a sense of belonging to the collective. There are many ways to describe culture within a group: innovative, entrepreneurial, accountable, team-based, healthy, abusive, driven, etc. Organizations can develop these types of cultures intentionally or accidentally.<sup>30</sup> Geiger and Peck describe unhealthy church cultures and practices of discipleship and leader development. The following lists some of Geiger and Peck's taxonomy of unhealthy church cultures and discipleship practices: first, the "quitter church," one ambivalent toward leadership development; second, a "flywheel church," one which has a strong system but no one cares about people enough to humanize it; third, a "talk louder church," one which develops leaders for the sake of building the organization of the church and fulfilling its ministries.<sup>31</sup> Each of these attitudes have been true of ICFG at times. Through what has evolved in the denomination as a whole, there is a glaring absence of a caring, growth culture for the sake of people.

The term "deliberately developmental organizations" has been defined by Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey. In their work, *An Everyone Culture: Becoming a Deliberately Developmental Organization*, they describe three organizations with "the most powerful settings in the world they have found for developing people's capabilities, precisely because they have created a safe enough and demanding enough culture that

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<sup>30</sup>Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2012), 98.

<sup>31</sup> Geiger and Peck, *Designed*, 11-13.



everyone comes out of hiding.”<sup>32</sup> They describe how most people actually work two jobs: the one they are hired to do and a second one where everyone is working hard to mask their weaknesses, keep up their reputations, and manage organization politics.<sup>33</sup> The Church’s mission is to make disciples, therefore being deliberately developmental should be second nature to its mindset and practices. Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries has coined the term “authentizotic organizations” to describe those that are committed to being deliberately developmental. His term comes from *authentikos* meaning “true to one’s values” and *zootikos* meaning “vital to life.” People find themselves growing, inspired and enlivened by their work and are more loyal to the authentizotic organization.”<sup>34</sup> Christ calls his people to live fruitful, flourishing lives. Hence, the church’s culture should be characterized as deliberately developmental, an authentizotic organization at its core.

The ICFG is poised to create a growth culture and to be an organization that believes in and values each person as having a God-given design with potential and purpose. It must value vulnerability and coming out of hiding. It must celebrate honesty about weaknesses and continually encourage a mindset toward growth. This type of organization is intentional and commits to a culture of holistic development over a lifetime.

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<sup>32</sup> Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey, *An Everyone Culture: Becoming a Deliberately Developmental Organization* (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2016), 3. The three DDO’s studied in Kegan and Lahey’s work are: The Decurion Corporation, an entertainment and real estate company; Bridgewater Associates, a hedge-fund investing company; Next Jump Inc., an e-commerce tech company.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>34</sup> Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries, *Down the Rabbit Hole of Leadership: Leadership Pathology in Everyday Life* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2019), Kindle Loc. 1409.

## SECTION 2:

### OTHER PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

#### **What Will Grow Us?**

During the 2014 Reimagine Foursquare reform process, a gathering of influential church pastors engaged a conversation regarding the future focus of the ICFG. Their question was, “What will grow us?” Their interest was enlarging the movement by making it attractive to young, high-capacity leaders. No one asked if this was the right question or if it aligned to the mission of ICFG. There was no strategy for how these young, high-capacity leaders would accomplish the predetermined commitment to align everything to the Great Commission. There was no dialogue around missiology or how growing the organization would accomplish making disciples of all nations. No consideration was given to whether ICFG has been diligent to develop the potential leaders already present among them rather than simply trying to attract others.

Jesus’ mandate was clear in his last words which we call the Great Commission: “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”<sup>35</sup> Earlier, in a moment of divine revelation to Peter regarding the identity of the Christ, Jesus said *he* would build his church.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the responsibility of the church is to make disciples and Jesus, as head of the Church, is the one who builds and grows it. Paul later confirms the same

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<sup>35</sup> Matt. 28:19-20 NET

<sup>36</sup> Matt. 16:18 NET

when writing about the growth of the church in Corinth. He writes, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused it to grow. So neither the one who plants counts for anything, nor the one who waters, but God who causes the growth.”<sup>37</sup> The Church Growth emphasis of the last fifty years indicates the church has attempted to reverse the roles. Many pastors have given more attention to growing the church than growing the people. This has been true within the ICFG.

A four-stage missiology has guided Foursquare Missions International (FMI), the global missions arm of the ICFG, throughout its history (see Fig 1, p. 19). The approach provides a natural growth process for national development: initiate (make responsible, reproducing indigenous disciples), nurture (make responsible, reproducing indigenous leaders), expand (make responsible, reproducing congregations), send (make responsible, reproducing missionary sending churches). Within each of the four areas, there are multiple stages of development.<sup>38</sup> This missiology, embodying the conviction of indigenous empowerment, has resulted in over 85,000 churches and meeting places in 147 nations with 15 regions participating in a global council.<sup>39</sup> The central value in adopting this missiology was making disciples. FMI understood that growing disciples resulted in more leaders who would plant reproducing, sending churches who would then repeat the process and keep the wheel turning. This model of disciple-making is infinitely reproducible.

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<sup>37</sup> 1 Cor. 3:6-7 NET

<sup>38</sup> John L. Amstutz, *Disciples of All Nations* (Los Angeles: Foursquare Missions International/Foursquare Media, 2009), 34.

<sup>39</sup> International Church of the Foursquare Gospel Annual National Church Report 2019, denominational internal document.

Unfortunately, this same missiology was not adopted by the United States, though it was discussed at three critical moments in 1993, 2010, and 2014 of the Reimagine reform process. The 2014 process resulted in a new mission statement reflecting the desired shift in direction: “We are a Great Commission movement transforming communities through the multiplication of disciples, leaders, churches and movements.”<sup>40</sup> The past six years have still placed more emphasis on church multiplication and health (churches and movements) rather than growing disciples and leaders. It shows, once again, the tendency toward a church organization focus. The lead team recognizes this engrained habit and is narrowing the target to more and growing leaders together on mission. The intent is to reactivate stages one and two of the missiology and move from being local church centric (stage three) to people centric. Their summation is that stage three and four will be the results of stages one and two being vibrant and life-giving.

In recent years, Foursquare Missions International launched a campaign to identify more U.S. workers for global mission as they focused on ministering to unreached people groups. In the midst of the campaign, one of the missionaries encouraged the director to consider the need for more and *better* workers - workers that are healthy, well-disciplined, growing, and prepared for the assignment to which they are being sent. The ICFG has recognized the importance of stage one and two in FMI’s four-stage missiology; high efficacy in these stages produces vibrant, developmental cultures in the local church. Further, ICFG has determined that few of the local churches sending

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<sup>40</sup> “Mission,” International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, accessed August 9, 2020, <https://www.foursquare.org/about/mission>.

missions workers embody vibrant, developmental cultures in stages one and two. This further proves the need for a holistic organizational culture of people growth.

The new president invested fifteen months listening and observing and has developed three concentric circles to demonstrate his organizational design. The outer and largest circle is our culture, the next smaller circle represents cause, and the smallest circle is the corporation. He is emphasizing our growth culture as the all-encompassing focus. The target for cause is more and growing leaders together on mission through recruitment, development, and sending. The culture will shape the cause through development of these leaders and will also influence the approach to recruitment and sending. People growth will also permeate the corporation as all the employees will be expected to embody the culture. Decisions regarding the corporation will be considered through the corporation's cultural lens. The pastors asked, "What will grow us?" The answer is a caring, people-centric culture that influences every aspect of the organization.

### **Recruitment Strategies**

In the dialogue with the influential church pastors referenced above, a common pursuit they contended for was something they described as the "It Factor," the essence needed to attract young leaders. Based on statistics in the U.S. that suggested church planting was the best method for evangelism, the underlying principle was for ICFG to attract young church planters from the top ten percent of the talent pool who would be most effective in reaching large numbers of people. In describing the mentality of an organization with this approach to recruitment, Kegan and Lahey explain how these organizations create their leadership development methodology accordingly. They state, "These types of programs are provided only for a few, generally for the 5 to 10 percent of

employees who are designated ‘high potentials’ (to say nothing of the way such a label indirectly writes off the potential of 90 to 95 percent of your workers).”<sup>41</sup>

Conferences and multiplication networks are often geared around this small group of star talent. Once again, this is a residue of the Church Growth movement’s primary goal that focused on apostolically gifted leaders growing the church. Sadly, this approach often results in leaders using the people to grow the church, rather than the using the church to grow the people. These leaders are certainly valuable to the expansion of the church, but the talent search for a few apostolic leaders can also distract the church from seeing everyone for the gift they are and developing them to their full capacity. The model that Paul provided in Ephesians 4—comprised of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers—teaches that all are important. All are part of the gifts to the Church and necessary for the body to grow itself in love.<sup>42</sup>

One other common oversight is failing to see children and youth as disciples and leaders. Churches often disconnect the younger demographic from their leadership continuum. As a result, the church is losing its young people as they experience children and youth ministries that are siloed from the life of the church and receive no intentional call to a higher purpose or vital connection as part of the community. Rather, children and youth ministries often fall into the consumeristic mindset of entertainment with a bit of virtue presented. Seeing every person, from womb to tomb, with God-given potential to be developed over a lifetime creates a sense of value, purpose, and belonging. This is the mindset of a growth culture.

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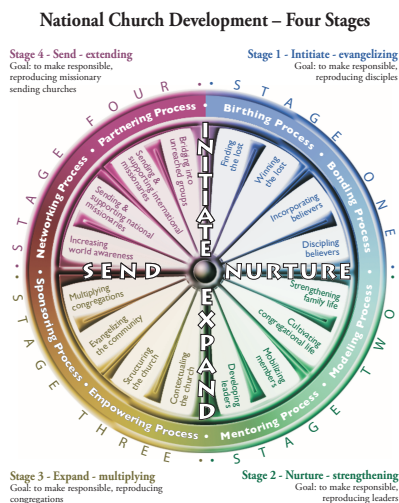
<sup>41</sup> Kegan and Lahey, *Everyone Culture*, 4.

<sup>42</sup> Eph. 4:9-16 NET.

## The ICFG's Call is to Interdenominational, World-wide Evangelism

The cornerstone of the founding Foursquare church states, “Dedicated unto the cause of interdenominational, world-wide evangelism.” This was the founder’s vision and it continues in the fiber of the ICFG. Evangelism was also at the heart of the original Church Growth Movement. Yet, over time, the movement failed to recognize that making disciples of all nations *was* Jesus’ evangelism strategy. Any church or movement that separates evangelism from discipleship is in danger of the same fate of atrophy of maturing disciples.

Jesus modeled evangelism by making disciples who multiplied and made him known through their ministry and stories about him. This is what the ICFG founder recognized as essential when she could no longer keep up with the demands of her global evangelism vision. Once McPherson gained this understanding, she intuitively worked the Great Commission strategy.



*Figure 1: Four Stages of National Church Development* <sup>43</sup>

FMI developed the four-stage missiology as a reproducible model derived from McPherson's discipleship and evangelism strategy. Additionally, they studied the book of Acts to discern how the early church carried out Jesus' commission. The resulting missiology sees evangelism and discipleship-making as synonymous ventures.

Critical to the missiology's effectiveness is the cyclical nature of the model, with all four stages always working simultaneously and continually. Foursquare utilizes the visual metaphor of a wheel, as seen in Figure 1, to convey perpetual movement and expansion motivated by global evangelism. Stage one and two are about making more and growing disciples and leaders (development). ... Stage three and four are about sending them into the world (expansion). ICFG's missiological model is based on a theological conviction that the Bible consistently instructs God's people to be his image bearers in the world.

This missiology of making and sending people to fill the earth with the presence of Christ is indicated throughout Scripture. In the Genesis account, God created humans in God's image and directed them to, "Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it!"<sup>44</sup> The Creation account includes an implicit statement that, as God's image bearers, humankind is to flourish and fill the world with God's likeness. However, just a few generations later we find the people living out their brokenness: "Let's make ourselves famous so we won't be scattered here and there across the Earth...Then God scattered

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<sup>43</sup> Amstutz, *Disciples*, 34.

<sup>44</sup> Genesis 1:28



them from there all over the world.”<sup>45</sup> God commands Abraham and Israel, as his representatives, to be a blessing to the nations and a reflection of God in a broken world.<sup>46</sup> Ultimately, however, they failed to fill the world with God’s likeness. Jesus redeems the original design, bringing everything under his headship and transforming his followers unto Christlikeness. Thus, Jesus conveys his evangelism model when he reiterates the original command to “be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth” by instructing his Church, “Go, make disciples of all nations.”<sup>47</sup> Our evangelism model must align to Christ’s disciple-making strategy.

As the U.S. is currently experiencing one-quarter of the cases of a global pandemic, political polarization, and social and economic upheaval, the faithful presence of Christ in society, represented in the model of making more and growing disciples and leaders, is crucial. The dearth of Jesus followers who live with the fruit of the spirit as their aroma implores the church to reconsider its mindset and work.

Because the ICFG has not been collectively committed to or communicating this vision of more and growing leaders together on mission, it will require creating a new culture for it to become normalized and effective. The current U.S. crises many leaders are experiencing is creating a more open environment to innovative thinking. Evangelism as the ICFG has known it since the 1970’s may no longer be effective. Church planting by a charismatic, high-capacity leader opening an attractional church is not having the same impact as in past decades, and the aforementioned social realities are changing how

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<sup>45</sup> Genesis 11:4-9 MSG

<sup>46</sup> Genesis 12, Isa. 61:9

<sup>47</sup> Matthew 28:19

people think about community and the white, evangelical church. Today, evangelism requires being with our communities, engaged in its challenges, growing and living the life and character of Christ before our neighbors, while serving the greater good. The evidence of salt and light is on the street, not under the steeple. A growth culture exudes an ethos of disciple-nurturing qualities that include love and acceptance, grace and truth, belief in and expectation of people to become a reflection of our good God, and to bring that goodness to the world.

The ICFG's purpose is the same today as the day the cornerstone was placed in Angelus Temple: "Dedicated unto the cause of interdenominational, world-wide evangelism." Without a culture shift, this cornerstone statement and the four-stage missiology will only be words in granite or on a page. Creating a growth culture in the ICFG will cultivate the environment for a 21<sup>st</sup> century expression of the missiological wheel and will gain momentum in the U.S. and return the focus to making disciples of all nations.

### **Create Innovative Leadership Development Programs**

Another aspect of the pastors' strategy in the 2014 reform process was to create innovative, world-class training for leaders. The ICFG leadership's desire was to have resources that would compete with the best church multiplication networks. Though these certainly augment a leader's growth, they do not address the holistic, life-long development of a person. They tend to be "how-to" helps by pastors who have experienced success and believe if others would follow their model, they would also experience effectiveness. This could more appropriately be described as training, not

development. While leaders do need training, it is a small segment of their overall developmental need.

Much has been written about what leadership is and who is and is not a leader. Questions like, “Are they born or made?” are plentiful. The second stage of the FMI missiology is leader development, which is also seen as maturing discipleship. Geiger and Peck introduce their work by making a case for the Church being a leadership locus. They state,

If we believe the command to make disciples (Matt. 28:19) is bigger and more beautiful than merely making converts and calling people to “make a decision,” then we understand the essential role of the Church in maturing people in Christ. The command to make disciples carries the connotation of forming believers who learn and develop over a lifetime. One result, then, of discipleship is believers who serve and influence others in all spheres of life. The Great Commission is Plan A; Jesus has no Plan B. Discipleship, developing believers who grow over a lifetime, is His method. The full extent of discipleship is the development of disciples who are able to lead and develop others, not merely people who gather together for worship once a week.<sup>48</sup>

The authors lament the separation of the two, making disciples and developing leaders, stating Jesus was simultaneously discipling the Twelve and developing them as leaders. They write, “While it may be helpful to view leadership development as advanced discipleship...it is detrimental to view leadership development as distinct from discipleship. The Church holds the conviction to develop others for the future. More than any organization, team or institution, developing future leaders is in the people of God’s DNA.”<sup>49</sup> This makes the case for a growth culture rather than simply providing leadership development resources.

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<sup>48</sup> Geiger and Peck, *Designed*, 3.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

In a blog post updated June 6, 2019 on leadnet.org, Brent Dolfo argues that while there are many factors for the rapid multiplication of some churches and organizations, one of the key accelerants to planting more churches, starting more campuses, or deploying more people to impact a city is how diligent a church is in leadership development.”<sup>50</sup> This is a description of the FMI wheel’s holistic approach from stage one and two to three and four. Further, Kegan and Lahey’s research revealed that deliberately developmental organizations grow the people and the organization grows as a result.

It is second nature from the historical habitus of the ICFG to believe an innovative new program will attract and grow leaders. The narrative, statistics, and mindsets reveal innovative ideas may start well but will have little hope for sustainability and culture shift. Certainly, functional structures and systems will be necessary to support the culture, but these alone will not bring about the desired outcomes. Additionally, with each start and stop of a new initiative, those involved through various iterations of the programs develop a level of cynicism.

Leaders desire to grow. Though there is a plethora of world class, easily accessible training available for online learning, these do not provide the full scope of the components necessary for growth. The student autonomously engages the material, yet formation requires relationship. Also, these modes of training are not intended to encourage practice and reflection in community. In recent years, a number of younger Foursquare pastors have joined other church planting networks in order to have access to

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<sup>50</sup> Brent Dolfo, “10 Truths of Churches That Do a Great Job With Leadership Development Part 1,” Leadership Network, last updated June 6, 2019, <https://leadnet.org/ten-truths-of-churches-that-do-a-great-job-with-leadership-development-part-1/>.

developmental resourcing and mentorship because they have not found it within the ICFG. A full-orbed growth culture with learning, relationship, and reflective practice cultivates the most conducive environment for personal and collective growth.

In their book, *Building Leaders: How Successful Companies Develop the Next Generation*, Conger and Benjamin address a needed mindset, one that understands that people development is a life-long process and involves everyone in every area of the organization. They posit it is dangerous for an organization to believe a singular program within the system will be sufficient.

In reality, an organization needs the mind-set of the military, where leadership development becomes an integral part of a manager's daily life and essential to the organization's future success. As a result, it is seen as a long-term investment requiring developmental opportunities over one's career...They must be prepared to reinvent the very content and focus of what they are developing on a regular basis.<sup>51</sup>

This long view of maturing development with opportunities afforded throughout the organization for intentional relationship and reflective experience is a marker of an intentional and sustainable growth culture.

The ICFG can fulfill its 1923 founding mission with a 21<sup>st</sup> century growth culture.

In *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*, the authors describe the needed action:

Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive. The concept of thriving is drawn from evolutionary biology, in which a successful adaptation has three characteristics: (1) it preserves the DNA essential for the species' continued survival; (2) it discards (reregulates or rearranges) the DNA that no longer serves the species' current needs; and (3) it creates DNA arrangements that give the species' the ability to flourish in new

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<sup>51</sup> Jay A. Conger and Beth Benjamin, *Building Leaders: How Successful Companies Develop the Next Generation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 262.

ways and in more challenging environments. Successful adaptations enable a living system to take the best from its history into the future.<sup>52</sup>

The ICFG has the opportunity in this critical moment to assess its DNA of discipleship and leader development and determine what must be preserved, what needs to be discarded, and what needs to be rearranged in order to promote thriving in this era. It should evaluate the “best from its history” that is to be taken into the future in order to flourish. It must determine areas to courageously stop what is no longer contributing to a vibrant future. The ICFG has the components of a growth culture throughout its story, and it is time to recapture that essence.

As the thesis of this paper will show, a growth culture provides the best solution to the ICFG’s challenge of their aging demographic and church-centric emphasis. A growth culture anchors them to their original DNA through people centricity and provides an opportunity for a mosaic of unity and diversity.

Within section three, this dissertation provides further definition, outlines five culture markers of the collective and three culture markers of individuals which are to be established within the organization and measured for a long-term sustained growth culture.

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<sup>52</sup> Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2009), loc. 374-379, Kindle.

### SECTION 3:

#### THESIS

#### **Definition of a Growth Culture**

The title of this dissertation is intentional with each word describing a patient process and desired outcome. The Oxford Dictionary's definition of *cultivate* is "to prepare and use land for growing."<sup>53</sup> The word *culture* has become popularized and has lost some of its historic meaning. In *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Williams summarized its early definition as "a general process of intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development." The authors go on to say, "With its most immediate roots in Latin *cultura*, referring to the process of cultivation, caring, or tending, culture implied growth and development."<sup>54</sup> Culture in its historic meaning is a caring environment which cultivates the growth and development of the object placed within it.

Disciple-centric growth is the life-long journey of people planted in a community with a culture that supports them as they grow in following Jesus; becoming like him from the inside out in love (desire, affection), character and mission (purpose). As with *culture*, *disciple* and *discipleship* have also lost some of their historic meaning. Some churches distinguish evangelism, discipleship and spiritual formation. Evangelism is thought of as the mission of the Church to share the gospel with unbelievers with the

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<sup>53</sup> <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/cultivate?q=cultivate>

<sup>54</sup> Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg and Meaghan Morris, eds., *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 64-65.

hope they are converted. Afterward, they are disciplined through a new believers class where they are taught the ways of Christ often centered on external behavior modification. Spiritual formation, not always found in Evangelical circles, is the interior growth process of maturing into Christlikeness through spiritual practices.

My own growth journey and observation of others' coupled with my study of the New Testament scripture leads me to believe that disciple making starts before conversion and is a lifetime process encompassing evangelism and spiritual formation. We see this in those who followed Jesus such as Simon Peter. He began following before believing. He was impulsive, brash, faithful *and* fearful, he denied *and* abandoned Jesus, he was remorseful and repentant, he led in the early church, opened the door for the Gentiles yet got out of line and out of sorts with Paul. Then at the end of his life when being martyred, he humbly asked to be crucified upside down as he wasn't worthy to die like his Lord. Though one of the Twelve Apostles, he never stopped being a disciple, a growing, always-becoming, Jesus follower. The lifetime formation of Christ in his mind and heart led to behaviors like Christ through his hands.

Dwight J. Zscheile in *The Agile Church: Spirit-Led Innovation in an Uncertain Age*, says,

To be a disciple in the ancient context was to be a learner, apprentice, or student, not so much in an informational sense but in a formational sense. That is, following Jesus meant close observation of his actions in relationship, going where he went, staying where he stayed, sharing conversations, listening, and trying things out. It was about being formed into a new way of life – what came in the book of Acts to be called 'the Way.'<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Agile Church: Spirit-led Innovations in an Uncertain Age* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2014), Kindle Loc. 827.



In his book *Creating a Missional Culture: Equipping the Church for the Sake of the World*, J.R. Woodward asks and answers a pertinent question:

So why do we lack mature disciples and mature communities of faith? One reason is that we fail to understand the hidden power of culture in life transformation...As coworkers with God, we create culture and culture reshapes us. Understanding the transformative power of culture is vital if we want to have mature communities of faith.<sup>56</sup>

In describing a growth culture, Tony Schwartz says learning organizations, as popularized by Peter Senge, typically focus on “intellectually oriented issues such as knowledge and expertise.” He states,

That’s plainly critical, but a true growth culture also focuses on deeper issues connected to how people feel, and how they behave as a result. In a growth culture, people build their capacity to see through blind spots; acknowledge insecurities and shortcomings rather than unconsciously acting them out; and spend less energy defending their personal value so that have more energy available to create external value. How people feel – and make other people feel – becomes as important as how much they know.<sup>57</sup>

Organizational culture has been a popular subject for over two decades for Patrick Lencioni of the Table Group. He speaks of the power of organizational health in his book, *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business*. He posits that organizational health is about integrity: “whole, consistent, and complete, that is, when its management, operations, strategy, and culture fit together and make sense.”<sup>58</sup> This researcher would argue management, operations, and strategy are all culture-shaping practices. These do not “fit together” with culture, they help shape

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<sup>56</sup> J.R. Woodward, *Creating a Missional Culture: Equipping the Church for the Sake of the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 30-31.

<sup>57</sup> Tony Schwartz, “Create a Growth Culture, Not a Performance-Obsessed One,” *Harvard Business Review*, March 7, 2018.

<sup>58</sup> Patrick Lencioni, *The Advantage*, 5.

culture. A growth culture, as defined in this dissertation, includes every aspect of a healthy organization—including values and beliefs, relationships, organizational clarity, communication, systems and structures, evaluation, and accountability—as each works together to create, strengthen, and sustain the culture. The result is that the organization cares for, encourages, and cultivates growth in its members for the sake of their flourishing and as a result the organization experiences the benefit. Lencioni says, “A good way to recognize health is to look for the signs that indicate an organization has it. These include minimal politics and confusion, high degrees of morale and productivity, and very low turnover among good employees.”<sup>59</sup>

The growth culture defined in this dissertation for the ICFG must be based upon the following beliefs and principles: every person has value and is created in the image of God; every person is uniquely designed and has God-given gifts to contribute to the greater good; people must experience feeling safe so they are encouraged to be vulnerable and honest about their challenges and weaknesses; each person is celebrated in their strengths; all desire to grow and are open to feedback regarding blind spots; and most importantly, grace and truth are the *modus operandi*. The goal is to collectively support and resource the growth of every person to be a better disciple, disciple maker, and leader sent on mission. This culture must permeate every aspect of the ICFG’s organizational life in its distributed leadership team, then further disseminated so that it becomes the norm throughout the ministerium and local expressions.

The remaining topics in this section describe the growth culture markers that emerged in the research from studying the selected churches and organizations. The first

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

five represent markers of the collective, the organization, and its growth environment. The collective is like the ground in which the seed is planted. It must have the proper ingredients conducive to growth. The final three represent the markers in an individual's transformational development and must be given intentionality in the collective systems. Organizations that have all eight markers create an environment for people to grow and the organization to flourish.

The purpose of culture markers is to provide indicators toward a direction so that collectives and individuals can evaluate their trajectory. Organizations and individuals need signals about their culture to gauge whether they are on the right path toward growth. Markers provide a way of assessing effectiveness and indicating areas of needed adjustment and improvement.

### **Culture Markers of the Collective**

The following five markers were consistent in the three churches described in the field research. Though each church expressed them in unique ways due to their respective contexts, they were clearly identifiable and able to be measured for signs of strength and weakness.

#### *Culture Marker #1: It Starts with a Belief System*

A collective belief system is the foundational mark of a growth culture. The organization must have agreed upon tenants and organizing principles that unite its people. Next Jump, Inc. is one of the organizations described by Kegan and Lahey as deliberately developmental. Kegan and Lahey note that Next Jump, Inc. “sums up the

belief system behind its culture with an equation: Better Me + Better You = Better Us.”<sup>60</sup> Each part of the equation holds a statement of belief. First, “Better Me” describes Next Jump Inc’s expectation that each individual is personally responsible to grow and improve as part of his or her contribution to the company. Next, “Better You” is about the meaning people derive from work through helping others, inside and outside the company. Next Jump’s leaders are struck by the research suggesting human beings are wired to serve others.”<sup>61</sup> Therefore, they build it within the company. Every job supports service to others, infusing meaningfulness into the work environment. The result of these steps is a “Better us”—everyone in and around the company benefits and has a deeper sense of fulfillment. Another reward is the company’s profitable bottom line which they attribute to the overall culture. The executives state, “At Next Jump, the organizing belief behind these programs is that when we feel our own growth and when we engage in activities that also helps others (including helping our colleagues grow), we can experience true wealth in the form of long-term, sustained happiness.”<sup>62</sup>

Decurion, a theatre group also described by Kegan and Lahey, have “axioms” or “fundamental beliefs about people and work” printed on posters around their conference rooms to keep their beliefs before them.<sup>63</sup> Kegan and Lahey summarize the three companies they have written about in this way:

Their big bet on a deliberately developmental culture is rooted in the unshakable belief that business can be an ideal context for people’s growth, evolution, and

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<sup>60</sup> Kegan and Lahey, *Everyone Culture*, 20.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 26.

flourishing and that such personal development may be the secret weapon for business success in the future.<sup>64</sup>

Unshakable belief marks this culture, resulting in firm and consistent behaviors that keep the organizations centered on growing people. Of every organization in society, the Church should be leading the way in this conviction, given our Founder's mandate to make disciples and our call to mature into Christlikeness.

In his book, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society*, Eugene Peterson draws from the quote of Friedrich Nietzsche. He writes, "The essential thing 'in heaven and earth' is...that there should be long obedience in the same direction; there thereby results, and has always resulted in the long run, something which has made life worth living."<sup>65</sup> A consistent pursuit gives value. Peterson goes on to define the forces of society that discourage this mindset and describes a biblical designation for Jesus followers:

Disciple (mathétés) says we are people who spend our lives apprenticed to our master, Jesus Christ. We are in a growing-learning relationship, always. A disciple is a learner, but not in the academic setting of a schoolroom, rather at *the* work site of a craftsman. We do not acquire information about God but skills in faith.<sup>66</sup>

This perspective must shape the belief system that marks a growth culture in the church. The present research has revealed that this core belief permeates a culture where disciple-making is not the means to an end, rather it is the end itself. We do not make disciples so we can have more leaders to build bigger churches. We utilize the resources of all

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>65</sup> Eugene Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), loc. 96-100, Kindle.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., loc. 102.

churches, large and small, and all ministries, to make more disciples who align to Jesus' command to go and make disciples.

The purpose of disciple-making, according to the collective belief system, is that the world will see an accurate representation of Jesus, through his body, the Church. This collective body, apprenticed to Christ, speaks, lives and demonstrates the love of God, which is the message of the gospel, to the world. Each member's focus is two-fold. First, the disciple must always remain a disciple. Therefore, each member must dedicate themselves to their own apprenticeship process with Jesus. Second, they are equally focused on replicating in others what they have learned, so they are simultaneously being disciplined and making disciples.<sup>67</sup> This two-way focus provides the path to maturity while making more and growing leaders. Collectively, these growing people who love and worship Jesus also come to know him and become like him; they do the works of his ministry and are empowered by his Spirit to influence the world.

Like Next Jump, Inc., the Church's individual members are responsible for their own maturity and growth. Also, like this organization, the Church knows we were made to serve and help one another. As a result, the entire Church, Christ's body, is strengthened and grows as a result.

At Fellowship NWA, their mission is "to produce and release spiritual leaders who know and express the authentic Christ to Northwest Arkansas and the world."<sup>68</sup> In each interview, as the team was asked to define "spiritual leader," the response was the same: "A maturing disciple with a kingdom focus." From its founding, there has been a

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<sup>67</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 11:1.

<sup>68</sup> "Mission and Vision," About Us, Fellowship NWA, accessed October 15, 2020, <https://www.fellowshipnwa.org/AboutUs>.

core belief in people and a passion to help them “realize their full potential as spiritual leaders – leaders equipped to express their authentic relationship with Christ to those within their neighborhoods, workplaces, community and beyond.”<sup>69</sup> This common belief system has shaped every aspect of Fellowship NWA. Their mission, to produce and release spiritual leaders, is clear. Everything in the organization is aligned to grow people. Their emphasis is not on building churches or organizing ministries. They believe that in the normal flow of life people are sent by God to express their relationship with Christ to the world. Fellowship simply provides launchpads for support, specifically to those sent for church planting and global missions work. The church believes as spiritual leaders grow in maturity and Christlikeness, they will be sent to impact Northwest Arkansas and the world with the love of God through many different vocations.

The senior pastors of Iglesia Dios Restaura, in Glendale, California model and communicate an infectious love and belief in people that resonates in the culture. They hold this as their central value. The senior pastor sees potential in people that most would say have been disqualified because of their past. His grounded belief in the restorative work of God motivates him to see the promise of God’s design for every person.<sup>70</sup> Brené Brown describes a leader as “anyone who takes responsibility for finding the potential in people and processes, and who has the courage to develop that potential.”<sup>71</sup> This type of courageous and hopeful leadership within every age group marks Iglesia Dios Restaura.

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<sup>69</sup> “The Training Center,” Fellowship NWA, accessed October 15, 2020, <https://fellowshipnwa.org/trainingcenter>.

<sup>70</sup> Walter and Marysol Ramos, Senior Pastors, Iglesia Dios Restaura, interview with author, February 12, 2020.

<sup>71</sup> Brene Brown, *Dare to Lead: Brave Work, Tough Conversations, Whole Hearts* (New York: Random House, 2018), 4.

This predominately Hispanic church of 300 people models truth and grace. Disciplined in their message and commitment to people, this church has hope for each person. As a result, people are open with their struggles and turn to the church for help. The name of the church, Dios Restaura, God Restores, is lived out through its belief in God's ability to restore broken marriages and addicted or hopeless lives. Everyone is welcome and moved toward wholeness and helping others do the same. The church sees children and youth as valued members and leaders in the church, and senior adults are honored and cared for as elders. This inclusive belief system creates a sense of healthy, inter-generational family relationships focused on growing every person.

Community Christian Church in Naperville, IL holds a core belief that God has a dream for the world that includes everyone finding their way back to Him, and their mission is to help that happen. The church's website states, "At the beginning of time, God created the entire universe and all its creatures. He continues to exercise His supreme power to sustain His creation. Throughout history, He has expressed His desire to be our God and to have a personal, eternal relationship with us."<sup>72</sup> Their belief system, rooted in humanity being created in the *imago Dei*, strengthens their belief in and posture toward every individual. From children's ministry to church planting, their focus is to point people to God and lead them to know him personally. The large atrium in their main campus, complete with accoutrements conducive to relationship, is continually filled with people one-on-one or in small groups discipling and encouraging one another.

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<sup>72</sup> "About God," What We Believe, Community Christian Church, accessed May 12, 2020, <https://communitychristian.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/WhatWeBelieve.pdf>.



A group of college students started this church with the same mission it has today. Their vision was to establish churches throughout Chicagoland as the methodology to help people find their way back to God. Their strategy included a development process that would guide their personal and leadership growth for multiplication. Though their implementation of this process has been remarkable, one could note the process missed one area. Community Christian Church lacks a clear pathway of leadership development among children and youth. The church has instilled value in children and youth and has focused on helping younger generations find their way to God, but they have not provided a pathway for younger people to integrate into their leader apprenticeship.

In each of the churches researched, their core beliefs about God's purposes and people's potential have marked their culture, shaped their mission and vision, and defined their ministry practice. Having spent multiple days with each church, interviewing many staff and members, and observing multiple gatherings, their belief systems are evident, positive, and consistent.

A common belief system that focuses on people and their potential to grow throughout a lifetime cultivates a growth culture. Healthy organizations fiercely create and protect a culture that aligns to that common belief.

### *Culture Marker #2: It Requires a Committed Community*

No individual leader creates a growth culture alone. It requires a committed community of people, a collective, that portrays the belief system in their own individual lives and embodies that belief in their relationships inside and outside the church.

A growth culture creates a bond between people that comes from the normative practice of vulnerability and grace, acceptance of strengths and weaknesses, and

encouragement to every member to make growth a lifetime commitment. It encourages belief in one another and the unique place each has in the body without competition or comparison. This committed community fights to keep the beliefs and values intact and lived out by “speaking the truth in love” in order to “grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” (Ephesians 4:15-16 NIV)

An important topic is the kind of leadership model that will value, form and contribute to this committed community. A top-down model often makes true community difficult because of the power differential inherent within hierarchical organizations. J.R. Woodward states, “If we are to meaningfully connect with the digital generation and live more faithfully to the narrative of Scripture, we need to shift from a hierarchical to polycentric approach to leadership, where equippers live as cultural architects cultivating a fruitful missional ethos that fully activates the priesthood of all believers.”<sup>73</sup> This represents a committed leadership community in which each person is valued and appreciated as a necessary contributor. Woodward believes the Apostle Paul “reveals to us a polycentric structure, where leaders interrelate and incarnate the various purposes of Christ in such a way that the entire body is activated to service and matures in love. The five equippers are gifted by God to help the congregation move toward maturity in Christ...”<sup>74</sup> This model is conducive to a growth culture as the shared leadership model demonstrates mutuality and interdependence.

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<sup>73</sup> Woodward, *Missional Culture*, 60.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 59-60.

Woodward includes a chart outlining aspects of leadership as viewed through the print age, the broadcast age, and now the digital age. He defines those in the digital age as “impartational leaders” as seen in Figure 2. In varying degrees, all three churches in this study embody a committed community that utilizes Woodward’s model of impartational leadership.

<b>Digital Age 2010-</b>	<b>Kinds of Structures</b>	<b>Focus of Leadership</b>	<b>Nature of Relationships with Others</b>	<b>Approach to Discipleship</b>	<b>Qualities and Skills Needed</b>
<b>Impartational Leaders</b>	Collaborative, grass roots oriented, roving leadership, open-source approach, dispersed authority, maintain cohesion through relationships and collaboration	Like gardeners they cultivate a collaborative approach to current conditions, opportunities and challenges; they teach by example	Unscripted, personal, familial; people use organizations to fulfill their missions for mutual benefit	Takes place in the living room and streets; relational, interactive, mentorship	Approachable, agile, networker, touchable, accessible, missional, transparent, advocate, sustainability, resilient, collective achievement, storytelling

*Figure 2 – Impartational Leaders* <sup>75</sup>

Fellowship NWA began with a polycentric leadership model, and after 35 years, it is in its second generation of leadership and continues to multiply effectively according to their mission. One of the interviewees was part of the original seven couples who envisioned Fellowship and has been an active leader throughout its history. She described the commitment to the mission and vision of the launch community and how the commitment both spread and strengthened over time as people experienced the culture

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 68.

becoming reality. Today, one only needs to walk into the atrium before and after the worship gathering to sense the depth of relationship and leadership. The room's design and layout encourage relational connection. It is common to see bibles open and people praying together, their body language indicating the deep conversations taking place. People often continue their conversations, sometimes missing parts of the worship gathering, to value these important moments.

Fellowship NWA's polycentric leadership is modeled through their behavioral values. The theme among the staff is, "No name but one Name." When the church onboards new staff, they are told, "Your name is not to be seen anywhere, but we want to see your fingerprints everywhere."<sup>76</sup> Hospitality, humility, and approachability are the most pronounced characteristics of Fellowship NWA's leadership. Many of the original group are now in their seventies and are still active in community while supporting the younger leaders. One of the long-time team members explained how the polycentric structure cultivates mutuality. She recounted a time when an auto dealer wanted to give one of the founding leaders a new car. The leader quickly responded that to do so, the dealer would need to give each team member a new car. As all are equal, he would not receive more than the others. The leaders' commitment to one another and the mission has only strengthened through the years, and the congregation now replicates the characteristics of its leadership.

Similarly, though Iglesia Dios Restaura began in the heart of its founding couple who serve as co-pastors, it quickly developed into a committed family. This familial atmosphere is palpable; everyone, from the youngest to the oldest, serves, shares

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<sup>76</sup> Interviews by author with five pastoral leaders. September 15, 2019 – April 6, 2020.

responsibility, and cares for one another. Their commitment to God, each other, and their city is obvious in everything from their collective gatherings, to small groups, to community outreach. Most every day of the week there is activity at the church facility. The church building, located on the corner of a residential neighborhood, is an embedded part of the community. Even the facility has a familial sense as people gather there daily, and some team members live in apartments on the premises.

Groups of people lead the ministry of the church to meet community needs, provide children and youth experiences, and develop maturing disciples in every age group. Similar to a family, each member of the church contributes, carrying out mutual responsibilities for the betterment of the whole. Every aspect of the church's community life has a flavor of togetherness and joy. Hospitality, humility, approachability, and commitment are marked characteristics of the leaders of Iglesia Dios Restaura, and these qualities resonate throughout the organization. What began with one couple has now multiplied into a committed community—a family—on mission to see people restored and growing into all God has designed.

Community Christian began with a group of friends on a college campus with a dream for the people of Chicagoland. This launch group multiplied, and the relationships are still foundational and rich some twenty years later. Part of the system that keeps them relationally connected is the deep value for development through their apprentice model. The close connection through intentional mentoring has created a strong network for committed community. Their all-staff meeting, which included leaders from every campus in the greater region, was lively with conversation and engagement. The meeting was marked by laughter, concern for individual needs, celebration of unique campus

accomplishments, worship, and prayer. The community quickly embraces and enculturates new members of the team. There was obvious intentionality in strengthening relationships and commitment to the mission.

A committed community is one that embodies the shared beliefs and values, norms, behaviors, and language of the growth culture. Its commitment reflects this goal for the body of Christ in Ephesians: “Until we’re all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God’s Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ.”<sup>77</sup>

An important essential of a healthy culture is to guard against small cliques within the community that can form over time. Left unchecked, what began as committed community can become closed groups, making it difficult for new people to join. One of the values of the ICFG is kingdom relationships, and the collective has often been called “family.” This term is endearing to some and painful to others. Today, Foursquare’s family dynamic derives more from historical roots of older generations than from enculturation of the ICFG’s stated values. For many ministers, their commitment is loosely held and not based on a clear sense of shared beliefs, values, mission, and vision.

Articulating direct identity statements and consistent behaviors that demonstrate lived values is critical for the ICFG. This provides people with a discernable choice to align to a common belief system and form a committed community or not. Ravasi and Schulz state, “Research on organizational identities indicates that the events that call into question members’ beliefs about central and distinctive attributes of an organization can

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<sup>77</sup> Eph. 4:7-13 MSG

challenge collective self-perceptions and self-categorizations.”<sup>78</sup> Researchers have called these events identity threats. With the lack of a committed community to a shared identity and belief system, the ICFG finds itself at a crossroads in this next season. Though Foursquare leadership has worked to rebuild trust in recent years, there is more work ahead.

As the new president of ICFG brings clear direction for the future it provides the opportunity for the members and observers to determine whether these are the beliefs and community to which they will commit. In order to begin this process, this dissertation author recommends utilizing the growth markers to evaluate the organization and develop and launch an immediate action plan. Groups within the ICFG that would be most advantageous to start with include denominational employees, NextGen leaders (cradle to college ministries), new church planters and FMI workers, dissatisfied pastors looking for change, and those entering the credentialing process. These groups are more apt to be early adopters in the culture shift and can create a committed community. Intentional growth cohorts can be developed with these like-minded people. Over time, this population will create a tipping point with consistent behaviors and focused communication. This is where the remaining culture markers are essential.

*Culture Marker #3: It is Enculturated by Clear and Consistent Communication*

Lencioni outlines the following four disciplines of healthy organizations: build a cohesive leadership team; create clarity; overcommunicate clarity; and reinforce clarity.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Davide Ravasi and Majken Schultz, "Responding to Organizational Identity Threats: Exploring the Role of Organizational Culture," *Academy of Management Journal* 49, no. 3 (2006): 432.

<sup>79</sup> Lencioni, *The Advantage*, 15-16.

These four disciplines convey a committed community with clear vision, reinforced by its communication and practices. A growth culture is marked not only by its central beliefs and committed community; it also implements focused, intentional, and consistent vision messaging that becomes second nature throughout the organization. Lencioni states, “The point is that people are skeptical about what they’re being told unless they hear it consistently over time. That need for repetition is not a testament to undue cynicism on the part of employees; it is the result of the generic, almost spoof-like communication that takes place within so many organizations.”<sup>80</sup>

Communication either cultivates or erodes a growth culture. Critical messaging takes place in many forms—verbal, written, and behavioral. The communication responsibility does not fall on one department or leadership team; every member must own and embody the message. For a growth culture to be realized, everyone must be the storyteller of the organization in word and deed.

The vision and mission of Fellowship NWA is clear and consistent in their messaging. One notable experience in every gathering and interview conducted was the focused simplicity of the church. They do not personify a sense of busyness, doing too much, or hurried desperation about the mission. There is a methodical, intentional, and peaceful atmosphere that radiates in every corporate gathering, in small group interaction, and in one-on-ones with the leadership team and among the members. This communicates culture. Every aspect of their large gathering is connected and sends one clear message each week. They communicate through written and spoken means using technology, music, and the arts.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., loc. 2520.



Each interviewee gave consistent answers regarding mission and vision, values definitions, systems and practices, and the overall culture. The organization's ethos was second nature in their responses. The Training Center director emphasized they are not about assimilating people into their organization; they are about enculturating people for the sake of the mission. They reiterate their mission and vision in every gathering through every means possible.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Fellowship NWA had no large group gatherings for over six months. Their theme for 2020, which was developed in 2018, is "clarity." As the large group gatherings ceased, their clear vision has served them well. They were prepared to move everything online and continue with their mission just as before. They were clear in their message that the church had not closed, only the large buildings had. Their mission to develop and release spiritual leaders was just as relevant and necessary. Their communications were concise and included pertinent information to continue ministry as usual.

Iglesia Dios Restaura has a single purpose: to believe in, draw out, and develop the potential in broken people. Because of their familial culture, much more of their vision is verbal and experienced rather than written, though their website does give a brief overview. One must only encounter the greeter at the door or the students coming out of their weekly gathering to hear the vision. They communicate clearly and consistently, though more organically, through atmosphere, relational conversations, modeling, and what they celebrate publicly.

When they closed their weekly large group gatherings due to the pandemic, they had colorful yard signs printed with the same ethos that permeated their Sunday morning

gatherings. They spoke of caring for the neighbors, praying for the community, and their availability to those in need. Small groups continued to meet, and online services exuded their family love and concern. The church has a tent in the parking lot next to the community apartments that has food available to the neighborhood for those in need. The message is clear: “We care about our neighbors and we are here for you.”

Community Christian is very intentional in their vision and messaging. Each age group clearly articulates their contribution to helping people find their way back to God. The pastors write books and produce resources to promote the vision. The walls are painted with their values and various strategies to fulfill the vision. Stories from different members, encouragement from senior leaders, and media driven communication fill staff meetings and church gatherings. All focus on the mission and vision. Ministry department leaders use the same language in expressing their contextualized version; each uses age or group appropriate methodology for communicating it to the people. Their creative strategies all point to their single-focused mission with various ways to accomplish it. Their visual presentation and unified messaging keep their purpose central.

Each of these three churches, though unique in the ethos of the culture, language, and medium of messaging, has organizational clarity which is reinforced with consistent and clear communication.

Organizations often underestimate the importance of clarity. In today’s world—filled with noise, opinions, confirmation bias, polarization and complexity—communication requires lucid, creative redundancy to gain attention. Everything must connect to the organization’s message. The gatherings, facilities, media, verbal and written communications, programming, and relationships all share a message. That

message must be simple, clear, and consistent. Lencioni's emphasis on creating clarity, overcommunicating clarity, and reinforcing clarity is necessary because of the challenges of communication in today's world. What we decide, platform, celebrate, and execute in the organization are all part of that communication.

Researching the ICFG's archives, website, and various communiques suggests this is one of the critical areas of transformation for the denomination as a collective. Foursquare's communication lacks purposeful focus and clear messaging. Identity and mission must be articulated with consistency of message and continuity of practice over a long period of time to create the desired growth culture and to sustain its future.

*Culture Marker #4: It is Supported by Functional Structures and Systems*

In order for the environment to produce growing people, it must be supported by functional structures and systems. Without this, it is an aspirational dream with few stories of transformation or long-term realized growth. That which is intended to support can become an obstacle.

From its inception, Fellowship NWA has designed systems and structures to ensure support of the mission and vision. NWA uses the greenhouse, training center, and launchpad as three metaphors for their systemic development process.

They use the greenhouse metaphor for nurturing growth. It speaks to the environment Fellowship NWA believes they need for the healthy development of spiritual leaders. A greenhouse provides the right warmth, protection, and care for plants to thrive. This is found at Fellowship in both large and small gatherings as the culture invites each person to be fully engaged with those around them and provides a safe place for honesty and vulnerability with care and support.

The training center metaphor is another system Fellowship NWA uses to provide the teaching and training needed to produce spiritual leaders. They provide core classes which every member is asked to commit to. They also offer a plethora of other classes addressing various topics related to stages of growth. These classes are relational in construct and promoted in the large gatherings in various ways as part of the developmental offerings.

Fellowship NWA utilizes the launch pad metaphor to describe their sending system. Whether sent to school, the workplace, a global mission, a church plant, or life in the community, everyone is to be sent as “spiritual leaders who know and express the authentic Christ.”<sup>81</sup>

The celebration/cell structure is the big picture framework for the development of knowledge, character, skill, and personal vision clarity in each spiritual leader. Practical experience accompanies personal vision clarity so that individuals grow as leaders under mentoring oversight. This leadership discovery process begins with middle schoolers. Each generation reaches back to serve younger ones and has the opportunity to develop leadership skills. As with personal vision clarity, there is a system to support growth in each of the areas of the development framework.

Because of Fellowship NWA’s value of whole life development experienced in large and small group gatherings (celebration/cell), this structure supports toddlers through senior adults in their continued growth. In the weekend gatherings, children experience both the large and small group dynamic and the intentional focus each bring.

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<sup>81</sup> “Mission and Vision,” About Us, Fellowship NWA, accessed October 15, 2020, <https://www.fellowshipnwa.org/AboutUs>.

Junior high through senior adults experience large group gatherings on the weekend and small groups throughout the week.

The leadership structure of the church clearly aligns to this model as previously described. It is comprised of equipping leaders governed by an eldering group. They do not use the label of pastor, rather community leaders and community shepherds, and there are multiple leaders and shepherds for each of their multiple campuses. These leadership groups are organized into the following groups: directional, worship, and community. The directional leaders are a collective of leaders with the same role for each campus, ensuring the community stays on mission and holds their shared values. The worship leaders create and serve the large group experiences for every age group which are conducive for personal growth and communication clarity. The community leaders create and serve the small group experiences of each of the campuses, ensuring the relationships are intentional, caring, and supportive for growth.

The structures and systems at Fellowship NWA are truly the support edifice of the mission. They are relational in nature and enduring in function. The core design has sustained for over thirty-five years and now supports a community of thirteen to fifteen thousand people.

Iglesia Dios Restaura uses a similar approach in generational leadership development as Fellowship with systems relative to their congregation size. The familial culture lends toward organization that is more organic and intuitive, yet consistent and functional. The pastors model for other leaders how to call out potential in people, and they place them in opportunities that grows them to places of leadership. They use aspects of the weekend gatherings, as well as weekly functions, for generations to lead

back to the younger. All of this is done in a relational context. This congregation also uses their weekend large group gatherings and weekday small group systems for teaching and practical training. All generations participate in community outreach events to put their training into practice.

The question this church must ask is how their organic and familial systems and structure can morph as they continue to grow in number. They will soon reach facility capacity and will need to evaluate next steps so their systems and structure do not impede continued multiplication. A strategy to send leaders to other locations is possible because of their leader development outcomes. Otherwise, they will reach the limits of their current organizational model. This will be an important part of their future vision and planning.

Community Christian has a very intentional leadership pipeline that moves people from disciple, apprentice, coach, resident, director, campus pastor, to church planter. Their emphasis on church planting shapes their process with a Leadership Lab as their educational space. The content of Lead Lab 1 is Lead Yourself, Lead Lab 2 is Lead Your Team, and Lead Lab 3 is Lead the Church. They use a developmental fractal, RPMS (relational, physical, mental, and spiritual), as their design focus for personal growth.

The field research revealed a clearly communicated vision around helping people find their way back to God. The disconnect for this researcher was from this vision statement to the leadership pipeline and Leadership Lab. Because Community Christian is also part of the Exponential conferences and New Thing Network for church planting, it seemed they have not connected these with clarity of purpose, communication, or structures. They appear to be two parallel ministries in which the lead pastors and some

staff are involved. An example of this was the lack of intentional systems to move young people toward the leadership pipeline from within Community. Their recruiting was mostly with adults and often outside their local church. There appeared to be opportunity for them to link these ministries as part of their growth culture, resulting, over time, in a full pipeline of local leaders.

The ICFG must evaluate current structures and systems and make courageous decisions regarding what must conclude, what must be changed, and what new ways must be embraced. One example is the credentialing process. Over the years, credentialing has become an administrative task rather than one that enculturates people into the life of the movement. The system must be rebuilt in order to be people-centric and designed in such a way that it cultivates the value for lifelong development and growth. Credentialing should be led relationally, as if passing on family values, norms, behaviors, language, and artifacts. The administrative process must be minimal and executed in a manner that serves the applicant with excellence. A celebration of welcome could become part of the annual denominational gathering. Credentialing is one example of many areas to be reformed to create a system that supports a growth culture.

In the last twenty years, the denomination has made bold structural changes. Most of these seemed to be in response or reaction to problems or concerns. As the new leadership team evaluates the structure and systems to support a growth culture, they must make the case for the how the new plan will fulfill the target of more and growing leaders together on mission. As a result, the proposed structural and systemic changes will support recruitment, development, and sending of leaders.

*Culture Marker #5: It is Reinforced by Evaluation and Response*

Creating metrics for measuring people development appears to be one of the greatest challenges as it is organic in nature, yet growth cultures are marked by the ability to evaluate effectiveness. Having clearly defined characteristics of maturing, consistent celebration, and courage to make needed course corrections is critical. This includes habitual evaluation of every marker and area of the organization.

In every interview conducted by the various leaders of these three churches, none reported the size of their organization. Even in areas where they did use numerical metrics, it was the number or percentage of people engaged in growth opportunities, small groups, leadership development, and serving their communities. They focused more on inputs than outputs; the areas that contribute to personal growth.

Every person interviewed at Fellowship NWA answered unequivocally regarding their metric for mission effectiveness: changed lives. When asked how they know when they are experiencing mission drift, each leader responded that the alarm sounds when they no longer hear or observe stories of transformation. Their whole life-focus, from toddler to senior adult, gives them a continuum to evaluate. Interviewees told multiple stories of children who became student leaders, who then became young adults with families, and now are leading in their communities and church.

Fellowship tells the stories of transformation in a myriad of ways, in every age group, and celebrates each one. When asked how they respond when they begin to notice a lack of stories, their quick reply was to evaluate needed adjustments in the culture or systems and have the courage to pivot. Two particular areas to which they are giving attention currently are single young adults and senior adults. They have found



diminishing stories in these two groups and are evaluating what course correction they need to make.

Joy is the palpable mark of celebration at Iglesia Dios Restaura as restored and transformed lives are the purpose for their existence. Here again, given the culture and size of the church, the metrics are more organic than structured. It is an intuitive sense within the pastors when they see people stagnate, returning to old lifestyle patterns or not engaging in growth and leadership opportunities. Their adjustments are often in one-on-one conversations to discover the root issue, ask about spiritual practices, and consider how to address necessary changes. This is another area they will need to consider for growth of the organization—ensuring they train leaders to listen for, observe, and document the stories or the lack thereof. As with systems and structures, the organic nature of this church will reach a size requiring a more systematic approach of evaluation to keep a pulse on their growth culture.

Community Christian uses three C's for metrics: celebrate, connect, contribute. Celebrate is their metric for number of people consistently engaged in their weekend services, connect is the number of people committed to small groups, and contribute is the number of people involved in giving and serving either in the church or community. They track and report these metrics. As a result, they celebrate or course correct where adjustments are needed. They make this a significant part of their larger all-staff meetings. This includes all campuses and teams to promote consistency across the organization. The senior leaders focus on the number of people in each segment of the leadership pipeline and number of churches planted. At the time of our interview, they focused on the recent lack of residents in the pipeline. It was at that point we discussed

the disconnect between children and student ministries with their leadership pipeline. What was missing for this researcher was how the metrics demonstrate people growth.

Each of these churches exhibit the use of metrics, celebration, and courage to make necessary adjustments for the health of the culture and effectiveness of mission. The sophistication of their evaluative systems is dependent upon their size and unique ethos and each is extremely effective at celebrating growth through storytelling. When they experience weakness in an area, they are relentless in their pursuit to discover the change needed for turnaround.

As the ICFG considers metrics, shifting to measure people growth will require a change in mindset. Currently the churches' monthly reports are heavily weighted on attendance at events and finances. The ICFG created an annual report, giving space for a description of the churches' processes for making disciples, developing leaders, planting churches, and local and global mission activity. Some utilize this area to tell stories of growth in people. Recently, the ICFG has utilized these stories in annual denominational reporting and convention platforming to begin shifting the narrative toward people growth.

Additionally, Foursquare can promote a growth culture in the area of credentialing by modifying the ministers' annual license renewal process. Each minister can submit a personal leadership development plan with a description of their growth opportunity in the coming year and their strategy to cultivate it. This gives the minister the ability to initiate their own growth pathway for the year, and through relationship, be

“held able” to the plan.<sup>82</sup> Stories of growth could be gathered through coaching or other intentional relationships within the organization and narrated through ICFG’s various communication channels, which would further cultivate a new culture.

### **Culture Marker Integration**

There are many ways in which each of these markers is inter-related to the others. Beliefs form behaviors, and a committed community embodies the beliefs and each member becomes a communicator of the culture. Systems and structures provide healthy community engagement and processes for evaluation. Celebration of the metrics becomes part of the clear vision communication. Hence, the need to integrate and evaluate each collective marker throughout the organization consistently and continually. Together, they become the ingredients for a healthy growth culture.

The following section will define three individual culture markers that must be embedded within the practices of the organization. These markers ensure every person has the opportunity to grow and understands how to provide the same opportunities for others in their sphere of influence. These are not separate from the collective markers. Instead, they are an essential and intentional part of the systems necessary for the organization’s realized growth culture.

### **Culture Markers of the Individual**

The following three culture markers of the individual have been outlined in the following way: head – a growth mindset for increasing knowledge; heart – intentional

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<sup>82</sup> Susan Scott, *Fierce Leadership: A Bold Alternative to the Worst “Best” Practices of Business Today* (New York: Broadway Business, 2009), loc. 2556, Kindle.

relationships; and hand – practical experience with reflection. These reveal the three aspects most conducive to growth in the individual over a lifetime. Human development, leader development, neuroscience, psychology, and scripture all support the research behind these markers.

The growth culture model most appropriate for the church to consider is Jesus' model of discipleship and leader development. He originally chose twelve men, with other women and men joining, to follow him over time. To address their mindset (head), he often taught them with statements like, "You've heard it said...but I say" (Matthew 5:21-48). When he taught the crowds, he would debrief with his close followers and either ask them questions, explain things more clearly, or provide deeper context. In his final commission to make disciples, he includes, "teaching them..." (Matthew 28:19).

In order for the teaching to move from head to heart, Jesus called individuals to follow him in community through intentional relationships (heart). For three and a half years, they lived life together. They discussed his teachings as they ate, as they walked along from place to place, as they rested. They processed the things the Master said and shared growth with each other.

To move their new knowledge from head and heart to hand, Jesus' followers observed him ministering, they participated in the ministry with him, and they went out on their own. They were able to put into practice what they had seen and heard and talked about. The theory became praxis (hand); then they debriefed and reflected, turning their experience into transformational learning.

*Culture Marker #1: Head – Mindset and Knowledge*

Thirty years ago, scientists believed that mental development was like our physical development. Just as we reach our physical height in our twenties, we also reach our mental capacity at the same stage of life. If one were to graph age and mental complexity on two different axioms, scientists would have graphed an upward slope to the age of twenty and then a flat line thereafter. Now, some forty years later, neuroscience has asserted something completely different—neural plasticity—with the acknowledgement that the brain has far greater capacities than previously believed and is able to develop and adapt through one’s lifetime.<sup>83</sup>

This discovery is important to a growth culture as every disciple of Jesus must realize that whole life discipleship means life-long learning. Neural plasticity means expanding one’s mindset so that knowledge can grow accordingly. The book of Proverbs exhorts the reader to gain knowledge, wisdom, and insight. Jesus’ commission to makes disciples included teaching them. We see teaching as a regular pattern Jesus used to mature his disciples. Patricia Cranton, in *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning: A Guide to Theory and Practice* states,

Regardless of the context, adult learners are mature, socially responsible individuals who participate in sustained informal or formal activities that lead them to acquire new knowledge, skills, or values; elaborate on existing knowledge, skills, or values; revise their basic beliefs and assumptions; or change the way they see some aspect of themselves or the world around them.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey, *An Everyone Culture: Becoming a Deliberately Developmental Organization* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2016), 58-59.

<sup>84</sup> Patricia Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning : A Guide to Theory and Practice* (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC, 2016), 2.

A.H. Maslow asserted true growth as self-actualization which is “the full use of talents, capacities, potentialities, etc.”<sup>85</sup> He placed this as the goal of learning and believed there are two opposing forces within each person that determines their growth:

One set clings to safety and defensiveness out of fear, tending to regress backward, hanging onto the past... The other set of forces impels him forward toward wholeness to Self and uniqueness of Self, toward full functioning of all his capacities... We grow forward when the delights of growth and anxieties of safety are greater than the anxieties of growth and the delights of safety.<sup>86</sup>

A growth culture encourages each person in the organization to live from a growth mindset rather than a fixed mindset and provides the safety to grow forward. In her book, *Mindset: How You Can Fulfill Your Potential*, Carol Dweck describes the difference between the two mindsets and debunks the myth that some people are simply able to grow, and others are not. She states, “...scientists are learning that people have more capacity for lifelong learning and brain development than they ever thought...”<sup>87</sup> A growth mindset is connected to one’s belief system. Dweck writes, “Mindsets are just beliefs. They’re powerful beliefs, but they’re just something in your mind, and you can change your mind.”<sup>88</sup> A growth mindset opens the door for new knowledge and creates a sense of awe and wonder. It allows challenge to current ways of thinking and offers opportunity for transformational growth.

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<sup>85</sup> A. H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 150.

<sup>86</sup> A.H. Maslow, “Defense and Growth.” *The Psychology of Open Teaching and Learning*. M.L. Silberman, et al. (eds). Boston: Little, Brown, 1972), 44-45.

<sup>87</sup> Carol Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (New York: Random House, 2016), 5.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 16.

*Culture Marker #2: Heart – Intentional Relationships*

In order for received knowledge to move from head to heart, people must engage intentional relationships. Geiger and Peck warn, “Heads filled with information without hearts transformed by the grace of God is a horrific combination in the realm of leadership development.”<sup>89</sup> Jesus’ model of development included three and half years of close followership. Within this context, Jesus often asked questions to help his disciples process his teachings and apply it to their lives. Through his patient grace they experienced a change of mind as they grappled with the new information and made it their own.

Character and Christlikeness develop in relationship. Proverbs 27:17 says, “As iron sharpens iron, so a person sharpens his friend.”<sup>90</sup> Coaches, mentors, spiritual directors, small groups, and various accountable communities all serve as intentional relationships and aid in growth. Organizations that have these connections placed within their systems create a sense of normalcy and expectancy to engage them as part of personal development.

Simon Western, in *Leadership: A Critical Text*, captures the holistic concept of formation, the goal of a growth culture, by describing the monastic tradition. Western states, “To undergo formation as a monk is not to undergo a series of separate developmental acts, but is a holistic experience that arises from living in the community.”<sup>91</sup> The intentional relationship within the community is the processing

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<sup>89</sup> Geiger and Peck, *Designed*, 173.

<sup>90</sup> Prov. 27:17 NET

<sup>91</sup> Simon Western, *Leadership: A Critical Text* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2019), 340.

center. In this community, monks share and discuss knowledge; they live life together, allowing for insight to move to understanding.

In *Lifelong Leadership: Woven Together through Mentoring Communities*, MaryKate Morse defines intentional relationship for development as “seeing something in each other that matters but that has gone unnoticed...Questions are a tool for helping people notice what might otherwise be overlooked.”<sup>92</sup> Morse goes on to use the metaphor of a house to define the outward and inward self. She describes the inward self as the inside of the house where the Spirit of God resides and desires to permeate every space. She explains it is “there, with the light of Christ, we might begin a journey toward authenticity and wholeness in Christ. We need each other in order to do this well.”<sup>93</sup>

Human development experts discuss the various types of relationships that have bearing on the growth of individuals. Coaching, mentoring, spiritual guides, affinity groups, family, even transactional relationships throughout one’s day have influence on personal development. Human beings are created to influence one another through our narratives and interaction. Organizations with a growth culture ensure systems that promote intentional networks of interdependent relationships for the betterment of the individual and the collective.

### *Culture Marker #3: Hand - Reflective Practices*

Leadership development books have a growing emphasis on experiential learning and how challenging experiences integrate head and heart knowledge into skill or

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<sup>92</sup> MaryKate Morse, *Lifelong Leadership: Woven Together through Mentoring Communities* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2020), 113.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.



competencies. Conger and Benjamin state the failure of most learning projects is that they end. When the class is over, there is no follow up or transfer back to the workplace to test its effectiveness in a practical environment.<sup>94</sup> In *The Handbook for Student Leadership Development*, the authors quote D.A. Kolb saying, “The concept of experiential learning is based on the idea that learning is best conceived of as a holistic process that results from students testing their knowledge and adapting it to their environments; it is only then that students will have internalized their learning.”<sup>95</sup>

The key to connecting the head, heart, and hand in development is reflection. Kolb goes on to say, “Effective programs consistently provide students with the opportunity to ‘step back and be thoughtful’ about their reactions and the impact of their work on themselves and the community.”<sup>96</sup> Reflection then becomes part of a learner’s meaning-making process and provides integrated practice. Dweck says, “Although people may differ in every which way – in their initial talents and aptitudes, interests, or temperaments – everyone can change and grow through application and experience.”<sup>97</sup>

In Jesus’ model of leadership development, he engages his followers in practical ministry whether feeding the multitude, healing the sick, or any number of miracles. Afterward, there was often a conversation about the experience. On one occasion, we see him sending out seventy-two of his followers in pairs with instruction for the ministry. Upon their return, they debrief, and Jesus reorients their thinking about the experience.

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<sup>94</sup> Conger and Benjamin, *Building*, 234.

<sup>95</sup> Susan R. Komives, Wendy Wagner, Craig Slack, Julie E. Owen, and John P. Dugan, *The Handbook for Student Leadership Development Second Edition* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011), 317.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 324.

<sup>97</sup> Dweck, *Success*, 7.

Luke 10:17-20 NIV says, “Then the seventy-two returned with joy and said, ‘Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.’” His reply affirms the authority they have been given. He then says, “However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

Jesus’ model portrays the integration of the individual markers. He taught them, processed with them through everyday life, gave them practical experience, debriefed and had them reflect upon the experience. This holistic model of head, heart, and hand—as an integrated, organic, and intentional process—becomes the framework of transformational development for lifelong growth.

The International Church of the Foursquare Gospel has an opportune moment to create their preferred future. With a fresh vision of discipleship, prayer, health, and unity; a renewed sense of trust both financially and relationally; a cohort of younger leaders moving into senior positions of influence; and a desire to come together around identity and mission, the environment is right for a growth culture to be created and sustained. With the current American backdrop of a pandemic, social and political unrest, and increasing polarization, this culture of support and development with the components defined in all eight markers, would offer an appealing counter-narrative. This potential environment would provide a greenhouse effect of care, result in encouraging one another toward maturity, and promote commitment to one another even when viewpoints differ. The future of ICFG is a beautiful mosaic, diverse and unified, of more and growing leaders, together on mission and demonstrating their values by placing people first and cultivating a growth culture.

## SECTION 4:

### ARTIFACT DESCRIPTION

#### **The ICFG Growth Culture Project**

The artifact consists of the implementation strategy and resources for the ICFG growth culture project including samples of the brand, website, brochure, and chapters from the evaluative e-booklet. The project was presented to the ICFG Board of Directors in June 2020 and minutes of the meeting are included in the artifact. As noted in the minutes, a growth culture task force has been convened and work groups have been launched. Actions steps and a timeline are described in the artifact.

The website, *GrowthLab*, will be the central online platform for information, training courses, webinars, access to the e-book and place for community connection. The sample site is live at [growthculture.online](http://growthculture.online) and will be embedded into [foursquare.org](http://foursquare.org) denominational site by May 2021.

The purpose of the brochure is to visually communicate the growth culture project including the intentionality of the brand design. It provides a scriptural foundation for personal growth. It centers on the individual growth markers to emphasize how the three work in harmony to create a personal growth continuum. The brochure demonstrates the Growth Pathways for children through adults and the ministry pathways available in the ICFG. It describes the commitments the ICFG leadership has made to the value of every person and her/his growth.

The e-booklet will describe the growth culture, the importance of the eight markers, and demonstrate the potential impact when people growth is the focus of the

mission. It is designed as an evaluative tool for the organization, and groups within it, to assess their current reality through an accompanying online questionnaire. The questionnaire will be specific to each culture marker enabling organizational leadership to assess their effectiveness in each and receive a consultative summary report. Supporting resources will include training through online platforms and workshops at conferences.

The collective markers assist the organization in looking at its organizing principles and observing how beliefs, community commitment, communication, systems and structures, evaluation and response all work together to create the organizational culture. The individual markers provide the organizational framework for people growth. The three markers provide indicators for how an organization must align its practices for people to engage new knowledge, intentional relationship and reflective practice.

The introduction will include a portion of the abstract of this dissertation in which the reader is challenged to consider the last fifty years of church history in regard to institutional church growth versus people growth, the outcomes of its past developmental approach, and the latent transformation within a culture shift.

The opening chapter will provide a fictitious story describing an organization with a flourishing growth culture. The narrative will portray the culture markers and describe the influence on the people and church collectively. The conclusion of the chapter will provide the moral of the story by summarizing the growth culture definition and eight markers.

Each successive chapter will describe the respective culture markers for the collective and the individuals. At the conclusion of each chapter a QR code will take the

reader to an online questionnaire. The concluding chapter will instruct the reader how to view the summary report with action steps, and provide recommended resources for further study regarding a growth culture.

The ICFG Growth Culture project will incarnate the thesis of this research through the following outcomes and objectives:

### **Objectives**

- The ICFG will reorganize in January 2021 and denominational employees will make a commitment to participate in the embodiment of the culture by an affirmation signature of their offer letter.
- As the denominational employees experience transformation and growth this will impact local leaders who are directly connected to the national team.
- The national team will use the same markers in their areas of oversight beginning with credential candidates, NextGen leaders, church planters, and receptive local leaders as early adopters.
- The growth pathway for credentialing and certification as described in the brochure will provide the enculturation process of future leaders as part of the culture sustainability.
- The Vice President and lead team, will analyze the growth in each marker biannually and report the outcomes to the Board of Directors and convention body.
- Part of the organizing practices will include a coaching system to provide monthly coaching and support to the participants throughout their development process.
- Stories of personal and organizational transformation will be captured and promoted to incentivize middle and late adopters and to celebrate growth and course correction within the ICFG. This will also add credibility to the artifact.

- This author's hope is that the artifact will be used beyond The Foursquare Church in other churches, denominations and networks, and non-profit ministries.

### **Outcomes**

- We dream of a movement continually growing to be more healthy, adaptable and capable followers of Christ and leaders in His Church and in the world.
- We envision a diverse and deeply unified culture centered in who we are living out our collective values.
- We see a future with higher levels of engagement and relationship and will provide tools and pathways to encourage increased involvement that are attractive to people looking for community.
- We commit to purposefully disciple the next generation to be equipped and launched for a lifetime of personal growth and ministry.
- We aspire for the Foursquare Church to be a prayerful people known for its continued learning, care and growth of its members, with a commitment to making disciples of all nations together.

## SECTION 5:

### ARTIFACT SPECIFICATION

#### **Artifact Goals**

In 2020 the ICFG's new President, Vice President and lead team evaluated the denominational statistics of the last fifteen years. Through the Vice President's dissertation research and these statistics, it was determined that a disruptive re-culturing including reorganization, would be critical to future flourishing. The organizational design is three concentric circles: culture, cause and corporation. Culture encompasses the other two circles and its strategy for implementation is this artifact: the ICFG Growth Culture Project. This is the central focus of the President and Vice President. A new mission statement was written for Cause: more and growing leaders together on mission. The three areas of focus are recruiting, developing and sending. This is the central focus of the General Supervisor and Global Missions Director. Culture and Cause are closely integrated with the Corporation serving as the administrative support systems which is the central focus of the Director of Operations and Director of Business and Finance. Culture encompassing the other two circles visually portrays the engagement with the markers and embodiment of the culture expected of every leader.

#### **Methods of Goal Success Measurement**

The eight markers revealed in the research can be measured for effectiveness in culture shaping. The online assessment will provide questions for evaluating progress. The Vice President will monitor each step of the implementation strategy and provide

actions steps for improvement as needed. Biannual evaluation will ensue with reports made to the Board of Directors and annual reporting to the denominational convention body. The fifth marker provides important instruction for response through celebration and course correction.

### **Audience**

The intended audience for this research is the U.S. Church of the ICFG. Because of the natural tendencies of early, middle and late adopters, a strategy will be utilized to engage these mindsets accordingly starting with NextGen leaders, church planters, FMI workers in training, and credential candidates. The second phase will include current ministers with a growth mindset and within three years we will expect all credentialed ministers to have some level of engagement as part of their credential renewal process.

The intended audience has already broadened to the global Foursquare church. The Global Director of Training and Education heard the presentation of the growth culture and asked the Vice President to join the global committee and make the presentation with recommendations for utilizing the culture markers in their context. As a result, national leaders are using the eight markers as a guide for strengthening the discipleship culture in their nations. The response has been very positive and the nations will provide a report of their actions steps at the global gathering in May 2021.

This author is hopeful that the artifact's success in the ICFG will provide an inspiring narrative within the larger Body of Christ through relationship with other denominations and church networks causing them to engage the artifact within their organizations. The intention is to develop the brochure, website template, and e-book into a usable resource for any Christian organization.



## Scope and Content

The artifact will provide a complete overview of the action plan and resources in the ICFG Growth Culture Project. The content will include:

- The ICFG Board of Director minutes approving the project
- The implementation strategy and timeline
- Sample promotional materials: social media, brochure
- The Growth Pathways – credential and certification pathway for children through adults
- Growth Community Opportunities – connections for intentional relationships
- Sample Growth Journal – personal resource
- GrowthLab – website for information, webinars, growth courses, credentialing and certification courses
- Two sample chapters of the e-book, *People First: Cultivate a Growth Culture*.

This is a pivotal resource to this project's implementation therefore, the following description is submitted:

### Overview:

This book describes the culture of Christian organizations which place people and their holistic development as their primary focus. It provides the reader with eight markers of a growth culture for the collective and the individuals. It is interactive to provide readers with an online organizational evaluation, a summary consultative report, and recommended action steps for change.

#### Purpose:

- To encourage the reader to consider the outcomes of their current organizational culture
- To inspire the reader to consider new ways of thinking about the words of Jesus regarding disciple making in today's context
- To stimulate a new vision of a culture that cultivates growing Christlikeness in people who live purposeful and influential lives of authentic expression in their world
- To provide the reader opportunity to evaluate areas of needed change with actionable support

#### Promotion and Marketing:

- Ministry endorsements
- Author's videoblog and podcast, Instagram, and Twitter accounts
- Foursquare.org, Foursquare Leader Magazine, Foursquare social media sites, Christianity Today advertising
- Foursquare Media via Amazon

#### Chapter Outline:

- Introduction: The introduction will describe the definition of a growth culture and why and how it answers the need of disciple making and leader development. It will include a portion of the abstract of this dissertation that demonstrates the effects of the church growth movement on growing people.
- Chapter One: Grace Church Network - This chapter will tell a fictitious story of a church flourishing with its growth culture. It will reveal how the individual and

collective markers are visible throughout the organization. Stories of how people experience transformation and growth will be the metric the church utilizes to keep a pulse on the culture to ensure there is no mission drift.

- Chapter Two: Collective Culture Marker #1: It Starts with a Belief System - This chapter will show how a common belief system regarding the mission of growth is necessary so there are not competing values and teachings. It will discuss how the collective must share these beliefs and see them as central to their culture. It will describe topics taught and how they are collectively engaged and passed on to others.
- Chapter Three: Collective Culture Marker #2: It Requires a Committed Community - This chapter will portray the picture of a community in sync and committed to holding each other accountable to be carriers of the culture. It will describe the attributes of this type of community and how it handles people who lack commitment and who move away from their shared belief and life.
- Chapter Four: Collective Culture Marker #3: It is Enculturated by Clear and Consistent Communication - This chapter will describe how language, mediums, and celebrations all tell the story of the culture. It will show how mixed messages and inconsistency erode and confuse the culture. It will provide examples and opportunities for using technology and natural means that already exist in people's everyday flow of life.
- Chapter Five: Collective Culture Marker #4: It is Supported by Functional Structures and Systems - This chapter is about the daily life practices of the organization, how it functions, and how systems and structures can support

growth rather than impede it. The language will be organic in nature rather than mechanistic as to demonstrate the historic meaning of culture. It will discuss how the human body has systems and structures as do other aspects of nature. All promote flourishing and growth.

- Chapter Six: Collective Culture Marker #5: It is Reinforced by Evaluation and Response - This chapter defines how to measure a growth culture. It describes the role of the leadership team in learning to observe and listen for stories of transformation. It will provide examples of how celebrating stories perpetuates the culture and how public course correction gives permission for people to fail and experience truth and grace as part of growth.
- Chapter Seven: Individual Culture Marker #1: Head – Mindset and Knowledge - This chapter differentiates between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset. A flexible, growth-oriented mindset makes it possible for new knowledge to become personal insight. It will discuss how mental growth is possible over a lifetime and the importance of modeling this to those younger as we age. It will challenge Christians to embrace a transforming mind as a means of conforming to Christ rather than the culture around us.
- Chapter Eight: Individual Culture Marker #2: Heart – Intentional Relationships - This chapter describes how new knowledge must be processed in intentional relationships for growth to take place. It demonstrates how various seasons of life require different types of relationships such as therapists, spiritual directors, life coaches, mentors, friends and affinity groups. The right person(s) at the right time

relating with vulnerability, authenticity, grace, and truth provides the depth of relationship needed for new knowledge and insight to become understanding.

- Chapter Nine: Individual Culture Marker #3: Hand – Reflective Practice - This chapter shows how practical experience stretches and grows individuals. Knowledge is theory until placed on the anvil of praxis and proven. It will describe the necessary component of reflection within community for new understanding to become wisdom.
- Conclusion: Utilize the Summary Report and Action Steps - The conclusion provides a compelling summary of how the eight markers all work together to create an environment for people growth. It will conclude with why it matters and what is at stake. Finally, it will instruct the reader how to access the full report of the assessment tool utilized throughout the chapters.
- Appendix: The appendix will offer action steps for each of the culture markers and provide a recommended reading list for further study.

### **Budget**

The ICFG Growth Culture Project will be funded by the annual operating plan, specifically the Vice President's budget will be designated for this purpose. This includes the full implementation plan and development of resources.

### **Action Plan and Timeline**

A full action plan and timeline is included in the artifact. A culture shift of this magnitude will take significant time and the executive leadership is committed to consistent engagement and a long-view approach. The reorganization will be announced

in January 2021, executed in February through May with orientation of the new team from May 15- June 15. The website access, e-book and other resources will be available at the denomination's annual convention in May 2022..

## SECTION 6:

## POSTSCRIPT

*Cultivating a Disciple-Centric Growth Culture in the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel* addresses the effects of the church growth movement on the ICFG over the last fifty years. The results of the church growth movement have caused a lack of intentional and consistent focus on disciple making and leader development during this period. *Cultivating a Disciple-Centric Growth Culture in the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel* argues for a culture shift to reorient the church toward people growth as the means to reverse the current trends of an aging leadership demographic.

The research included a historical narrative of the founder Aimee Semple-McPherson's mission and paradigm of development and how that has evolved in the past five decades. It includes current data on the age of credentialed ministers and mindsets of those under the age of forty. The bodies of work researched include leadership theories, human development studies, organizational systems, and scripture. The field research was conducted with three churches of various sizes and culture and included over one hundred hours of interviews and on-site observation. This field research combined with the reading and ICFG data and narrative revealed the eight culture markers described. The stories of transformation in all three churches and their intentionality to that end demonstrate how organizational culture creates the environment for people growth.

The artifact's design as an implementation strategy emerged as new leadership began engaging this direction and asked the author to take a role specific to cultivating a growth culture. The various resources including the e-book with an online assessment, summary report, supportive online resources, and workshops provide organizational

leaders various means to fully grasp the concepts and develop a plan for their own culture shift. This varied menu of resources also serves to give leaders experience with the individual markers. Leaders will gain insight, process what they learn in relationship, and practice the markers in their context.

As I reflect on my forty-year journey of pastoral ministry, I see how my continual pursuit of personal growth and the ministry training in church growth created conflict in my own leadership. This research has increased my passion for disciple growth and emboldened me to use my voice to speak to the matter. I love the Church and have grave concern for the trajectory of many of her local expressions. Dire factors in American evangelicalism today motivate the urgency I sense to implement this work within the ICFG and beyond. As toxic leadership makes the news, celebrity culture takes the platform, and consumerism seeps into the church, we must engage the hard work of a culture shift. I am compelled to address my fellow generational cohort and call us to become sages who model lifelong growth into Christlikeness. We must stop the initiative-driven, programmatic leader development and make relational discipleship our normative lifestyle. I want to cultivate this culture in the ICFG and support younger leaders as they contribute their ideals and ways of being the church.

An additional research opportunity that would further inform this work is with the global Foursquare church. In recent years, other nations have experienced a lack of stage one and two effectiveness in their four-stage missiology. This reveals the natural tendency to move toward institutional church and away from disciple making as the central focus. The current global council is utilizing the culture markers described in this



dissertation as a starting place for their discussion. Global leaders are eager to engage this work.

Future research on the state of the American church will also be important as the long-term effects of the current pandemic unfold. It will be important to study how the lack of church attendance in a building has affected the mindsets of people toward faith, church engagement, and community. Important questions need to be asked about their personal growth during this period and the discoveries they made about their own state of discipleship. As new ways of gathering emerge, it would be important to note that the culture markers defined in this dissertation are effective in any group of people, be it a collective of two families or an organization of thousands.

Throughout this research, I have reflected on the disciple makers in my own life. I have looked back on my lifelong pursuit of learning and the experiences I have been afforded. This dissertation process has given clarity and greater specificity to my own ministry for the remaining years I am given. The dream I hold is for the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, with its 6,800 ministers in the U.S. and thousands more globally, to be one collective of many in the Body of Christ that places the transformational growth of people first. That we would wholly embrace the mindset that a model of church or ministry does not matter, as those are merely organizing principles. What matters most is people becoming like Christ and sending them as leaders to exhibit God's faithful presence in the world.

## APPENDIX A:

### ARTIFACT

The following content represents the artifact components:

- ICFG Board of Director minutes June 2020
- Implementation strategy and timeline
- Promotional materials: brochure, social media
- The Growth Pathway – ministry credential and certification pathways including app designed for each leader's personal leadership development plan as required for annual credential or certification renewal
- Growth Community Opportunities
- Sample Growth Journal
- GrowthLab – website
- Sample chapters of e-book, *People First: Cultivate a Growth Culture*

**EXCERPT FROM MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF THE FOURSQUARE GOSPEL**

**June 23-25, 2020**

**EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**      Rev. Dunahoo presented an update regarding **EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**. A significant amount of information was contained in the documents that were provided. The aim of the update was to present a philosophy. Historically, leadership development has had many different programs/plans, all with acronyms, that have never taken root. Rev. Dunahoo shared a personal conviction that there must be a shift in culture not another program. The basic thesis centers on what Jesus said: “Go and make disciples of all nations and I will build my church.” It is believed that in the last 40 to 50 years of the church-growth movement, churches have reversed roles with Jesus by saying, “We will build the church.” Some churches have been effective, but not all. Collectively, we have not made disciples. If we had, it would be apparent in our communities. There are nominal, cultural and even nationalist Christians but not enough Jesus followers that are becoming like Him in character and mission.

The statistics that were presented earlier indicate that there were 103,032 salvations but only 13,999 water baptism and 10,228 Holy Spirit baptisms. Churches and organizations that have excelled have become deliberately developmental and focused on growth culture—people who are more like Jesus at the end of their lives than ever before and who are on mission with Him. The goal is for all believers to understand that they are on mission and that pastors/leaders are equipping them for ministry in their spheres of influence. The executive summary explained five markers:

- Culture Marker #1: It Starts with a Belief System
- Culture Marker #2: It Requires a Committed Community
- Culture Marker #3: It is Enculturated by Vision Communication
- Culture Marker #4: It is Supported by Functional Structures and Systems
- Culture Marker #5: It is Reinforced by Metrics, Celebration and Adjustment

In Foursquare's four-stage model, there is a constant momentum of growth in the lives of people and the Church. This is Rev. Dunahoo's chosen doctoral dissertation, with the resulting aim of communication tools and a book that includes an interactive assessment for each of the markers and the transformational development model. Hopefully the book will become a resource to help churches assess how they are doing in making disciples and developing leaders. Currently she is working with a church that embodies this growth culture, from 18 months of age all the way to a person's memorial service. This church has a richness of discipleship and leadership. Their mission is to produce and release spiritual leaders for maturing disciples with a Kingdom focus.

Work has been done with the supervisors in leadership development so that there are intentional ways this could be utilized from NextGen to higher education, into credentials and deployment. It ties NCO and FMI with the goal of developing people and then allowing God to call them into His harvest field. The goal is to have a culture that values lifelong learning so that all Foursquare ministers value growing people—from womb to tomb—to love Jesus more, become more like Him and serve in His mission wherever He leads them.

There is a personal and collective passion to make sure that people are thoroughly equipped because there are too many unhealthy leaders. A recent study indicated that pastors are 500% to 3000% more likely to be clinically narcissistic

than the general population. This is why we need to make disciples. We must have a healthy culture, so that it's normal to lovingly challenge each other to grow. Further information was given and discussed. Rev. Dunahoo expressed appreciation to Dr. Burris for allowing her to add this education piece to her responsibilities. This is what she plans to give to the Foursquare family over the next few years of her life.

Rev. Remington stated that this is the essential reason he requested for Rev. Dunahoo's role to shift so she could give this her focus. It is critical. It brings a convergence to Foursquare's missiology that is embraced globally, but not nationally. If we disciple people well, we will never lack church planters or leaders. With this new emphasis, it was recommended that the Education Commission Subcommittee of the NCC, be placed on hiatus, and that the board commission a Growth Culture Task Force to move this forward. Motion. Second. Unanimous approval.

*Growth Culture Executive Summary and brochure included in agenda packet of meeting.*

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## **ICFG Growth Culture Project**

### *Action Plan and Timeline*

- Growth Culture Research conducted as Vice President's dissertation project 2018-2020
- Vice President's presentation of the ICFG Growth Culture Project to the Board of Directors June 2020 (Culture Markers 1 and 2)

- Written statement and artifact development refined language and implementation plans June through December 2020 (Culture Markers 3 and 4)
- Presentation to key lead team members October 2020 (Culture Markers 1 and 2)
- Presentation to global committee October 2020. National leaders utilize culture markers in regions. Progress report May 2021 (Culture Markers 1 and 2)
- Credential task force convened October 2020. This group was commissioned to redesign the ministry credential process (Track 2 of the Growth Pathway) with the values of the growth culture. Two work groups are designing the qualifying process and the content (Culture Markers 4 and 6-8)
- Growth Culture Task Force convened November 2020. All principal areas of the denomination were represented. Work groups assigned to develop systemic practices for the three individual culture markers throughout the organization. Plan first draft due Feb 2021, second draft due March 2021 and final for presentation to ICFG Cabinet in April 2021. Phase 2: (Culture Markers 4-8)
- Employees receive growth culture orientation May 2021. (Culture Markers 1-8)
- Growth Culture Task Force presentation to Cabinet April 2021 with supporting brochure, Growth Journals, GrowthLab (website), Growth Culture podcast, webinars, and systems for individual markers ready for soft launch (Culture Markers 1-3)
- Credential candidates will begin using the new Growth Pathway systems June 2021 (Culture Markers 4-8)
- NextGen summer camp themes to focus on individual growth culture principles (Culture Markers 4-8)
- Church planter and missions training to incorporate growth culture resources Fall 2021 (Culture Markers 4-8)

- The Vice President to begin a mentoring/education cohort for women preparing for senior leadership and church planting incorporating growth culture resources Fall 2021 (Culture Markers 4-8)
- A culture coach will partner with the Vice President from March 2021-2022 to utilize the e-book and other resources in the districts to ensure the district teams embody the growth culture markers, provide learning opportunities, intentional relationships, systems, and can coach and consult local ministries interested in the culture markers. Districts will determine local implementation systems and timeframes as they assess their regions (Culture Marker 1-8)
- The app supporting the annual growth plans for credential renewal will be field tested with renewals Fall 2021 (Culture Marker 4 and 6-8)
- Online platforms and systems are updated for technological support (Culture Marker 4)
- District conferences and annual convention will utilize this platform for growth stories celebrating progress and publicly describing course corrections (Culture Marker 3, 5)
- The first evaluation of the phase one will be conducted Spring 2023 with a progress report and phase two implementation plans presented to the Board of Directors in late November. Thereafter, reporting will take place at each Spring and Fall face to face meeting with celebration and course corrections as needed (Culture Marker 5)

The ICFG leadership recognizes the monumental culture shift that is envisioned.

Strategic opportunities through emerging leaders and new appointments will be critical to establishing a growth culture.

### **Growth Community Opportunities**

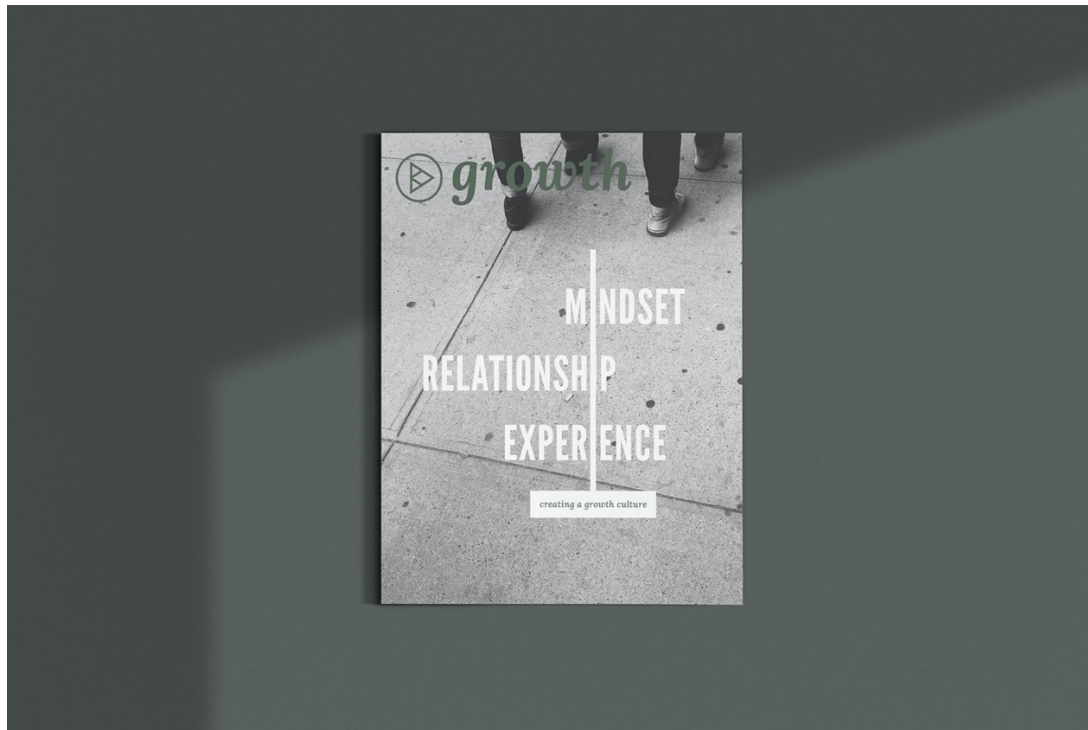
Intentional relationships (Individual Culture Marker #2 – Heart) are a critical component of transformational growth. Various seasons of life require different types of

relationships. Within the various ministries of the ICFG, growth communities will be encouraged to form as affinity groups and cohorts of leaders for intentional relationship. They will gather online and in person and be encouraged to utilize the Growth Journal. The goal is the formation of deep relationships intentionally focused on the personal growth of each individual. The ethos of vulnerability, trust and accountability will characterize the groups. The goal is to share new knowledge each has gained and through the discussions move insight to understanding. They will also reflect together on the practical experience with the new knowledge and what wisdom has been gained.

In addition to community groups, the growth culture will normalize the intentional engagement of coaches, therapists, spiritual directors, and mentors to address specific areas of needed growth that require expertise. The ICFG has a growing number of licensed therapists, certified coaches and spiritual directors who will form networks as learning communities. These professionals will be oriented to the culture markers and recommended to the ICFG as growth supporters.



## Digital and Print Brochure



## GROWTH CULTURE

The target of the Foursquare Church is more and growing leaders **together** on mission with focused priorities of **discipleship, prayer, and health**.

**Mindset:** "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect." (Romans 12:2 NLT)

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:52)

**Relationship:** "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." (James 1:5)

"Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another." (Proverbs 27:17)

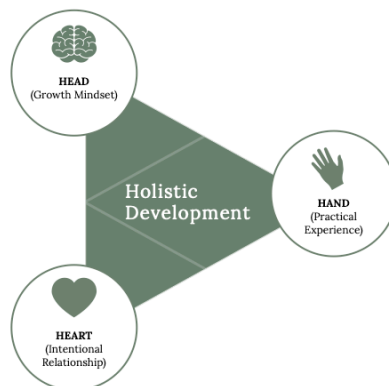
"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

**Experience:** "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

"What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." (Phil 4:9)

SCRIPTURE

A growth culture is marked by vulnerability and valuing the uniqueness of each person. It is characterized by the life-long, holistic development of head (growth mindset), heart (intentional relationships), and hand (practical experience).

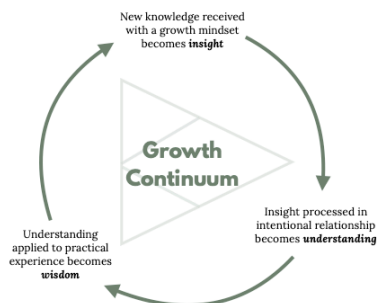


"To equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and **become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.**" (Ephesians 4:12-13)

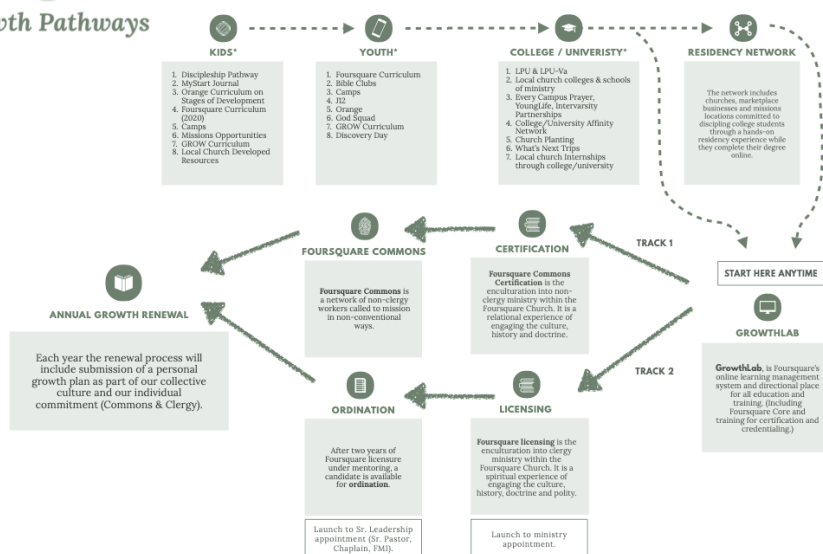
## GROWTH PRINCIPLES OF HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT: MINDSET / RELATIONSHIP / EXPERIENCE

Foursquare commits to the following growth principles for all leaders:

1. **HEAD** (Growth Mindset): Creating environments that cultivate awe and wonder through the study of God, humanity and our world. The focus will not be on perceived shortcomings or lack of knowledge, rather on a **mutual commitment to life-long learning**.
2. **HEART** (Intentional Relationships): Mentoring, support and care provided through intentional relationship grounded in a **shared commitment to help each other grow**.
3. **HAND** (Practical Experience): Encouraging and providing opportunities to develop competent practitioners to meet the challenges of today through a **common commitment to transformational practices**.



## Growth Pathways



\*Recommended resources to serve local ministries

## IMPLEMENTATION

Equipping people of all ages and stages of life must be intentional, accessible and comprehensible. In doing so, our culture ensures every member of our movement has access to growth opportunities and tools.



### GROWTHLAB

**GrowthLab**, is Foursquare's online learning management system and landing place for tools and links to all opportunities for education and equipping, the Growth Communities, and experiential opportunities including ministry appointment openings.



### GROWTH COMMUNITIES

The Foursquare Growth Community will be made up of a myriad of intentional relationships such as affinity groups and groups of coaches, mentors, spiritual directors, and network of counselors. The idea is to engage in relationships most conducive to growth through various seasons of life.



### GROWTH PATHWAYS

An accessible two-track system for recruiting, developing and sending:

- Track 1 is a certification pathway for non-clergy workers within Foursquare Commons. This pathway requires an annual growth plan for the renewal of certification.
- Track 2 is a credentialing pathway for clergy workers which includes licensing and ordination. This pathway requires an annual growth plan for the renewal of credentials.

See Growth Pathways on next page

# OBJECTIVES

By developing a growth culture in the Foursquare Church we envision our movement flourishing in the following ways:

1. We dream of a movement continually growing to be more healthy, adaptable and capable followers of Christ and leaders in His Church and in the world.
2. We envision a diverse and deeply unified culture centered in who we are living out our collective values.
3. We see a future with higher levels of engagement and relationship and will provide tools and pathways to encourage increased involvement that are attractive to people looking for a family.
4. We commit to purposefully disciple the next generation to be equipped and launched for a lifetime of personal growth and ministry.
5. We aspire for the Foursquare Church to be a prayerful people known for its continued learning, care and growth of its members, with a commitment to making disciples of all nations together.

## DESIGN CONCEPT



The triangle pointed forward is to show movement toward growth in people. The triangle has three sections to represent holistic development through head, heart and hand. The symbol is in a circle to show relationship and integration in our growth and development that continues for generations.

### GrowthLab WEBSITE EXAMPLES



#### CORE COMPETENCIES

Foursquare Core  
 Proficient in issues of diversity  
 Interpersonally competent  
 Skillful communicators and motivators  
 Community builders  
 People developers  
 Design well-aligned organizations

*\*This list is not yet vetted or complete*

#### GROWTH CULTURE MARKERS

It starts with a **common belief system**  
 It requires a **committed community**  
 It is disseminated by **clear, consistent communication**  
 It is supported by **functional structures and systems**  
 It is reinforced by **evaluation and response**

## Social Media

**wearefoursquare** Message

1,249 posts 9,907 followers 55 following

**The Foursquare Church**  
 Foursquare began as a revival and became a global church. We believe in church reimagined: rooted in scripture and responsive to a changing world.  
[linktr.ee/wearefoursquare](https://linktr.ee/wearefoursquare)

POSTS IGTV TAGGED

The target of the Foursquare Church is **more** and **growing leaders together** on mission with focused priorities of **discipleship, prayer, and health.**

New knowledge received with a growth mindset becomes **insight**  
**Growth Continuum**  
 Understanding applied to practical experience becomes **wisdom**  
 Insight processed in intentional relationship becomes **understanding**

**MINDSET  
RELATIONSHIP  
EXPERIENCE**  
 cultivating a growth culture

**The Foursquare Church** 3d •

Watch the video below to hear from Foursquare's VP of Culture, Tammy Dunahoo, on creating a Growth Culture in our movement. [#ThisIsFoursquare](#)

72 8 Comments 13 Shares 907 Views

Like Comment Share

**wearefoursquare**

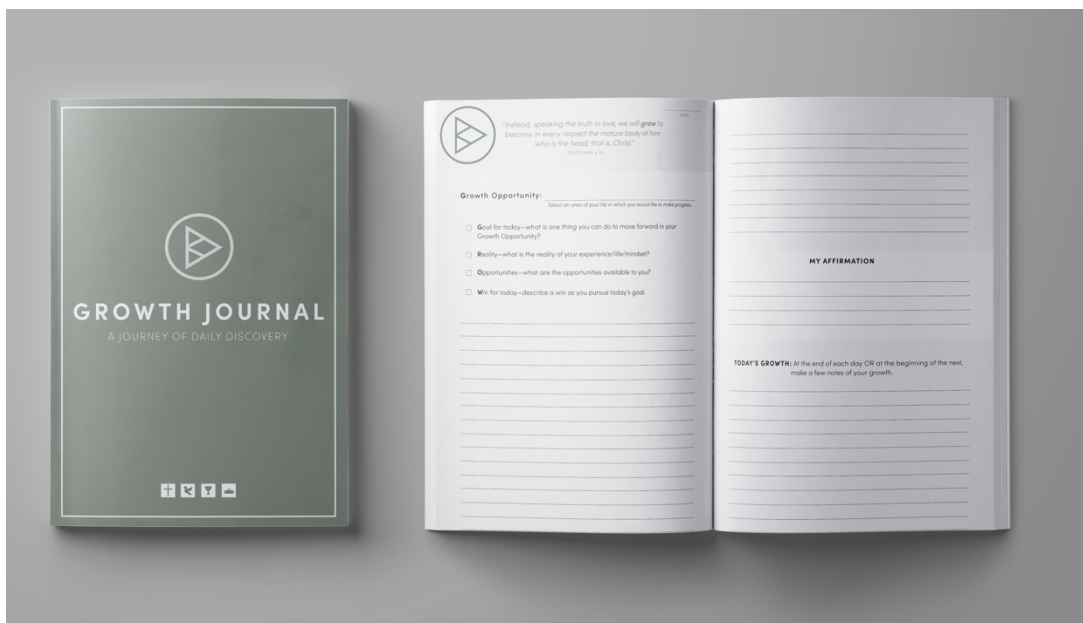
**5 CULTURE MARKERS**

1. Starts with a Belief System
2. Requires a Committed Community
3. Enculturated by Clear + Consistent Communication
4. Supported by Functional Structures + Systems
5. Reinforced by Evaluation + Response

**wearefoursquare** Organizations and individuals need signals about their culture to gauge whether they are on the right path toward growth. These 5 cultural markers provide a way of assessing effectiveness and indicating areas of needed adjustment and improvement for organizations.

November 24

## Growth Journal





## GrowthLab Website



The mockup shows a website for GrowthLab. The header features the GrowthLab logo (a play button icon inside a circle followed by the word "growth") and a navigation menu with links: About, Growth Pathways, GrowthLab, Growth Communities, Resources, and a Contact button. The main content area has a light green background with a marble texture. It includes three images: a group of people in a meeting, a person speaking at a podium, and a person in a green shirt. Text overlays include "cultivating a growth culture." and "MINDSET RELATIONSHIP EXPERIENCE". A central play button icon is also present. Below this is a dark green section titled "Learn More about Growth" containing two images: a large group of people at a table labeled "Growth Pathways" and a person presenting at a whiteboard labeled "GrowthLab". A text block describes a growth culture as being marked by vulnerability and valuing the uniqueness of each person, characterized by the life-long, holistic development of head (growth mindset), heart (intentional relationships), and hand (practical experience). A "Learn More" button is provided. The footer contains contact information: Growth Culture, 1910 W Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90023, and links to About, Growth Pathways, GrowthLab, and Resources.

**growth**

About Growth Pathways GrowthLab Growth Communities Resources [Contact](#)

*cultivating a growth culture.*

MINDSET  
RELATIONSHIP  
EXPERIENCE

**Learn More about Growth**

Growth Pathways

GrowthLab

A **growth culture** is marked by vulnerability and valuing the uniqueness of each person. It is characterized by the life-long, holistic development of head (growth mindset), **heart** (intentional relationships), and **hand** (practical experience).


Learn more about holistic development of head, heart and hand.


[Learn More](#)

Growth Culture  
Made with [Squarespace](#)


1910 W Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90023

About  
[Growth Pathways](#)  
[GrowthLab](#)  
[Resources](#)



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[Growth Communities](#)
[Resources](#)
[Contact](#)




Search by Category



Lead Self




Lead Others



Lead Church

[JOIN](#)


Explore courses below:



### Reconciling Power of Love

This course will help pastors and church leaders **navigate racial tensions and realities of the day.**

The desired outcomes include: greater awareness of the issue, an understanding of biblical justice, a grasp of the historical/systemic roots of racism, active listening, and practical help that lead toward reconciliation and transformation. The topics will be addressed with grace and in the context of God's love for all people. Open, honest discussions will be encouraged.



### The Mission of the Church in a Changing Global Culture

Whether you live in the heart of budding metropolis or in a rural farming town in Indiana there can be no denying that our world is going through some dramatic changes and those changes are increasingly having an affect on our faith and our local churches. In this course, you will wrestle with questions as you seek to understand globalization and discern how your faith community can respond to globalization locally.

## Join a Course

Search courses at the GrowthLab Course Catalog below.

[Join a Class](#)

E-Book: *People First: Cultivate a Growth Culture*

Table of Contents

- Introduction
- Chapter One – Grace Church Network
- Chapter Two – Collective Culture Marker #1: It Starts with a Belief System
- Chapter Three - Collective Culture Marker #2: It Requires a Committed Community
- Chapter Four - Collective Culture Marker #3: It is Enculturated by Clear and Consistent Communication
- Chapter Five - Collective Culture Marker #4: It is Supported by Functional Structures and Systems
- Chapter Six - Collective Culture Marker #5: It is Reinforced by Evaluation and Response
- Chapter Seven – Individual Culture Marker #1: Head – Growth Mindset and Increasing Knowledge
- Chapter Eight – Individual Culture Marker #2: Heart – Intentional Relationships
- Chapter Nine – Individual Culture Marker #3: Hand – Practical Experience and Reflection
- Conclusion – Utilize the Summary Report and Action Steps



## Sample Chapter 1

### Grace Church Network

Everywhere I look this morning I am overwhelmed by the stories of transformation in the room. Today we celebrate the thirty-fifth anniversary of Grace Church Network and my mind is flooded with memories of that first small group of fourteen people gathered in our living room. We had more dreams than experience but we knew that Jesus had put the vision in our hearts of a faith community we all wanted to give our lives to. God's dreams were larger than ours as we never anticipated the leaders that would emerge and new communities that would multiply from this humble beginning.

We were an eclectic group of first-generation immigrants, college students and empty nesters, transplants from other states, families with new babies, but most of all, we were a tight knit group of friends in a neighborhood. Block parties and weekly "family dinner night" had become our rhythm of life. Our conversations would regularly turn to discussions about faith and some would share their disillusionment with local churches they had experienced. Others would tell of their "church back home" and their longing for that kind of Christian community. Though our journeys were unique, our common denominator was a love for Jesus and a hunger for a church that *He* would be the leader of. One that accepted and loved all people right where they are. One committed to everyone's growth into Christlikeness from womb to tomb. A church where worship is all about inspiration (filled with the Spirit to help us know Jesus), formation (to transform us to become like Jesus), and participation (send us into the world to be on mission with

Jesus). The more we described what we longed for the clearer it became we were to start Grace Church. Sharon was the first to speak up with concern, “We have to define the culture we have created among us so we can sustain it. I don’t want to lose what we have.” To make sure we were on the same page I grabbed an old dictionary I had in the library. “Well, this is really cool. The Latin word *cultura* in its historic meaning is a caring environment which cultivates the growth and development of the object placed within it. That sounds like us!” We went to work defining our shared beliefs and community commitments. We recognized this as foundational as we desired the unity Jesus had prayed for in John 17. I remember that holy moment when we collectively read the final draft of our purpose, beliefs and commitments, tears were flowing when Joe jumped up and yelled, “Let’s do this!” The somber, prayerful moment turned into a full-blown party, the norm for family dinner night, but this night was different, something was born that would be central to our lives for years to come.

Our next gathering tested our beliefs and commitment as we focused on how this faith community would practically be led. We all had previous experiences with leadership that had shaped us for good, bad and even the ugly. Because of our deeply held conviction that Jesus is Lord and Leader of the Church and we are all members of His Body, we discovered polycentric leadership would best align to our beliefs and values. Women and men who embody our culture would share responsibility according to gifts and grace. Identifying the selection process and choosing this first group of elders was an exercise in personal growth and humility and set the tone for our future.

In a matter of months, we experienced the contagious nature of personal and relational growth. We all brought those we were discipling at work or school to be part of

the community and soon our living room was overflowing in the other rooms of the house. Because we had business leaders and marketers among us, practical questions arose regarding what organizational design would hold us true to our values yet make room for more. They helped us see the importance of agile structures and systems and clear and consistent messaging. We knew we wanted all of our defining metaphors to be living organisms. We were committed to never become a machine. We determined to ask ourselves hard questions and evaluate regularly then respond with celebration and/or course correction. We were cognizant that if we did not stay vigilant, we could wake up one day and realize we had morphed into the very church none of us wanted to be part of. We pledged ourselves to vulnerability, honesty and whatever change would become necessary to stay true to our beliefs, purpose and commitments.

Because our central purpose is disciple making, we studied what causes transformational growth in all age groups. We reflected back on what we had experienced that had changed us. We realized we all believed we *could* grow and were hungry to learn. Much of our gatherings were discussions about new things we had read or heard. We stretched one another, asked questions, pressed back. One of the scriptural principles we committed to was Ephesians 4:14-15 (NLT), “Then we will be no longer immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body the church.”

Another key discovery was our commitment to action, not just talking about new things. We recalled stories of one of us being adamant about a truth only to come back

the next week with a story that when the truth was tested, it did not work. We grappled with the outcome and what we believed. These three practices of learning, processing in community, and reflective practices of our faith had been the disciple-making model we experienced together.

Once we discovered what had grown us, we designed systems of these practices for the growing community. We were resolute in our focus on people growth from infancy through senior adults and created experiences conducive to each age and within the natural flow of life. We did not want people to think of Sundays as the day to go to church, rather we wanted every day of the week to be formational in different ways. Growing as a loving follower of Christ in life and mission is a 24/7 intentional endeavor. Whether in a training class, around a dinner table, in a worship gathering, facilitating a meeting in the office, or serving at the local elementary school, the goal is for the essence of Christ to emanate in increased measure.

As the months turned to years the group of fourteen friends became thousands. We have sent missionaries to fifteen different nations and commissioned multiple groups to other cities and states to start faith communities fitting for those contexts. The growth in number has simply been the people's response to Jesus through the lived message of Grace Church. We have stayed true to our foundations and never wavered in our commitment to let Jesus be the Lord and Leader of his church. He alone is the one who builds it. Today we celebrate the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the friendship of the Holy Spirit growing in each of our lives, in our relationships with one another, and in the world. Thirty-five years after forming this faith community, we are just as firm in our beliefs about people growth, just as committed to our relationships, we

continue to tell a simple and clear story, we keep our life together agile, and continually look and listen for transformed lives. We celebrate big and we change with gusto. This is the growth culture that has been cultivated over three and a half decades in Grace Church and the stories still amaze us.

#### Sample Chapter Four

##### Collective Culture Marker #3: It is Enculturated by Clear and Consistent Communication

Everything communicates! Intentionally and unintentionally we continually send messages. Sometimes they are clear and compelling, other times they are mixed and muddled. In America today the white noise is almost deafening and makes good communication nearly impossible. Christian organizations often underestimate the need for clarity and overestimate our communication skills. Struggling to find the right words we often use too many. We also fail to understand how everything sends a message, not just what we write or say.

God created human beings with sensory perception: hearing, taste, smell, sight, and touch all become gateways to our comprehension. Using every means possible to communicate one compelling idea paints a well-defined picture in the minds of those who experience it and they are more likely to retain the message.

Organizations are enculturated by clear and consistent communication. Patrick Lencioni of The Table Group emphasizes essential disciplines of healthy organizations: create clarity, overcommunicate clarity, and reinforce clarity. A growth culture is marked not only by its central beliefs and committed community; it also implements focused,

intentional, and consistent messaging that becomes second nature throughout the organization. Lencioni points out the typical skepticism of people about a message they receive unless they hear it consistently over time. He argues this is not because of natural cynicism in people, rather it is the result of poor communication that is the reality of many organizations.

Communication either cultivates or erodes a growth culture. Critical messaging takes place in many forms—verbal, written, and behavioral. The communication responsibility does not fall on one department or leadership team; every member must own and embody the message. For a growth culture to be realized, everyone must be the storyteller of the organization in word and deed.

Evaluating your organization's communication habits is essential. Mission and vision must be portrayed in every gathering through every means possible. Have you asked people outside your group what they hear and understand from your stated mission and vision? Do you hear an echo or something else you did not intend? If we were to interview your staff or key influencers in your congregation, would they give a congruent response to questions regarding the vision, values, the overall culture of your ministry? The organization's ethos must be embodied in their responses. How about your worship preparation? Is there a clear and compelling message each week? Is it communicated in everything written and spoken including your use of technology, music, and the arts? Have you considered that even the number of ministries and schedule on your website communicates? How do each of the activities accomplish your mission? Does your programming personify a sense of busyness and productivity or a part of a natural flow of life? Relentless hurry is the enemy of personal growth. Often an overcrowded calendar

sends mixed messages of expectation and can cause people to lose sight of why they should belong. Focused simplicity speaks volumes to already overcrowded lives. This one example demonstrates how culture is communicated.

A loud message experienced in communities with a strong local identity of church growth is assimilation. The focus is to incorporate new people into the life of the church to get them to volunteer as a growing church always needs more volunteers. The message sent is, “You are needed to help us grow. Use your time and talents for God to make our ministries function.” The problem with this mindset is that it’s not motivated by the growth of the person, but the growth of the church. Conversely, disciple making is motivated by turning followers into ministers who serve, and leaders who influence their world. A growth culture does not assimilate people into a local church culture, rather it is intentional to enculturate them into the Body of Christ so that wherever they are planted they will grow and flourish. It is people-centric for external mission rather than church-centric for internal volunteerism. This is another example of how everything speaks.

Small, medium or large, every organization communicates. Methods may vary, but messages are conveyed. The atmosphere of a community group, the ministry opportunities promoted, the children and youth ministries, the room you gather in all tell something of your intentions or lack thereof. What we decide, platform, celebrate, and execute in the organization are all part of that communication. We cannot underestimate the importance of clarity in this noisy, opinionated, polarized and complex society we are living in. Communication requires lucid, creative redundancy to gain and sustain attention. Identity and mission must be articulated with consistency of message and

continuity of practice over a long period of time to create the desired growth culture and to sustain its future.

Next steps: place your device over the QR code below to access the next phase of the online survey. Ask others in the organization to work through the questions with you so that your answers best describe your current reality.

.



## APPENDIX B

### **Denominational Reform Research**

I began this dissertation studying various denominations and their approach to reform and renewal. Of particular interest were the Southern Baptist Convention and the United Methodist Church. Dockery's work, *Southern Baptists, Evangelicals, and the Future of Denominationalism* describes a similar challenge as the ICFG regarding identity and structure. The United Methodist Church's Connectional Table group presented a restructure plan in 2012 and 2016 and failed at the Judicial Council. From 2019 through the time of this writing the UMC is embroiled in a theological divide over the LGBTQ+ community with a split seeming imminent. Throughout the history of Baptists and Methodists there are multiple mergers or separations forming new groups. Each of these seemed to emerge due to identity, theology, or structures and finance.

This early research narrowed my focus on the ICFG and culture change: from institutional to people centricity, specifically disciple making through a growth culture. The challenge of this task in a 98-year-old denomination, given the research of other organizations and the history of ICFG, is sobering. The positive advantage is the clear DNA of the founder and its continuation through the global missions efforts (FMI) with significant success.

## **Field Research History and Demographics**

The three churches researched were varied in demographic, age of church, geographic location, and leadership. Two are independent and one is a Foursquare church.

Fellowship Bible is located in Northwest Arkansas with three unique congregations meeting at the main campus in Rogers, and a fourth at a campus in Fayetteville. The average attendance of the main campus is approximately 8,500 with a total combined of all congregations between 13,000-15,000 and some 23,000 people trained through The Training Center since its launch. The average age is late 30's to early 40's and ethnic demographic is predominately white with intentional investment into opportunities to reflect the changing demographic of the region. The church was launched with seven couples in 1984 and transitioned to its second-generation leadership team in 2011.

Community Christian of Naperville, IL has ten campuses in varied neighborhoods and communities throughout the region plus three locations in prisons. The average attendance of the main campus is 3,350 with a total combined of all congregations 7,000. Their age demographics include 18-30 years 30%, 31-45 years 32%, 46-60 years 30%, 61 years and over 8%. The main campus is predominantly white, but neighborhood campuses throughout Chicagoland include African Americans, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American. The church was launched in 1989 and the founding leaders are still co-pastors.

Dios Restaura is a predominately Hispanic, multigenerational congregation in Glendale, CA, a suburb of Los Angeles. The average attendance in Glendale is 350 with a

work starting in Anthem, AZ. The church was launched in 2006 and the founding pastors are the co-pastors today.

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