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GCM: Generations in Community on Mission a Theoretical Framework for Intergenerational Disciples on Mission

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

PROJECT PORTFOLIO:

GCM: GENERATIONS IN COMMUNITY ON MISSION

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR INTERGENERATIONAL DISCIPLES ON MISSION



IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

PORTLAND SEMINARY

BY:

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PROJECT FACULTY:

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PORTLAND, OREGON

FEBRUARY 2023



CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral project to three male voices that are ever encouraging and challenging me forward. Ingmar Martinson who brought me into the community and restored the wounds caused by a ministry setback. He saw my potential empowered, trained, and released me. His “Sister Church Program” provided an early backdrop for this research.

Bishop Wojciech (Wojtek) Włoch, whose passion for the people of God and the expansion of the Kingdom of God constantly challenge me. His encouragement to pursue this doctorate and to remain in the USA until it is finished, stilled my heart.

To my dad, Ivar M. Johnson, whose prophetic voice spoke of this challenge, decades ago. He saw my academic abilities when I only saw insurmountable barriers.

Finally, to my sisters in Christ who have prayed ceaselessly, supported, sent words of encouragement, and humor. Particularly Cathy Kruse, Sandy Bayer, Beth Bender Koenig, Joanie Zwerling, and Darla Finnochiaro whose faithfulness brought hope throughout this journey.

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I am particularly indebted to Rev. Lori Blackburn and Fulton Foursquare for their technical support and special care during Covid lockdowns. Christine Van Proyen, for her writing expertise, design, which got me over countless writer's blocks. Finally, Heather Voigt, who was an accountability partner and transcribed hours of interviews, and workshop sessions.

Special gratitude is extended to Rev. J.R. and Shana VanProyen who not only graciously participated as stakeholders but willingly shared their church and congregation for this research.

Finally, there are no words to express the depth of blessing that Rev. Elmaire Parker and Rev. Nicole Huyck-Richardson have been, their contribution of pure joy, and partnership as co-sojourners in this endeavor.

Epigraph

Tourist or Pilgrim?

I stand at the edge of myself and wonder
Where is home? Oh! Where is the place
Where beauty will last? When will I be safe? And where?
My tourist heart is wearing me out. I am so tired of seeking
For treasures that tarnish. How much longer, Lord?
Oh! Which is the way home?
My luggage is heavy. It is weighing me down
I am hungry for the Holy Ground of home.
Then suddenly, overpowering me with the truth,
A voice within me gently says:
'There is a power in you, a truth in you
That has not yet been tapped.
You are blinded with a blindness that is deep,
For you have not loved the pilgrim in you yet
There is a road that runs straight through your heart.
Walk on it.'
To be a pilgrim means to be on the move, slowly,
To notice your luggage becoming lighter,
To seek for treasures that do not rust
To be comfortable with your heart's questions,
To be moving toward the Holy Ground of home with empty hands and bare feet.
And yet, you cannot reach that home until you have loved the pilgrim in you.
One must be comfortable as a pilgrim before one's feet can touch the homeland.
Do you want to go home?
There's a road that runs straight through your heart
Walk on it.

by Macrina Wiederkehr¹

¹ Macrina Wiederkehr, "Tourist or Pilgrim," *Spiritual Pilgrimages and Tourism*, April 15, 2015, <https://www.culturehoney.com/tourist-or-pilgrim-by-macrina-wiederkehr/>. Sister Mary Marina Wiederkehr was an educator and served the St. Scholastica Monastery and Center as a Vocation Director, retreat director and spiritual director.

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List of Abbreviations

GCM – Generations in Community on Mission

NIV – New International Version

NLT – New Living Translation

NPO – Need/Problem/Opportunity

Glossary

Disciple: An individual who intentionally pursues Jesus on a spiritual journey, as a pilgrim.

Equity: Refers to emotional, and relational investment, particularly in how it relates to building a supportive and growing faith community.

Missional purpose: God's uniquely designed task, congruent with an individual's identity, blending with God's eternal purposes, as in Ephesians 2:10. "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Person of peace: The person within the foreign mission field who receives the foreign missionary and their message of the kingdom of God. Based on the person of peace referred to in Luke 10:6. "...a man of peace is there; your peace will rest on him..."

Societal community: The territory in which a person or group of people live, such as a city or town.

Research Method

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

Abstract

The increasingly unstable and changing world in which we now live requires a resilient, discerning, and adaptable family of God, who is intentional about reaching their community with the hope of Jesus. This project sought to address the disconnect between the congregants, the relational network, and the tools necessary to walkout the fulfillment of their identity on mission.

The following NPO was initiated due to my background working in disenfranchised settings within public schools as a Special Educator and School Counselor and the three decades working in interdenominational foreign missions' partnership, together with Foursquare Missions International. This final form was developed through the input of this discovery process: *The integration of identity, community, and mission within small spiritual communities, which empowers, develops, releases, and sustains intergenerational disciples on mission.*

The Discovery Process revealed: (1) a desire from leaders for a flexible structure of resources to facilitate the acquisition and implementation of life empowering transformation. (2) Diversity of individuals' depth of relationship with Jesus, academic abilities, and life experience, are assets to group growth. (3) The relationship depth between facilitator and participants impacts the participant commitment and trust. (4) A congregation's calendar of events, and community activities influences the pool of participants.

This project is a theoretical framework for ongoing discipleship in the local church setting. It implements concrete spiritual practices within an intergenerational small group over four sessions. A full spectrum of ages was represented, and worked together in personal and collective spiritual growth, while engaging in mission. Individuals learned to take responsibility for their own personal spirituality and engaged missionally in their personal circle of influence. This provides a template of skills, and processes for a foundation to equip anyone to develop personal, spiritual growth, and fulfill missional purpose within a supportive, intergenerational, spiritual family.

Introduction

This project covers decades of embracing a journey of responding to the requests of the Holy Spirit with an emphatic, "Yes." A project that exhibits a small stone of concept that excites the deepest core of my identity, followed by the awareness that the idea is far beyond the person I am today. The One who created me knows me and is inviting me into an even greater supernatural relationship with him through the fulfillment of that small stone.

While observing and listening to my Foursquare missionary colleagues the stone emerged. There was this overwhelming burden to create, and maintain relationships with local congregations, while breaking new ground of ministry in a foreign context. Initially, I was under the impression that this divide could be addressed with a simple joint partnership on a project to connect congregants with a real need in the field. In 2014, I initiated an Adopt A Missionary/ Take a Missionary to Coffee small group program to pray, fund, and build more authentic relationships between the local church and the mission field. While being extremely fruitful for the individuals in the local churches and the missions to achieve the expressed goals, there were issues with the execution from the local church administration level, missionaries, and denominational misunderstandings of the goals and purposes. This proved to be the small stone revealing much deeper issues contributing to the relational disconnect between the local church and the realities on the foreign mission field.

The doctoral program at Portland Seminary provides a means to systematically address the root causes and contributing factors. The process within this exploratory program develops from the Discovery stage, onto Design, and finally the Delivery of the project. In the remainder of this introduction, I provide the various steps in this process, followed by synthesis and analysis of each stage. Reflective of this process, is the emergence of a much broader and refined NPO.

Discover

I entered this process with the belief that every born-again Christian has a divine identity from birth, that when activated by partnership in God's purposes, they find their greatest fulfillment. Many of my concepts around identity and purpose were based on Michele Borba's *Esteem Builders*² curriculum which I used while working as an elementary school counselor. My experience as a missionary who survives on the gracious gifts of donors, leads me to the understanding that God is a god of abundance. My very salvation revealed that the Christian God's highest priority is relationship with his adopted children, their relationship with one another, and his relentless pursuit of those who have not yet experienced their adoption. Therefore, the lack of financial resources, disconnect on an emotional, and relational level experienced by many foreign missionaries is incongruent with how I know God to be. What emerged as the original NPO: Within the Foursquare

² Michele Borba Ed.D., *Esteem Builders: A K-8 Self-Esteem Curriculum For Improving Student Achievement, Behavior and School Climate*, Second (Torrence, CA: Jalmar Press, 2003).

movement, there is a significant disconnect between the local church, and the mission field (missionaries).

My Discovery Workshop in November 2020 followed the predetermined guidelines for virtual participation. I choose to limit the workshop to pastors and mission leaders within the Foursquare denomination. This allowed for stakeholders to speak freely without influencing existing relationships with current missionaries in the field. The stakeholders included lead pastors of a simple church, small and mid-size churches from both coastal regions of the United States. These churches are located in suburban or rural areas. The size and location of these churches reflect the majority of Foursquare churches in the USA. Included in this group of participants was a district mission communications contact, a mission's pastor, and a district missions' representative. They came ready to discuss "the disconnect between the local church and the mission field." The individuals were orientated to the virtual workshop process. The group worked on clarifying the NPO by identifying the needs, thoughts, emotions, and root causes. Desired outcomes were explored, all elements were combined to create the amended Discovery Statement:

Considering Pastors, Congregants and Field Workers

We have discovered that there is a need for cultivating connections and meaningful, authentic, family-like relationships, which is caused by a lack of reasonable means to know and be known by the three groups.

If solved, it would mean all three groups will feel known, supported, and inspired to be more engaged missionally.

Following this workshop, I conducted six interviews with a male and a female field worker, two married couples, a regional supervisor, and a district missions' representative. Each interviewee received a summary of the Discovery with the pastors prior to the interview.

The information shared in the discovery session and the one-on-one interviews was similar, like opposite sides of the same coin. Thirteen of the fourteen stakeholders agreed that there is a serious disconnect between the local church and the mission field. This disconnect needs a less burdensome process for those who serve in the field to connect not only with church leadership (senior pastors) but also individual congregants. The need for several key elements emerged:

- The need to build family-like bonds.
- A reimagined and redefined understanding of missions and correlating actions.
- A system that makes integration of missions into every aspect of church life easier.
- The need to engage and empower "people of peace," or relational brokers in the congregation who have the passion, time, and access to the resources to take the lead in creating and maintaining the relationship.

Addressing this complex relational issue will require a multi-discipline approach at various levels. First, develop an easily adaptable discipleship tool to be integrated into the churches' discipleship format. Second, engage pastors in the implementation and to solicit their active participation in

integrating the tool. Third, establish a network of participating churches that can work cooperatively in sharing the responsibilities and communication. Finally, execute regular assessment and adjustment of system to ensure that it is in fact mutually beneficial and resulting in meaningful, authentic, family-like relationships.

Further areas of academic research included exploring the nature of meaningful, working relationships. Building a strong, supportive, community in today's mobile society. Integrating missions into the fiber of the discipleship process. The final area to explore was the development of a menu of best practices for communicating across long distances that can be adapted to the various missionary assignments, including security sensitive regions.

The Discovery process continued to reveal new insights through the examination of psychological, sociological, church history, and theological factors, in the development of community, the roles of church leadership. These research findings assimilated with the Discovery Workshop and interviews produced the following NPO statement: *The integration of identity, community, and mission within the local church setting results in the empowering, developing, releasing, and sustaining of disciples on mission.*

Design

The Design Workshop for this project was an in person meeting with one individual joined by Zoom. It was conducted in November 2021. The stakeholders comprised five ministers from various backgrounds. One retired pastor and church planter, one youth pastor, one first responder chaplain. one bi-vocational virtual pastor, one associate pastor and sermon coach. There were three women and two men. The group reflected the demographics of the area with four Caucasians stakeholders and one Black³ stakeholder.

The session opened with prayer, introductions, and an overview of the day's activities. A significant amount of time was spent on refining the NPO, particularly defining what is a disciple and who is doing the discipling. I then led the participants through three brainstorming activities to define the target audience, the value of this type of template to various groups, and the cost benefit to the local congregation. We also discussed what elements would be necessary for a prototype to be transformative. The workshop concluded with prayer.

There were three Concept Pitches that emerged: A pastoral professional learning community, an accountability partner group of congregants, and a missionally engaged church survey. The first two concepts seemed the most pertinent to significantly impacting the relational isolation of the various group experiences and providing a supportive environment for on-going growth.

³ The stakeholder's preferred designation.

After reviewing the input from the Design Workshop and the corresponding one on one interviews, a similar format for both groups would be used. This would help in determining whether spiritual leaders or congregants would be more responsive.

The various activities promoted identification of personal identity, deeper relationships among participants, and missional awareness.

The prototype groups were as follows:

PASTORAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

Participants:

The composition consisted of three local pastors, two online pastors, one parachurch leader, one overseas field worker who joined via Zoom, and two first responder chaplains. Five of the participants are female and four males, ranging in ages from thirty-eight to sixty-nine. All participants are Caucasian except for one Black.⁴

ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER GROUP

Participants:

This group was formed from self-identified lay people within a local fellowship in Port Angeles, Washington. There were five individuals consisting of four females and one male, ranging in age from twenty-nine to forty-two. The ethnic mix consists of three Caucasians, one Black person, and one Native American. Two of the women are currently stay at home moms, with one who homeschools her children. One woman is an educator and the other one is in the military.

The two prototypes participated in the following activities: Worship, Personal Coat of Arms, Personal brainstorming of positive characteristics, Five Finger Prayer, missional intercession, Prayer Partners, and Personal Journals.

Open-ended and reflective questions were used to empower, encourage, and release one another in their God designed missional adventure (Ephesians 2:10), which is in alignment with their gifts, talents, and current maturity level.

Both groups concluded their fourth session by evaluating their experience, through engaging in the following activities: Empathy Map, an individual survey, Action Planning, and by creating a Storyboard.

The most important discovery was the overwhelming significance of relational equity, and the impact it plays in people's participation, involvement, engagement, and sense of safety in the group. This is coupled with the need for there to be a culture of home where safety, vulnerability, meaningful practice, and identity can be nurtured and developed. The final insight is an expansion of the home

⁴ The stakeholder's preferred designation.

concept, in that true families are multi-generational and provide the best opportunity for meaningful learning of skills, stories, and connection to shared history. A literature review confirmed the value of intergenerational small groups.

The disconnection between beliefs and meaningful practices contribute to low participation and inactivity within the local church setting, as well as the mission field.⁵ This is probably due to an overreliance on rational thought which leads to good verses creating a community of belonging and identity to attain transformation.⁶ The practices implemented in this prototype provided an opportunity to learn new ways for parishioners to hear the voice of God (John 10:4) for themselves and engage in a missional activity that was unique to the individual and what they heard Jesus say to them. These activities provided a lab type experience for the Holy Spirit to use each persons' wide variety of skills and giftings, breaking them free from the limitations seen in the lecture format⁷ of a Sunday morning service. When individuals can apply learning in ways which make sense to who they are and how they relate to the world, that learning⁸ becomes transformative. The context of the home, and family model provides the relational model for this prototype.

Four individual interviews were conducted via Zoom. In the interviews there was: one male Iranian Immigrant pastor within the Muslim world, one female house church pastor, one female denominational evangelist, and one female Hispanic National Guard officer. These stakeholders' input contributed to the intergenerational make-up of the delivery group, content features such as the use of Lectio Divina and relational accountability.

The MVP that emerged was an intergenerational⁹ small group of congregants that engage with scripture through reflective practice of Lectio Divina, while supporting, and encouraging one another in their individual Holy Spirit activated areas of growth over four sessions. This is the best experiential format to replicate the natural development, learning, and implementation found in the

⁵ Scott Thumma and Warren Bird, *The Other 80 Percent: Turning Your Church's Spectators into Active Participants*, 1st ed, Jossey-Bass Leadership Network Series 56 (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011).

⁶ Marcus Warner and E. James Wilder, *Rare Leadership: 4 Uncommon Habits for Increasing Trust, Joy, and Engagement in the People You Lead* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2016), 44.

⁷ Sir Ken Robinson, "How To Escape Education's Death Valley," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wX78iKhInsc>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Holly Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community and Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012).

extended family type context.¹⁰ Each stakeholder will individually and collectively seek the Holy Spirit's direction in an intentional mission. This template of spiritual practice tools that will take any believer from where they are and develop meaningful skills that enhance their identity, within the spiritual community, while fulfilling their missional purpose, reflect the needs expressed by local pastors in the Discovery Workshop. It also equips congregants with the missional awareness from which a meaningful relationship with foreign missionaries can be established.

Delivery

THE PROJECT PROCESS AND SCOPE

I attend a Foursquare Church in Port Angeles, Washington. The four-week sessions were offered to anyone there. It was announced in the regular Sunday services for several weeks leading up to the start date. In order to complete the intergenerational context, I invited a family, and two women in their seventies. The sessions were one and half hours following the regularly scheduled Sunday service. Before the commencement of the group weekly materials were developed including Themed scriptures to be used in a Lectio Divina format, art activities, reflective questions, missional intercessory prayer, personally selected memory verses, personal journal activities, and reflective prayer. The community component was addressed through shared responsibility with set-up, teardown, and bringing food.

BENCHMARKS

The process of determining SMART benchmarks was particularly challenging. How to measure the movement of the Holy Spirit in anyone's life? How do you measure what an individual writes in their private journal without violating their privacy? The approved benchmarks were as follows:

- Journal entries will be measured by 80% responses anonymously shared on Empathy Map type posters each session.
- 80% of stakeholders will have selected 3-6 verses and put a minimum of 1 verse to memory by the fourth session.
- Each person will select 3-5 individuals that they pray for each week using the Five Finger prayer. They will share their progress on anonymous Empathy Map type posters with an 80% participation.
- 80% of the stakeholders will demonstrate joint ownership of the community by participating in providing food, clean-up, and set-up.
- Stakeholders will demonstrate community building communication skills as documented on the affirmation poster with 80% usage by the final session.
- Pre/Post self-evaluation of the stakeholders' personal growth spiritually, by a 60% increase in their personal perception of their engagement in the community, personal application of scripture, memorization, and God's mission through intercessory prayer.

¹⁰ Steven Bouma-Prediger and Brian J. Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Pub, 2008).

- The extensive absenteeism due to winter illnesses made it difficult for stakeholders to get momentum and build a routine. Therefore, I added a response poster asking which activities we did that were helpful and what would have made those activities more applicable.

FEEDBACK GATHERING:

The feedback gathering was through response posters each session. However, the high degree of absences made it possible to use the same posters every week because the individuals present had not necessarily been present the previous week. The details of this are outlined in Appendix Two.

LONG TERM OBJECTIVES

Implementing this project in a local congregation with a full range of generations was a great opportunity. Moving forward I desire to incorporate hands-on missional skill development activities. There needs to be further development in the area of actual accountability, partner relationships, and a greater variety of art activities. To address these challenges, I endeavor to empower a team of facilitators of various giftings, within this congregation, to partner in executing this type of format for the whole church.

Evaluation and Reflection

The journey of this project is inseparable from my own personal and professional journey, where the surprises, joys, and disappointments are all intertwined. I discovered that my network of relationships, though they may be quiet, are always within reach. The greatest surprise was the role of relationships in every aspect of life. The depth and value of a relationship is the currency of exchange for trust, volunteerism, vulnerability, and the strongest motivations. The lack of relational depth can quickly destroy the most well-planned programs.

This project is built on the foundation of a lifetime of experiences, defeats, and victories that all worked together to inform, shape, and make sense of project discoveries. I have been reminded of the Lord's hand on my life as my momentary setbacks, gave space to unexpected discoveries, such as the role of home, pilgrimage, and solitude in the development of Christ followers.

When I consider the impact, this process has had on me personally, I am overwhelmed. Although, I am unsure of my current context because it is in transition. At the beginning of this program, I never would have imagined I would be living in the US. However, I have experienced a deeper integration of my life with Jesus and what I do.

This project has revealed the need for Christians to be connected to their identity as individuals and as children of God, seeing their purpose as more than just their own self-fulfillment and comfort. This identity is satisfied best when it is joined with God's eternal design and purpose. Many people have become content showing up for a church service, bible study, or other events. However, few have experienced the exhilaration of their unique design partnering with God's purpose for supernatural impact.

During this process the church community has revealed that it is on a treadmill of events with the hopes of keeping its congregants satisfied and possibly transformed. It is difficult to cultivate authentic relationships that challenge us as individuals and are supportive. The individualistic nature of the American culture is in constant tension with building a close-knit community of believers. This is further challenged by insecurities around an individual's story with Jesus not being enough, as well as the misconception that biblical knowledge is the most important element to being used of God.

The third area of revelation was the misperceptions around missions. Many churches and individuals treat it as an event that is organized by leadership and executed with the help of congregants. Whereas the early church saw missions as a central element of its identity. Every believer sought opportunities to authentically share the story of their journey with Jesus. During this process I learned that the best way to be missional was to have a deeper relationship with Jesus. That it is out of this depth that a newfound gratitude for what I have received gets transformed into a spontaneous compassion for others.

My dream for this project is it will allow people to experience a deeper understanding of their God-given identity and the joy, peace and fulfillment that comes when they walk it out with Jesus.

Doctoral Project

Introduction

The project GCM: Generations in Community on Mission: A theoretical framework for intergenerational disciples on mission is showcased as follows: First an introductory overview of the process from the original NPO to the current NPO and the development of this project. Secondly, an explanation of the key players, context, practices, and tools. Next the execution of the project with its corresponding benchmarks of measurement. Finally, a summary of the final discoveries and appendices of materials. This research resulted in an opportunity based on my NPO: *The integration of identity, community, and mission within the local church setting results in the empowering, developing, releasing, and sustaining of disciples on mission*. I discovered that discipleship and small group Bible studies are common within the Christian community. They come in many forms in local congregations, but their primary focus is on content specifically designed around a theme or subgroup of individuals. The focus of this project is the acquisition of applicable spiritual practices within a meaningful community, for the Holy Spirit to lead individual transformation, and the fulfillment of individual identity in partnership with God's purposes.

This project is not a curriculum, rather it is testing various tools and spiritual practices within a multi-racial, non-gender specific, and intergenerational small group. The scope of my project involves the defining of four essential elements: key participants, the context and setting, practices, and resources. The small group sessions are two hours in length. The desired outcomes include organically growing relationships and support networks, personal responsibility for spiritual growth, a growing awareness of their missional purpose, and how to practically partner with God if fulfilling that purpose. The benchmark goals and the evaluation of those markers are found in the Assessment section.

The following is a presentation of:

1. The Four Essential Elements that shape the small groups—key participants, context and setting, practices, resources.
2. GCM: Generations in Community on Mission: A theoretical framework for intergenerational disciples on mission—four-week study.
3. Assessment: The execution of the project with its corresponding benchmarks of measurement.
4. Appendix E

Presentation of the Project

The four sessions of *Generations in Community on Mission* (GCM) small group implemented spiritual practices to address the three themes, identity, community, and mission of the project NPO. The emphasis was on engaging in multiple learning modalities around these themes. The activities promoted group interaction, through the individual's varied perspectives, and retention through personal assimilation of new scriptural insights.¹¹ The facilitator gave time and space for the Holy Spirit to direct the discussion through the promptings and questions of participants. I present to you, GCM: Generations in Community on Mission: A theoretic framework for intergenerational disciples on mission.

The Four Essential Elements of Small Groups

Jesus challenged the first disciples to leave everything and follow him. He invited them to experience the presence of God as their dwelling place. This is a difficult concept to comprehend within the context of the middle-class Western Christian world. Yet, Henri Nouwen in *Following Jesus: Finding Our way Home in an Age of Anxiety*,¹² suggests that this stripping away of our worldly comforts is necessary to be transformed and fully integrated. This is a vulnerable state in which the disciple becomes anchored in the presence of Jesus. His presence becomes the home for which we long to know but often find pseudo fulfillment in worldly pleasures. When Christ becomes our home, it embodies the totality of belonging; being known and unconditionally acceptance.¹³ The question then rises; do we sell everything and go sit in some desert somewhere? While this drastic action may be an option for some, it is not practical. Nouwen in *The Way of The Heart: Connecting with God Through Prayer, Wisdom, and Silence*, provides another option: solitude.¹⁴ He challenges us to enter "the transformational furnace" of solitude where "our false," and "compulsive self" is made "new" in "Jesus Christ."¹⁵ It is within this quietness that the foundation of "intimacy with God" is laid.¹⁶ The fruit of this type of experiential relationship with God is the healing of our past, a restoration of our

¹¹ Appendix E: All materials used and referenced are in appendices that correspond with each session.

¹² Henri J. M. Nouwen and Gabrielle Earnshaw, *Following Jesus: Finding Our Way Home in an Age of Anxiety*, First Edition (New York, New York: Convergent, 2019), 19.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart*, 1st Ballantine trade pbk. ed (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003), 10.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Marcus Warner and E. James Wilder, *Rare Leadership: 4 Uncommon Habits for Increasing Trust, Joy, and Engagement in the People You Lead* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2016), 116.

God created identity, the fulfillment of our purpose in partnership with him, and a profound sense of belonging to the family of God.¹⁷

The following is the Identification of the key participants, context and setting in which the practices and resources which are essential to creating this type of intentionally organic and transformative.

Key Participants

The participants and their characteristics listed here represent the main relational entities in GCM small groups.

Disciple

Disciples are all believers, everyone who chooses to follow Jesus is on their own individual continuous growth journey. Maturity is not a determining factor in the relevance of their contribution to the group. There is a presumption here, that God determines the steps (Proverbs 16:9b) of everyone. Those who are open to recognize his hand in their lives have an opportunity to learn from one another as we "spur one another on toward love and good deeds."¹⁸

This process is represented in the disciple's growth process.¹⁹ The diagram identifies four areas of a person's continuous development: identity, spiritual community, mission or purpose, and competence.²⁰ We are all invited into this process of transformation. The redemptive cycle leads us toward greater oneness with God and his purposes, and the joy of living out of our godly design.²¹ These four areas are simultaneously being influenced, shaped, and redeemed by the Holy Spirit.

An individual's identity is the raw material of who they are at this moment. It includes the gifts, talents, and personality which has been a part of them since birth.²² The older a person is, the more factors that contribute to how they understand themselves including life experiences, education, and various roles. The above-mentioned characteristics are aspects of every person, for the Christian there is also our identity in Christ or our spiritual character. For our natural and spiritual identity to

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Zondervan Bibles (Grand Rapids, Michigan), ed., *NIV Study Bible 10th Anniversary Edition*, Fully Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Bibles, 2020), 1869.

¹⁹ Figure 53.

²⁰ Borba, *Esteem Builders: A K-8 Self-Esteem Curriculum For Improving Student Achievement, Behavior and School Climate*, 99.

²¹ Warner and Wilder, *Rare Leadership*, 144.

²² Romans 12:4-8.

reach their optimal restorative health we need to be in an experiential, personal relationship with a responsive God.²³

The spiritual community is the environment where believers have the opportunity to learn new habits in order to deepen their intimacy with God.²⁴ It is within the community that we observe, practice, try, fail, relearn, and try again. This supportive group of individuals hold up a mirror for us to see how God sees us. It is in the sharing of the struggle and victory of one's journey that the group finds encouragement. The community becomes one another's history keepers to remind and affirm us of where we have been and just how we have overcome. It is through this developmental process that each gains a growing awareness of themselves as God's amazing creation. This leads to a growing understanding that our unique identity has a greater purpose, with can be fulfilled in partnership with the Creator. This community of individuals become our "allies" in our struggle, maturation, and co-laborers in our mission.²⁵ As the community grows closer to God in intimacy and gratitude, the natural by-product is compassionate service. In its simplest form service "bears witness to" the "new life" of grace we have experienced.²⁶

Missional purpose is both individual and collective group partnership with God's redemptive plans. These plans are initiated by God and require a response from us. They can be described as a spontaneous reaction, "That's me!" which affirms our identity. This is usually followed by thoughts of this task being impossible.²⁷ This is an opportunity to return to solitude with Jesus for instruction, clarification, and understanding. These are challenges for the person we are today, to grow in learning the ways of God and responding to his voice.²⁸ They provide a testing ground to grow our faith. Our faith grows incrementally as we say yes to progressively more challenging steps of obedience.

The final stage of development is competence. These are the lessons acquired from the mission experience. A mission experience can be an act of kindness toward someone else or a specific challenge to grow in a Christ-like behavior. There is no success or failure just a learning from the experience. The GCM group provides the environment of reflection by asking the following questions:

²³ Warner and Wilder, *Rare Leadership*, 54.

²⁴ Ibid., 62.

²⁵ Ibid., 108.

²⁶ Nouwen and Earnshaw, *Following Jesus*, 130.

²⁷ Warner and Wilder, *Rare Leadership*, 90.

²⁸ David showed up with all he was, the weapon he knew, and an unwavering experiential understanding of his God, resulting in the defeat of Goliath (1 Samuel 17:17-51).

- What did you learn about yourself?
- What did you learn about God and his nature?
- Where did you see Jesus? What was he doing? How can you recognize him sooner?
- What is the Holy Spirit wanting to teach you from this experience?
- Who does God want you to share this story of his faithfulness with?

These new experiential lessons become a part of the person's identity, which is available for the next faith challenge.

GCM, is like being in an extended family, where no one is excluded due to age, gender, ethnicity. Only in GCM the story of our journey with Jesus is intentionally encouraged. Below is a list of elements that define a disciple and their scriptural reference. It is important to keep in mind that each person is at their unique level of development in each of the areas listed. Each person's story of growth can become an encouragement and inspiration to others in their own journey.

Disciples are both learners and ones who share what they have learned. In John 4:7-26, the woman at the well exemplifies this. Jesus sets her free from the way of sin and ushers her into a life of new hope. The response is to share this newfound freedom with all those who knew her. It is also interesting to note that she did not choose only the people who were safe for her. She risked it all to by calling the entire village to come and meet the Messiah. This encounter with Jesus also freed her from the shame of her sinful life.

A disciple is a person who has made an intentional decision to pursue God on a spiritual journey. Jesus describes the way of a disciple as one that is without an earthly home.²⁹ In Luke 10, Jesus challenges his followers to rely totally on their relationship with God as they go to the towns around them to practice what they have learned and to spend the peace of the Kingdom.

They are on pilgrimage with Jesus. Psalm 84:5-7 provides a picture of Christ followers who are on a journey. They have learned to draw their strength from the Lord who is their joy. This mindset of continual progress opens them up to the transformation of life's sorrows into "refreshing springs" and "blessings."³⁰

In Jesus' description of himself as the good shepherd we also gain insight into those who would follow him. Those who know the good shepherd can discern his voice from a stranger or one who would be dangerous.³¹ These people recognize and respond to the voice of God in their lives.³²

²⁹ Luke 9:58, NLT.

³⁰ Psalm 84:6, NLT.

³¹ John 10:5, NLT.

³² John 10:16, NLT.

Peace is a trademark of the kingdom of God. Disciples are representatives of that kingdom are to bring that same peace into the world they find themselves in. When a disciple has acquired the righteous character of God that peace comes with them.³³ They are able to respond from a position of quiet confidence birthed in peace.³⁴

Disciples know Jesus and the ways of the kingdom well enough to respond to observed needs from a position of compassion, humility, and discernment. In the account of the man healed at the pool of Bethesda, the area around the pool was crowded with people with various illnesses, yet Jesus healed only one man. Jesus also performed this act on the sabbath which was forbidden. He also did not draw any attention to himself but slipped away. This is a special skill to know when to act compassionately. Just because a person is in need does not necessarily mean they must be helped. Understanding the Lord's purposes in acts of compassion is important to not sabotage the greater goal.³⁵

Small Group Facilitator

This individual is someone who has "built a habit of intimacy with God."³⁶ They have done this by practicing of being still before God, assimilating the scripture into their daily life,³⁷ maintaining a posture of gratitude, writing down the story of their journey with God,³⁸ and humbly sharing their trails and success of what they have learned about themselves and God.³⁹ The facilitator knows that they are not the expert in the group. They can demonstrate the spiritual practices. These individuals are able to connect others within the group with their God identity and purpose. The facilitator welcomes opposing thoughts while encouraging everyone to respond from a heart of compassion and grace.⁴⁰

A facilitator realizes they are making a relational investment in others. This individual is choosing to engage in the lives of others, not merely organize a biblical event. There is a relational cost of time.

³³ Galatians 5:22-23, NLT.

³⁴ Isaiah 32:17, NLT.

³⁵ John 5:15, NLT.

³⁶ Warner and Wilder, *Rare Leadership*, 113.

³⁷ Ibid., 114.

³⁸ Ibid., 155.

³⁹ Ibid., 116.

⁴⁰ Steven Bouma-Prediger and Brian J. Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement* (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub, 2008), 62.

The facilitator must be willing to take the necessary time to know the individuals within the GCM group. This requires willingness to be personally vulnerable and to seek opportunities to engage with each person's world.

This type of invest begins from a culture of "Community Contact." The intentionality of remembering people's names and details about that individual. This is followed up with remembering that person's name and interest the next time they are met. Then taking the relationship further by inviting that person to do a life activity. All the while reminding them of the story they shared during the last encounter.⁴¹

Facilitators are connectors. They use the information they have gathered from community contact practices to connect people who have interests in common. They can join aspects of God and his word to an individual's interests, talents, desires, and areas of growth. Facilitators are able to see and provide opportunities for others to promote their strengths. These individuals have the skill to help people to embrace the Holy Spirit revealed growth areas in a non-threatening manner. Facilitators know their people well enough to remember past struggles and how those individuals managed to overcome.

GCM facilitators know and recognize the voice of God well enough to teach others to do the same. This skill is important to establish the ultimate teacher is the Lord not the facilitator. It helps to develop mature disciples that can discern for themselves. Eli in 1 Samuel 3 models this for us. Samuel hears a voice that he assumes is Eli's. Eli realizes it is the Lord attempting to get Samuel's attention. It would be so easy for Eli to explain everything to Samuel. Instead, he chooses to teach Samuel to develop his own relationship with God.

GCM facilitators spend time in the Word of God to deepen their relationship with Jesus and to develop godly character. Stephen from Acts 6-7 is a great example. He was selected to serve those in need because he was "full of faith and the Holy Spirit."⁴² Stephen was a man full of grace, wisdom, power, performed miracles, and he could articulate the ways of the kingdom with authority.⁴³ The Word of God was so much a part of Stephen's being that when he was to be stoned, it poured out of him with conviction and authority.⁴⁴

The Holy Spirit

⁴¹Figure 39.

⁴² Acts 6:5, NLT.

⁴³ Acts 6:8,10, NLT.

⁴⁴ Acts 7, NLT.

It is important to identify the person and role of the Holy Spirit within the group. This helps to create important parameters which provide a safe domain. It establishes him as the primary entity who leads directs within the context of GCM.

The person of the Holy Spirit works in conjunction with the Father and the Son to counsel and lead God's followers into truth, because he is the "Spirit of truth."⁴⁵ He was present when we were created. He knows the Father's intentions for our design. The Holy Spirit identifies the best way to fulfil our identity.⁴⁶ Because of his intimate knowledge of us and his partnership with the Father, the Holy Spirit discerns the best ways to refine our character and unearths our giftings.⁴⁷

The Holy Spirit is God's every present presence with us.⁴⁸ The Spirit of God helps us in our weakness and prays for us from the depths of his spirit.⁴⁹ He is continually urging us to live in harmony with the Spirit, so that we would experience freedom to be our best self.⁵⁰

GCM groups, in keeping with the expression of freedom of choice God gave to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.⁵¹ Every person is invited to participate with the Holy Spirit, on a transformational journey.⁵² The diagram below illustrates the relational flow of a GCM small group.

⁴⁵ John 14:16-17, NIV.

⁴⁶ Psalm 139:15-16, NLT.

⁴⁷ Romans 8:27-29b, NLT.

⁴⁸ John 14:16b, NLT.

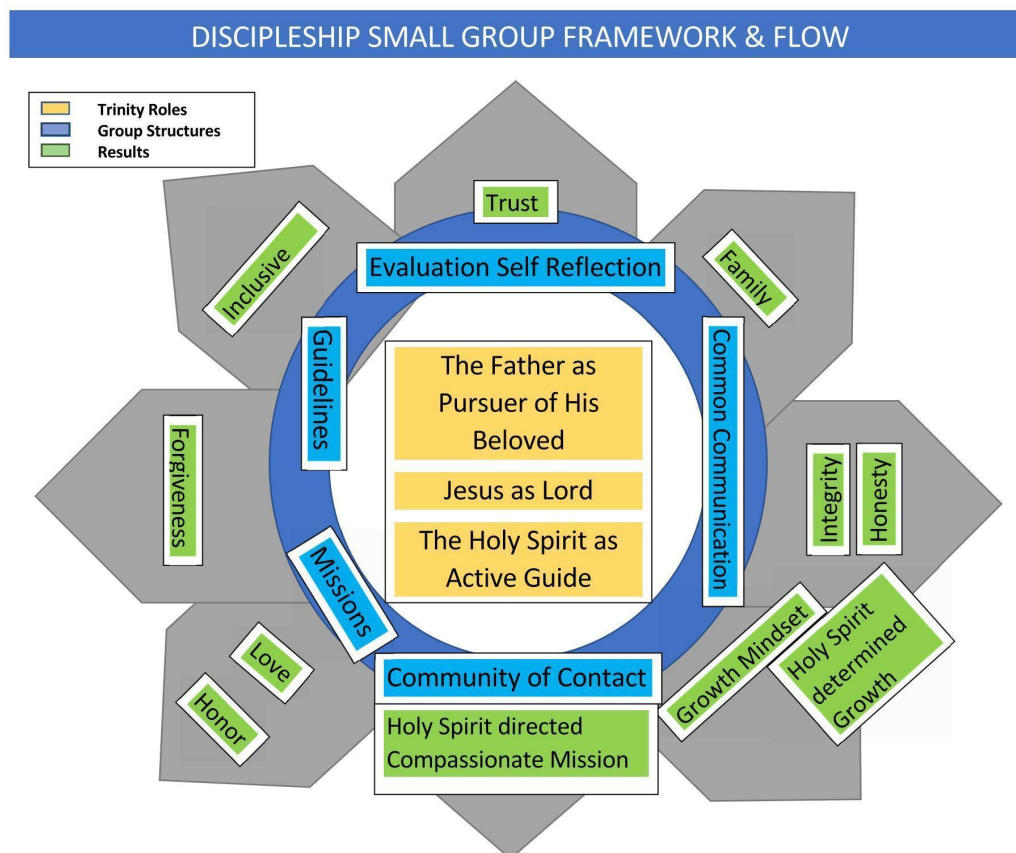
⁴⁹ Romans 8:26, NLT.

⁵⁰ 2 Corinthians 3:17, NLT.

⁵¹ Genesis 2, NLT.

⁵² 2 Corinthians 3:18, NLT.

FIGURE 1: DISCIPLESHIP SMALL GROUP DYNAMICS



⁵³ This diagram was developed from Prototype Group B Appendix Twenty-Three in the Portfolio

Community

Within a GCM community the Holy Spirit has three main roles. The first of which is to reveal to everyone's areas of their life which need to be address. The community provides a safe place to look at one's weakness and receive support in making transformational change as the Holy Spirit highlights the specific areas.⁵⁴ The second role is modeling unity and cooperation. In John 14: 16, 17 the Holy Spirit models working in unity with the Father and the Son to comfort, lead, guide, and encourage those who choose to follow Jesus. The final role is to be our primary instructor on how to live a godly life.⁵⁵

Mission

Mission and purpose are central elements to the development of a person's and institutional identity. The fulfillment of missional purpose builds confidence encourages risk taking and empowers individuals to explore outside of their comfort area.⁵⁶ It is in the perseverance through a challenging situation that a person's character is refined.⁵⁷ In Romans 5:3-5, the author encourages the reader to not be surprised by life's challenges but to embrace the process. He continues by saying that the believer has an extra element of hope in hard times, God's love which is poured out on us, and the Holy Spirit fills our hearts with that love.

Therefore, the primary goal of mission within a GCM community is connect individuals with the kindness and patience of the Holy Spirit draws people into an ever-deepening relationship with God.⁵⁸ This is to enhance a person's awareness of the Holy Spirit's work and presence in their lives.

The second goal is to help participants to recognize the Father's purposes within their circle of influence. Then to respond to the Holy Spirit's voice with compassion, grace, and confidence in who they are as they partner with God to fulfill his mission each day.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ John 14:26, NLT.

⁵⁵ John 14:26, NLT.

⁵⁶ Michele Borba Ed.D., *Esteem Builders: A K-8 Self-Esteem Curriculum For Improving Student Achievement, Behavior and School Climate*, Second (Torrence, CA: Jalmar Press, 2003), 221.

⁵⁷ Tod E. Bolsinger, *Tempered Resilience: How Leaders Are Formed in the Crucible of Change* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 75.

⁵⁸ Roman 2:4, NLT.

⁵⁹ "...He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." Ephesians 2:10, NLT.

Context and Setting

These beliefs establish a common understanding for how God views his children and works within the spiritual community.

Shared Beliefs

It is important to establish a baseline of beliefs in which the GCM group functions. The following basic list came out of the design prototype groups. It was important to focus on the role of the Holy Spirit as the primary instructor not someone in the group. It was determined that participants needed to experience their uniqueness is an asset to the group. Each person regardless of their perceived spiritual maturity are capable of hearing God's voice, acting on what they hear, and have a significant role in the community.

- God is always speaking to anyone who desires to hear (John 10).
- We can learn to recognize his voice (1 Samuel 3).
- God is big enough to handle all circumstances (Romans 8:28).
- God has uniquely designed everyone for a purpose (1 Corinthians 12).
- God has a special purpose for everyone today, that fits who they are today (Ephesians 2:10).
- God is committed to walk with us until we are transformed into the fullness of his likeness (2 Corinthians 3:17-18).
- The Holy Spirit will lead and guide us into all truth (John 16:13).

Spiritual Community

The "goal is the creation of a transformative community" which is firmly established in "belonging and" the emergence of each person's God-designed "identity," which is continually being shaped through missional partnership with God.⁶⁰ The building of this type of community requires far more time than this four-week experience. The practices outlined in this project provide participants with experiences to develop intimacy with God, imitation of someone who practices those exercises, and activities to identify and support others in their spiritual journey.⁶¹

The people of God are told that they are the "household of faith," (Titus 1:7) which redefines how we are to be seen by the world. This new home is to embody the "worldview" of heaven which

⁶⁰ Warner and Wilder, *Rare Leadership*, 100.

⁶¹ Ibid. 119.

reshapes our habits, rituals, and interpersonal relationships.⁶² It is as we become the incarnate expression of God's love that we "build a new home, a new community, a new dwelling place for God in this world."⁶³ The intergenerational element of a GCM group resembles this type of a "home...where families are raised, the elderly are respected, and the vulnerable cared for."⁶⁴ Steven Bouma-Prediger and Brian J. Walsh, define the characteristics of home as follows:

- Permanence: It is the place that provides a safe haven, a resting place from the challenges of sojourning through life. It signifies that it is enduring.
- A dwelling place: A place that is "saturated with meaning." Those individuals that call this home know how things function. There are elements of rituals, customs, fun and seriousness.
- A place of stories: The historical nature of our life together in Jesus are shared for mutual edification. These stories of our shared identity and purpose provide hope and instruction.
- Hospitality: Communicates that security in who we are, unthreatened by newcomers who are yet to walk in transformational life.
- Inhabiting the society: A sense of ownership and responsibility for the physical location a person lives. The church's opportunity in this is to extend the blessings of the Kingdom outside of itself. This is the very heart of missional purpose.
- Belonging: The sign of true community. Belonging and affiliation is being accepted by individuals who are fully aware of all the broken places in one's life. In Christian terms this might be referred to as unconditional love.⁶⁵

Societal Community

The societal community is the territory in which the people of God live. In Jeremiah 29: 4-9, the exiled people of God are instructed to settle down and become contributors of the land. They are challenged to pray for the prosperity of their new home. This type of emotional and relational ownership moves an individual from a tourist or resident attitude of consumption, to one of a citizen who feels a sense of responsibility for their circle of influence.

⁶² Bouma-Prediger and Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness*, 127.

⁶³ Henri J. M. Nouwen and Gabrielle Earnshaw, *Following Jesus: Finding Our Way Home in an Age of Anxiety*, First Edition (New York, New York: Convergent, 2019), 60.

⁶⁴ Steven Bouma-Prediger and Brian J. Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Pub, 2008), 152.

⁶⁵ Bouma-Prediger and Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness*, 65-66.

A citizen has both rights and responsibilities. It is out of this sense of ownership that they make an investment in the well-being of the territory in which they reside. As Christians reestablish their home in Christ their emerges a new attentive heart for others.⁶⁶ We become "less worried about ourselves,"⁶⁷ and are transformed into an "expression of gratitude for the love we have already experienced."⁶⁸ Missions and missional purpose are no longer an obligation but an act of gratitude. The missional activities within in GCM are spiritual practices to enhance the development of fear free worldview and to assist participant to bring the peace of heaven to those they meet in their circle of influence.

Small Group

Small groups provide a more intimate context for knowing one another and being known. Jesus used this model with the disciples. The project group was composed of twelve individuals. This number divided nicely into two equal table groups of six, same gendered individuals. It was also a good number for pair work. Groups and individuals are unique. Therefore, it is best if group members are empowered as to the specific theme or content. To maintain a sense of ownership, the facilitator can invite members with interests and strengths to fill their gaps, for example art exercises.

Identity

The fullness of one's individual identity is revealed through living in community.⁶⁹ The community becomes a mirror that shows the individual who they are, both good and bad. These revelations provide opportunity to practice new growth behaviors within a community of acceptance.

Community

Community is developed through commonly shared life experiences or mission that results in a memorial story.⁷⁰ Individuals within the group who observe the strengths of others and clearly communicate feedback, encouragement, and support strengthen to bonds of the group.⁷¹ The greater the diversity of age, ethnicity, and background the broader the perspective of the

⁶⁶ Henri J. M. Nouwen and Gabrielle Earnshaw, *Following Jesus: Finding Our Way Home in an Age of Anxiety*, First Edition (New York, New York: Convergent, 2019), 128.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 130.

⁶⁹ Nouwen and Earnshaw, *Following Jesus*, 29.

⁷⁰ Bouma-Prediger and Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness*, 66.

⁷¹ Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, *How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk* (New York: Scribner Classics, 2012).

community. Reflective question discussions challenges individuals' perspective and keeps the interaction focused on personal transformation.

Mission

A GCM group's missional purpose begins with making our home in the presence of Jesus. The more time a person spends absorbing his presence the more freedom they experience which empowers them to risk.⁷² It is essential to become observers' people, their needs, and their possibilities to best discern God's action plan. Every member is important to God's purpose. He invites to trust and obey Jesus in acts which extend compassion to others. When we respond wholeheartedly, in our imperfection, Jesus will respond with abundant grace to fill whatever void is left.⁷³

Practices

The following practices were developed to enhance intimacy with God, while revealing one another's created identity and missional purpose. This was achieved within a richly diverse community of individuals within whom the love of God" became "incarnate in very different ways."⁷⁴

Discipleship

Prototype Groups determined that relational equity is the foundation for discipleship. The meaningful and intentional investment in an individual's life is the key to transformational growth. They determined that a disciple is both a learner and a one who shares their learning with others. The following behaviors were determined to be essential to building relational equity in discipleship:

The Process of Discipleship

The process begins when an individual becomes a child of God. This is the moment when they realize God has chosen them and calls them his beloved child. The individual becomes aware that God sees them as a special person. It is at this point that their uniqueness's are seen as an asset. God's act of acceptance expresses "a desire to know" the individual, "to come closer," and "to love" them.⁷⁵ The elements that define an individual now have an eternal value.

The community of God is the domain in which the child of God learns what it means to be part of this new family. It is to be a place of belonging which reinforces the loving acceptance, and value of

⁷² Nouwen and Earnshaw, *Following Jesus*, 27.

⁷³ Ibid., 33.

⁷⁴ Nouwen and Earnshaw, *Following Jesus*, 48.

⁷⁵ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World*, 10th anniversary ed. with new guide for reflection (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2014), 53.

the individual's unique identity. 1 Corinthians 12 describes the value of each member's uniqueness and their contribution to overall community. It also challenges to actively encourage those who are particularly unusual. These relationships are to be in an atmosphere of unity which supports, encourages, develops, and sustains each person as they bring their best self to the community. Personal application of biblical truths is valued over academic knowledge. This community gets its identity from its relationship with God, how they live together, and how they live out their missional purpose.

Our individual and collective identity is developed as each one intentionally seeks the missional opportunities "God has prepared in advance"⁷⁶ and obeys. Each opportunity is an occasion to grow in faith, character development, unity of the community, and trust in Jesus. This is a continuation of the spiritual growth process, so there are no failures only new learnings.

The fourth stage is the application of the learnings from the steps of faith taken missionally. This is a time of reflection about what each member did as they followed the voice of God. What did they hear? What did they observe about themselves, others, and how God showed up? What new spiritual and behavioral practice could improve the situation next time? What behaviors did each person part take in that were beneficial? Are there any behaviors that compromised the purpose of the task, or misrepresented Jesus? Finally, how can we support one another moving forward.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Ephesians 2:10b, NLT.

⁷⁷ Figure 2.

The Disciple's Growth Process

FIGURE 2: THE DISCIPLE'S GROWTH PROCESS



¹ Michele Borba Ed.D., *Esteem Builders: A K-8 Self-Esteem Curriculum For Improving Student Achievement, Behavior and School Climate*, Second (Torrence, CA: Jalmar Press, 2003), 6. Borba's educational theory addressed in this curriculum was a major influence in the development of this project and the graphic above.

² Carol S. Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, Ballantine Books trade pbk. ed (New York: Ballantine Books, 2008). Dweck associates this with a growth mindset & continuous development.

The Role of Relational Equity

The facilitator usually initiates the discipleship relationship. Although, as participants become more empowered and invested in the practices of the group, they become initiators. Stakeholder

feedback on the importance of egalitarian relationships within discipleship, contributed to the use of a reflective, round table style in this project.

Relational equity emerged early in my research as a significant factor. In order for a GCM group to maximize its effectiveness the facilitators must commitment to being in relationship with participants beyond group meetings. This behavior models availability to one another which reduces barriers and engages in various forms of fellowship and fun.

The more often the facilitator creates opportunities for real-life experiences, such as eating together and play, the more the group mirrors a healthy family setting. These activities are the segway into making space for new people on a regular basis. This investment of time models the inclusive community that is expected which becomes an aspect of its identity. As individuals experience more of life together, they begin to build an element of trust which facilitates mutual vulnerability, essential for maximum growth and accountability.

Finally, each person's spiritual walk is individual, but when it is done in community there is the support, encouragement, and loving exploration of the barriers that hinder each person from becoming their best self. A GCM group is committed to helping each person to identify and walk in their unique Holy Spirit designed, an individualized spiritual growth plan. Keeping in mind that we are all on a journey with Jesus, which is filled with unique challenges and experiences that are tools of opportunity to encourage someone else.

Intergenerational Groups

Prototype Group B decided it was important to have intergenerational⁷⁸ groups. Intergenerational groups create a natural family dynamic. The various ages are representative of language, values, history, experience, and perspective. Every generation has its own strengths and weaknesses. This type of integrational group intentionally creates opportunities to demonstrate mentorship, mutual honor and respect through natural relationships.⁷⁹

Some of the unique assets of generations is highlighted below:

- Older generations have more experiences in life, and usually walk with Jesus.
 - This is an opportunity from someone who has mastered practical life skills and spiritual practices.
 - They are often experienced storytellers.

⁷⁸ Holly Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community and Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012).

⁷⁹ Ibid.

- Younger generations:
 - The secrets of the Kingdom are revealed to children (Matthew 11:25).
 - They keep life fun.
 - They have an innocent faith (Matthew 18:3-4).
- Middle age generations:
 - They are in the throes of finding their way in life.
 - They bring a current perspective.
 - They can create a symbiotic relationship with the older generation through mutual help in life situations.

The exercises and scriptural text reflected the themes of the NPO, identity, community, and mission. The four sessions of this project did not prove insufficient time to build the depth of relationship desired, but it did begin the process. It should be noted here that most of the individuals in this group had a causal relationship with one another to this project. However, there needs to be more time for each element to be solidified as a new spiritual habit.

Communication

Prototype Group B felt strongly that it was important for small groups not only to practice good communication skills. They also realized that there is a need to learn better skills. There are three categories of most importance: Encouragement, Feedback, and Conflict Resolution skills. The following is what these skills look like behaviorally:

Everyone needs meaningful encouragement to keep persevering, particularly in difficult times. All too often the input we receive is counterproductive. The following tools help us to see and focus on those aspects of another person that add to their development. The first suggestion is to look for the good in others and tell that person what you noticed. Second, be specific about the behavior you noticed and how it made you feel. Third, people do not need our advice to fix their struggle. However, they probable would appreciate our empathy for our struggle. Sometimes it helps to remind people of their previous victories in similar situations. In a similar vein, asking how they have seen God show up during previous struggles. The key is being observant of what is happening in others' lives:⁸⁰

Feedback, like encouragement is important information necessary for living in a harmonious community, but it is not one of those skills we use effectively. Feedback is those elevated markers on the roadway that informs a driver the car is headed for danger. Feedback informs community

⁸⁰ Faber and Mazlish, *How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk*.

members when they are speaking, and behaving in a manner that the community finds acceptable. Most often this is done subtly, which leaves a great deal open for interpretation and misunderstanding. The following are some ways to reduce confusion and build cohesive community. The most important element is to believe the best about others. People who show up do so because they want to belong. If their behavior does not connect with the group, it is probable they are unaware of the expectations.

People generally respond best to positive feedback. It is important that all feedback is specific and clearly communicates the purpose for the desired behavior. Remember progress over perfection. It is important to own one's feelings about a particular behavior. It may be that my expectations and feelings are the ones that need to change. Positive feedback or complements can be done in public, however negative feedback or corrections are to be done in private.

It is important to allow the Holy Spirit to do most of the correcting. Most people know when they have done something inappropriate. When we point it out, it usually results in a defensive response.⁸¹

Conflict is an unavoidable element of close relationships. This is particularly true when the group is comprised of a variety of unique individuals. Misunderstandings that cause friction and often division without intentional mechanisms in place to come to a healthy resolution. Recognizing that conflict is normal opens the possibility for mutual growth as described in the iron sharpening iron metaphor of Proverbs 27:17.

When these relational challenges arise it is important for each individual to identify the specific behavior that is an irritant. Each person needs to own their feelings, expectations, and contributing behaviors to the situation. It is important to assume the best about the other person or people involved. There needs to be a mutual commitment to work toward the issue's resolve. Throughout the process all parties strive to leave the other individuals' dignity intact.⁸²

Below is a sample conflict resolution dialogue:

- "We have a problem. We need a plan."
- "What do you see as the problem?"
- "This is how I understand the problem."
- Explore each other's feelings around the issue.

⁸¹ Barbara Coloroso, *Kids Are Worth It! Giving Your Child the Gift of Inner Discipline*, Rev. ed., 1st Quill Harper Resource paperback. ed, A Harper Resource Book (New York: Quill, 2002).

⁸² Barbara Coloroso, *Winning At Parenting Without Beating Your Kids* (Littleton, Colorado: Kids are Worth It, 1989).

- Use I-statements.
- "When (this) happens. I (feel)."
- Create a mutually agreed upon plan.
- Review and evaluate the plan in a set period of time.⁸³

The four-week sessions practiced encouragement by participating in the "Affirmation poster." Participants actively listened to those who shared.

Resources

Use of Art

Stakeholders felt that the use of art enabled them to be released from the limits of words.⁸⁴ It opened them up to see the bigger picture of the text. The experience of using art modalities made the content more memorable.

These were easy for the children to be full participants and were more challenging for some of the older adults. In this aspect it created a level field for the various ages to share the challenges, and victories.

- Shield: Draw images that reflect you.⁸⁵
- Playdough: Create something to represent you.⁸⁶
- Optional: drawing.
- Optional: make a collage.

Use of Scripture

The texts used were selected to reflect the key elements of the NPO of identity, community, and the Christian's missional role. The scripture was used in context to provide a larger picture. It was read chorally multiple different ways to facilitate different words to touch participants. Stakeholders commented that it opened their mind to what God was saying. They also mentioned that it was

⁸³ Faber and Mazlish, *How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk*, 110.

⁸⁴ Warner and Wilder, *Rare Leadership*, 90.

⁸⁵Figure 3.

⁸⁶Figure 51.

challenging to do it at home. This could mean that a different form of Lectio Divina may need to be explored or may be just more practice.

The use of contemplative prayer and reflective questions around scripture creates a more for an experiential and relational interaction with God. This requires a person to move from an intellectual world to one's heart where our emotions reside.⁸⁷ These prayers of the heart are vulnerable cries of the soul which invites God to not only change the circumstances of our world but us.⁸⁸ Henri Nouwen sees "reflective thinking" as fundamental to dialogue with God through prayer.⁸⁹ The more a person is in this deep learning posture of prayer the more "new discoveries they make about" the person and character of "God."⁹⁰ Marcus Warner and Jim Wilder suggest that this type of developing new spiritual habits retrain our brains, resulting in life transformation.⁹¹

Participants stated that the discussions around the reflective questions and the use of post-it notes helped them gain a wider perspective. The notes made for a safe place to share more openly and to be more vulnerable. Being able to hear the wide variety of responses was felt to be encouraging.

- Lectio Divina
- Reflective questions
- Title the fragments
- Memory verse.

Developing the Art of Journaling

Effective and meaningful journaling takes time and practice. The congregational prototype group had developed this skill. However, the project group of the stakeholders from the same congregation did not have the same level of journaling skills or practice.

This is a good situation to adjust the session time to practice journaling in pairs. It would be particularly helpful to be able to partner individuals from the prototype group with people in this group.

A follow-up activity would be to brainstorm in tables what questions the text prompted.

⁸⁷ Warner and Wilder, *Rare Leadership*, 90.

⁸⁸ Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart*, 75.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 69.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Warner and Wilder, *Rare Leadership*, 108.

Developing Missional Purpose

The following activities were chosen for developing a missional purpose. These focus on having a heart of compassion for individuals within the participants circle of influence.⁹² They emphasize developing a prayer life and a heart to be used by God. Observing and listening for God's agenda⁹³. Culminating in finding God's treasure in the people in their neighborhood.

- The John Wesley Covenant Prayer was used to provide a model of prayer that focuses on how to live a life devoted to God and his purposes.⁹⁴
- The Five Finger Prayer is a daily intercessory tool to pray for people in a person's circle of influence.⁹⁵ Each finger represents one aspect of the prayer. One, pray that the individual will come to know the Father's unconditional love for them. So that they would want salvation and to be in relationship with God. Two, pray against the enemy's lies and schemes that would keep them from the freedom in Christ that is available to them. Three, ask the Holy Spirit to work in this person's life to reveal their sin and draw them into repentance. Four, ask God to reveal himself in the people and circumstances in this person's life. Five, is the prayer that expresses one's openness to be used of God to bring this person closer to God.
- Community Field Trips:⁹⁶ These are guided activities to be done in groups of three or four individuals. They develop observational skills that are blended with prayer to assist GCM participants to openly share their unique Jesus story of hope with people from their circle of influence.
 - Missional Observation Form.⁹⁷
 - Treasure Hunt Map.⁹⁸

Identity Affirming Partners

⁹² Nouwen and Earnshaw, *Following Jesus*.

⁹³ Dennis Walker, *Catching the Initiatives of Heaven: The Key to Accessing the Power of Heaven for Every Need on Earth* (Nevada, USA: Dunamis Publishing, 2010), 26.

⁹⁴ Figure 7.

⁹⁵ Figure 8.

⁹⁶ Nouwen and Earnshaw, *Following Jesus*, 33.

⁹⁷ Figure 69.

⁹⁸ Figure 70.

These individuals become “allies” in one another’s ongoing growth and support.⁹⁹ They assist with follow-up and encouragement between sessions. The goal of these groups is to affirm the identity that God has created and is revealing within each individual. These partners are sojourners who call out the best in one another.¹⁰⁰ “Together” we “help each other on a common journey of transformation and discovery.”¹⁰¹

The inconsistent attendance made it difficult for people to make a natural connection with one another for these purposes. This component of the project will be a significant aspect of the project in the Launch Plan. However, stakeholders from the prototype B and the Design group felt that having a partner would help them in being more consistent in implementing these new spiritual practices.

- Journal insights
- Pray together Five Finger Prayer
- Practice memory verses
- Share insights into the reflection questions (transition sentences)

Session 1–What God Thinks of Me:

Participants explore scripture that focuses on God’s intentional good work in creating them. God loves who they are, in all their unique qualities. They had an opportunity to express their uniqueness through art, as they introduced themselves to the group.

Content Themes for Session One:

- How do I see myself?
 - God’s intentional, good, craftsmanship in making each person (Psalm 139).
- The use of art as a spiritual, relational, and practical exercise.
- The implementation of scriptural repeated meditative practice.

Method:

- All members participated in setting up.

⁹⁹ Warner and Wilder, *Rare Leadership*, 108.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 117.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

- Organizational Tasks:
 - Signing of consent forms.
 - An overview of the four sessions.
 - Completion of the Pre-Self-Reflective Survey.¹⁰²
- Open in prayer.
- Shield exercise to introduce who you are to the group:
 - Put your name in the banner at the top of your shield.
 - Use the pencils, pens, and markers to illustrate what makes you unique.
 - Share your shield to the group.
- Read the text *"What God Thinks About Me,"*¹⁰³ multiple times in various ways of choral reading.
 - Stop and reflect on its personal impact after each reading.
- The introduction of homework activities.
 - Each participant received a 3X5 card to write down their selected memory verse for this text.
 - Write your chosen scripture on one side.
 - Write that scripture in your own words.
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to show you which portion of scripture he is wanting you to focus on.
- The remainder of planned activities were postponed.
- Close in prayer.
- All members participated in tear down.

¹⁰² Finger 4.

¹⁰³ Figure 3.

Materials:

FIGURE 3: SHIELD:

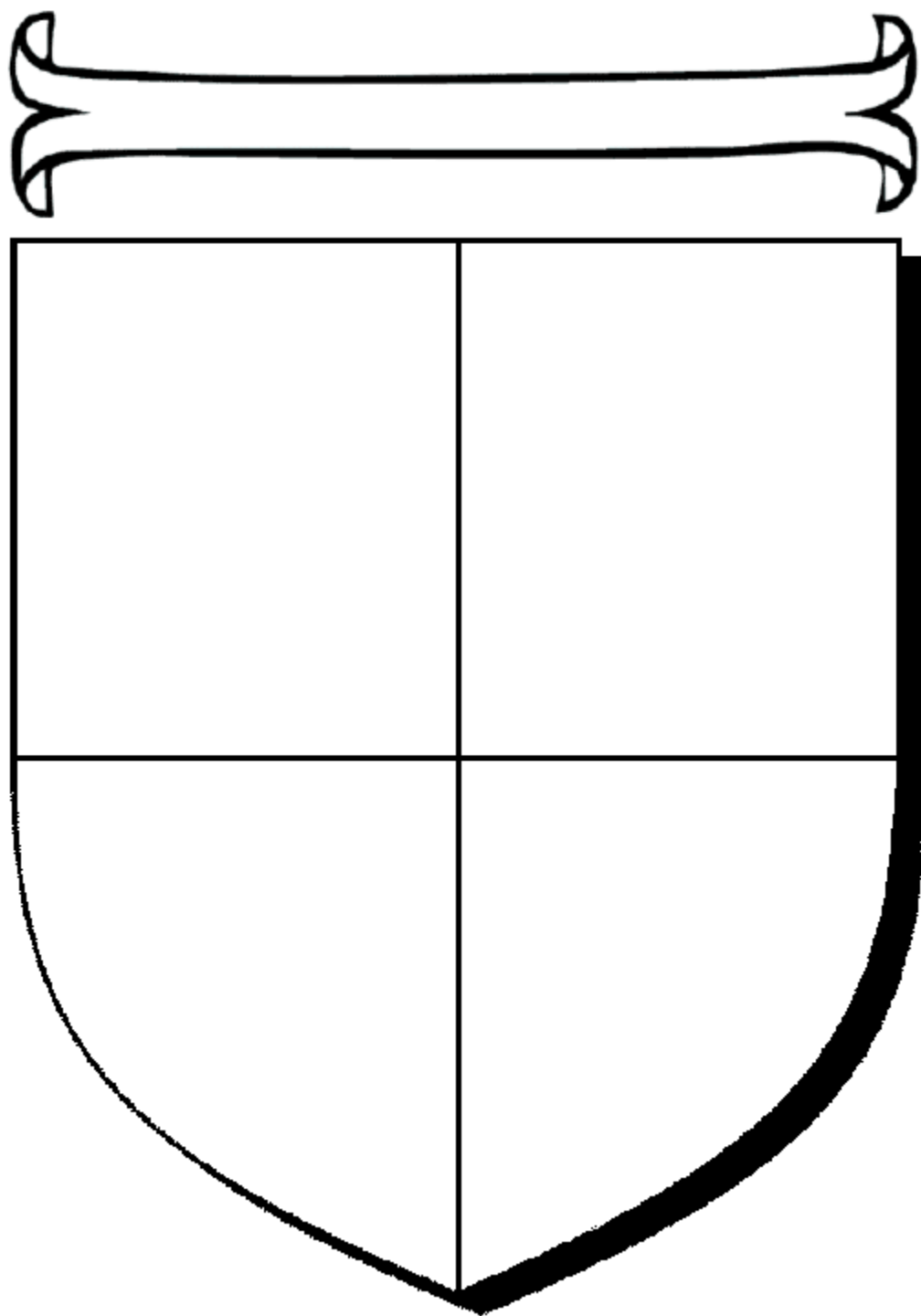


FIGURE 4: HANDOUT: PERSONAL IDENTITY: WHAT GOD THINKS ABOUT ME

What God Thinks About Me

"O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even When I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand! I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night- but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you. You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me tighter in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous-how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them: they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me! Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life (Psalm 139:1-18, 23-24)"¹⁰⁴

- Read the first sentence and stop.
- Read the next sentence and stop.
- Continue in this manner to the end of the text.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you?

- Read to the first punctuation mark and stop.
- The next person continues reading to the next punctuation mark and stops.
- Continue in this manner to the end of the text.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you? Are they the same or different from the 1st reading?

- Start reading the text.
- The next person interrupts when they feel they are to begin.
- This continues until the end of the text.

¹⁰⁴ Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation*. (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 507-508.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you? Are they the same or different from the previous readings?

Thinking about how Jesus sees you, create yourself.

Journal Time:

Your journal is God writing your personal psalms. You are recording your journey with Jesus. Expect Him to speak to you. Ask Him questions. Complain and express whatever feelings you have but expect Him to answer in your heart and confirm through His Word. Be creative. Draw pictures, write poetry, or songs. Invite the Holy Spirit into your time.

Scripture text:

Select one of the following to focus on each day:

Psalms 139:1-6

Psalms 139:7-12

Psalms 139:13-18

Psalms 139:23-24

What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about God? Do you see yourself any differently now? Do you see Jesus any differently? What is Jesus asking you to do? Can you find another verse that has a similar message? Is there one verse that is speaking to you personally? If yes, consider memorizing that verse.

RECORD IN YOUR JOURNAL.

Memory Verse:

- Which verse is the Holy Spirit encouraging you to focus on?
- Why is this verse important for you?
- Who can help you make this verse a part of how you live your life?
- How can they help you? Be specific.

Prayer:

- Ask Jesus who in your “backyard” (circle of influence) He wants you to pray for regularly.
- Write those people on your Five Finger sheet.
- Pray for the people on your sheet by name according to the prayer in the Five Finger sheet.
- Ask Jesus for a specific local government leader to pray for regularly.
- Ask Jesus for a specific local church leader to pray for regularly.

Record any insights, specific prayers, or answers to prayer in your journal.

FIGURE 5: PRE – SELF-REFLECTION SURVEY:

First & Last initials: _____ Age: _____ Date: _____

Please rate the following questions 1 being the least and 5 the most often/true:

1. I read my Bible 3 or more days a week:

1 2 3 4 5

2. I think about the scripture I have read throughout my day/week:

1 2 3 4 5

3. I regularly ask the Holy Spirit to help me apply the scripture I have read:

1 2 3 4 5

4. I intentionally put Holy Spirit prompted scripture to memory:

1 2 3 4 5

5. I regularly introduce myself to someone I don't know:

1 2 3 4 5

6. I regularly talk to people who are not like me (age, look different, etc.):

1 2 3 4 5

7. I regularly invite someone "new" to meet (coffee, home for a meal, watch kids sports, game night, etc.).

1 2 3 4 5

8. I regularly pray for people in my circle of influence that don't know Jesus.

1 2 3 4 5

9. I regularly pray for God to use me and my life for His service:

1 2 3 4 5

10. I feel comfortable sharing my story with Jesus:

1 2 3 4 5

11. I regularly write in a personal journal:

1 2 3 4 5

12. I regularly pray for my spiritual leaders:

1 2 3 4 5

13. I regularly pray for the leaders in my community:

1 2 3 4 5

14. I regularly pray for missionaries:

1 2 3 4 5

15. I regularly ask Jesus to show me how He sees my world:

1 2 3 4 5

16. I regularly ask Jesus what He has for me to do today:

1 2 3 4 5

Session 2-God's Representatives:

Participants were given the opportunity to review the previous session in terms of their personal learning. Each person shared the specific memory verse they selected and the significance of that verse to them. Those who were absent for Session One shared their Shields.

Content Themes for Session Two:

- I am God's special creation.
- I am God's representative.
- God invites me to his work.
 - God has prepared good things for me to do today.
 - Who I am today is preparing for faith acts today.
 - I can do something to bring the life of Jesus to others.
 - Pray for people in my specific circle of influence:
 - Intentionally.
 - Specifically, by name.
 - Regularly.

Method:

Review of Session 1:

- All members participated in setting up.
- Open in prayer.
- Participants were asked to close their eyes and focus on the text as it was read twice.
 - They were asked to think about how God had created them.
 - Create something that represents the wonderful you of God's creation. Participants could select from drawing or Play Dough.
- Journal Posters:

- What are you doing differently?¹⁰⁵
 - Prayer.
 - In your circle of influence.
 - Approach to scripture.
 - In action.
- What caused you to be happy?¹⁰⁶
 - Thoughts.
 - Actions.
 - From the scripture.
 - Feelings.
- What did Jesus say to you?¹⁰⁷
 - About yourself?
 - About your purpose?
 - About your challenges?
 - About your prayer life?
- What encouraged you this week?¹⁰⁸
 - In the scripture.
 - Through other people.
 - Through something you did.
 - Other.

¹⁰⁵ Figure 53.

¹⁰⁶ Figure 54.

¹⁰⁷ Figure 56.

¹⁰⁸ Figure 55.

- Participants recorded their responses on post-it notes. Then place them in the corresponding coordinates of the discussion posters.
- The facilitator shared those responses by coordinate with the whole group.

New:

- Introduction of the text: *"God's Representatives"*¹⁰⁹
 - Brainstorm in table groups what it means to be a representative of God.
 - Record the ideas from both groups on the board.
- Read the text multiple times in various ways of choral reading.
 - Stop and reflect on its personal impact after each reading.
- Introducing the *Wesleyan Covenant Prayer*.¹¹⁰
 - Read together.
 - How does this prayer challenge your personal commitment to Jesus?
- Introduction of the Five Finger Prayer.¹¹¹
 - Ask Jesus to reveal three people that he wants to begin to pray for regularly.
 - Record your responses in your journal.
- Review homework handout.
- Close in prayer.
- All members participated in setting tear down.

¹⁰⁹ Figure 6.

¹¹⁰ Figure 7.

¹¹¹ Figure 8.

Materials:

FIGURE 6: HANDOUTS: GOD'S REPRESENTATIVES

God's Representatives

"As they were walking along, someone said to Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go." But Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens to live in and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has not place even to lay his head." He said to another person, "Come, follow me." The man agreed, but he said, "Lord, first let me return home and bury my father." But Jesus told him, "Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God." (Luke 9:57-59, 62)¹¹² "The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places he planned to visit. These were his instructions to them: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So, pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields. Now go and remember that I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. Don't take any money with you, nor a traveler's bag, nor an extra pair of sandals. And don't stop to greet anyone on the road. Whenever you enter someone's home, first say, 'May God's peace be on this house. If those who live there are peaceful, the blessing will stand; if they are not, the blessing will return to you. Don't move around from home to home. Stay in one place, eating and drinking what they provide. Don't hesitate to accept hospitality because those who work deserve their pay. If you enter a town and it welcomes you, eat whatever is set before you. Heal the sick, and tell them, 'The Kingdom of God is near you now.' But if a town refuses to welcome you, go out into its streets and say, "We wipe even the dust of your town from our feet to show that we have abandoned you to your fate. And know this-the Kingdom of God is nearby!" Then he said to the disciples, "Anyone who accepts your message is also accepting me. And anyone who rejects you is rejecting God, who sent me. When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, "Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!" "Yes," he told them, "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning! Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy...But don't rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven." (Luke 10:1-11, 16-20)¹¹³ "Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!" (1 Peter 3:15-17) ¹¹⁴

- Read the first sentence and stop.

¹¹² Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation*. (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 841.

¹¹³ Ibid, 841-842.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 995.

- Read the next sentence and stop.
- Continue in this manner to the end of the text.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you?

- Read to the first punctuation mark and stop.
- The next person continues reading to the next punctuation mark and stops.
- Continue in this manner to the end of the text.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you? Are they the same or different from the 1st reading?

- Start reading the text, the next person interrupts when they feel they are to begin. This continues until the end of the text.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you? Are they the same or different from the previous readings?

Thinking about how Jesus sees you, create yourself.

Journal Time:

Your journal is God writing your personal psalms. You are recording your journey with Jesus. Expect Him to speak to you. Ask Him questions. Complain and express whatever feelings you have but expect Him to answer in your heart and confirm through His Word. Be creative. Draw pictures, write poetry, or songs. Invite the Holy Spirit into your time.

Scripture text:

Select one of the following to focus on each day:

Luke 9:57-59, 62

Luke 10:1-4

Luke 10:5-7

Luke 10:8-11

Luke 10:16-20

1 Peter 3:15-17

Record in your journal.

What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about God? Do you see yourself any differently now? Do you see Jesus any differently? What is Jesus asking you to do? Can you find another verse that has a similar message? Is there one verse that is speaking to you personally? If yes, consider memorizing that verse.

Memory Verse:

- Which verse is the Holy Spirit encouraging you to focus on?
- Why is this verse important for you?
- Who can help you make this verse a part of how you live your life?
- How can they help you? Be specific.

Prayer:

- Ask Jesus who in your “backyard” (circle of influence) He wants you to pray for regularly.
- Write those people on your Five Finger sheet.
- Pray for the people on your sheet by name according to the prayer in the Five Finger sheet.
- Ask Jesus for a specific local government leader to pray for regularly.
- Ask Jesus for a specific local church leader to pray for regularly.

Record any insights, specific prayers, or answers to prayer in your journal.

FIGURE 7: WESLEYAN COVENANT PRAYER

Covenant Prayer by John Wesley ¹¹⁵

The Wesleyan Covenant Prayer was adapted by John Wesley, the co-founder of Methodism (along with his brother, Charles) for the renewal of the believer's covenant (formal, serious, binding agreement) with God. Wesley says that the prayer was first used in a covenant renewal service held on Monday,

August 11, 1755, in London, with 1800 people present. Since then, the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer has often been used in Methodist services around the world on the first Sunday of the year. The prayer points to deep surrender of ourselves in complete trust to God. At first use, the words of the prayer can be jarring. Pray these words until you mean them.

I am no longer my own, but yours.

Put me to what you will, place me with whom you will.

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you,

Praised for you or criticized for you.

Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service.

And now, O wonderful and holy God,

Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,

you are mine, and I am yours.

So be it.

And the covenant which I have made on earth,

Let it also be made in heaven.

Amen.

As you prayed and meditated on this prayer, what did you hear Jesus say to you?

Was there a specific word or phrase that grabbed your attention?

What did you learn about God and how he views you?

What did you learn about yourself?

How has this experience changed how you see your relationship with Jesus?

Has this experience changed your behavior in any way?

¹¹⁵ Steve Manskar, "The Wesley Covenant Prayer and the Baptismal Covenant" (Discipleship Ministries: The United Methodist Church, January 2018), <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/blog/the-wesley-covenant-prayer-and-the-baptismal-covenant>.

FIGURE 8: FIVE FINGER PRAYER: INTENTIONAL MISSIONAL INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Pray the 5-Finger Prayer¹¹⁶

"I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf & give thanks for them...This is good & pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved & to understand the truth. For there is only one God & one Mediator who can reconcile God & humanity-the man Christ Jesus. He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone..." 1 Timothy 2:1,3--6 NLT.

For the Seeker, the Lost, New Believer & Struggling Believer

1. *Intercede for the person by name that they would desire salvation, God's Kingdom & ways.*

- "Lord, you are a good, gracious & loving Father. You created _____ to understand that you are for them & love them unconditionally. You desire to give them new life & that is abundant with purpose & hope. Father, I bring before you _____ as a person who is already purchased by the blood of Your Son Jesus Christ.

2. *Stand in Opposition to Satan & his working in this person's life.*

- "In the name of Jesus Christ, I stand against the powers of darkness that are attempting to disguise the Truth preventing _____ from entering into new life with you. I proclaim freedom for _____ so that he/she can come to Jesus without any interference from Satan. I come against you Satan, in the Name of Jesus, that you & all your schemes no longer have any impact in _____'s life.

3. *Holy Spirit I ask that you work in this person's life, revealing their sin & leading them into repentance.*

- "Holy Spirit you know that _____ doesn't know you yet (needs freedom, return to you, etc.), they are living in darkness & sin (bondage, depression, etc.). Only you fully understand their situation, lead them into repentance & righteousness. Open their eyes to the full Truth of who you are, the God of Truth whose plan is to save. Please Holy Spirit draw _____ to Jesus."

4. *Lord, I ask that you use every person, circumstance, blessing & challenge to bring this person into a vibrant, growing, victorious, personal relationship with you.*

- "Father, reveal to _____ through their circumstances your love & care for them. That they would understand the cost that Jesus paid when he was crucified on the Cross. Lord, you paid the full price for _____ sin, shame, fear, doubt, sickness, etc. May _____ understand that your Love is without condition...the decision to believe or not is theirs but your Love is a never ending free gift. Papa, open _____ heart, mind & spirit to experience your great love through people, place, nature, circumstance (good, bad, ugly) you are there to love us. That _____ may come into a living relationship with you as one of your disciples.

¹¹⁶ Unknown, *Five Finger Prayer*, English. This is the English version of a handout used in the Church of God in Poland, Krakow. Bishop Wojtek Włoch.

Five Finger Prayer: page 2

5. Lord, I ask that you would use me to escort this person closer to you & ultimately into Salvation & Discipleship.

- "Father, I'm open to being used by you to be a blessing to _____. I will need your help to overcome my fears, doubts, etc. put your words in my mouth. Lead me to do, say & be the person that reflects your kingdom well. Open my eyes & ears to your Spirit. Let me be used by you to be an answer to _____'s needs so that they can see your working in their life."

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____



**“Five Finger”
Prayer**

Session 3-Living in Community:

Through further exploration of the previous sessions' texts participants began to see their purpose in God's plan. They practiced thinking about small portions of scripture within the larger context. Finally, they took a deeper look at what it means to intercede for another person.

Content Themes for Session Three:

- I am God's representative.
- I can partner with God to reach other people.
- I get to live in a community with God's people.

Method:

Review of Session 2:

- All members participated in setting up.
- Open in prayer.
- Read the text multiple times in various ways of choral reading.
 - Stop and reflect on its personal impact after each reading.
- What does it mean to be "*God's Representative*" brainstorming activity?
- Title the scripture:¹¹⁷
 - Each table group received three smaller portions of the larger text.
 - In pairs they created a title for that passage.
 - They then shared their scripture and title with their table group.
 - The group discussed the titles and amended them.
 - Table groups presented their scripture and corresponding titles.
 - The entire group amended the titles one final time.
- Five Finger Prayer:
 - Participants were given a sheet of copy paper.

¹¹⁷ Figure 9.

- They were asked to fold the paper into three equal sections.
- They titled the sections as follows:
 - Those in my circle who know Jesus but need help.
 - Those in my circle who do not know Jesus.
 - As I pray the Five Finger Prayer for this person, what is the Holy Spirit asking me to do?

New:

- Read the text, for "*Living in Community*,"¹¹⁸ multiple times in various ways of choral reading.
 - Stop and reflect on its personal impact after each reading.
- Review homework handout.
- Close in prayer.
- All members participated in tear down.

¹¹⁸ Figure 8.

Materials:

FIGURE 9: HANDOUTS: LIVING IN COMMUNITY

Living in Community

"Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be Patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future... Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new 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. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you (Ephesians 4:1-4, 11-17, 30-32)"¹¹⁹ Read the first sentence and stop.

- Read the next sentence and stop.
- Continue in this manner to the end of the text.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you?

- Read to the first punctuation mark and stop.
- The next person continues reading to the next punctuation mark and stops.
- Continue in this manner to the end of the text.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you? Are they the same or different from the 1st reading?

- Start reading the text, the next person interrupts when they feel they are to begin. This continues until the end of the text.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you? Are they the same or different from the previous readings?

¹¹⁹ Richard Sasanow, *The NIV Study Bible/10th Anniversary Edition* (Place of publication not identified: Zondervan, 1995), 954.

Thinking about how Jesus sees you, create yourself.

Journal Time:

Your journal is God writing your personal psalms. You are recording your journey with Jesus. Expect Him to speak to you. Ask Him questions. Complain and express whatever feelings you have but expect Him to answer in your heart and confirm through His Word. Be creative. Draw pictures, write poetry, or songs. Invite the Holy Spirit into your time.

Scripture text:

Select one of the following to focus on each day:

Ephesians 4:1-4 Ephesians 4:11-13 Ephesians 4:14-15 Ephesians 4:16-17
Ephesians 4:30-32

What would title each set of scripture verses?

Record in your journal.

What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about God? Do you see yourself any differently now? Do you see Jesus any differently? What is Jesus asking you to do? Can you find another verse that has a similar message? Is there one verse that is speaking to you personally? If yes, consider memorizing that verse.

Memory Verse:

- Which verse is the Holy Spirit encouraging you to focus on?
- Why is this verse important for you?
- Who can help you make this verse a part of how you live your life?
- How can they help you? Be specific.

Prayer:

- Ask Jesus who in your "backyard" (circle of influence) He wants you to pray for regularly.
- Write those people on your Five Finger sheet.
- Pray for the people on your sheet by name according to the prayer in the Five Finger sheet.
- Ask Jesus for a specific local government leader to pray for regularly.
- Ask Jesus for a specific local church leader to pray for regularly.

Record any insights, specific prayers, or answers to prayer in your journal.

Session 4-Review and Feedback of the Experience:

Content Themes for Session Four:

- I am unique and chosen by God for something.
- I am God's representative.
- I appreciate others and am appreciated.
- My voice is important to our growth.

Method:

Review of Session 3:

- All members participated in setting up.
- Open in Prayer
- Review the text, Living in Community:
 - Participants closed their eyes as the facilitator read the text with varying word emphasis.
- Journal response posters:
 - What God ____ (Says, Thinks, Feels, Does) about me.¹²⁰
 - As a representative/Disciple of God, I ____ (Say, Think, Do, Feel).¹²¹
 - In what ways does Jesus want me to ____ (Speak, Think, Feel, Behave) differently.¹²²
 - I appreciate ____ (Specific behavior) about ____ (Person's name)!¹²³

Participants wrote their responses on post-it notes and placed them in corresponding spaces.

¹²⁰ Figure 61.

¹²¹ Figure 60.

¹²² Figure 59.

¹²³ Figure 62.

New:

- No new content was shared.
- New handouts:
 - A Prayer to Welcome the Day.¹²⁴
 - The Prayer of Examen.¹²⁵

Feedback of the Experience:

- Response poster:
 - Which activities I liked and why.
 - What would help me make these activities more a part of my life?
- Post-Self-Reflection Survey.¹²⁶
- Close in prayer.
- All members participated in tear down.

¹²⁴ Figure 9.

¹²⁵ Figure 10.

¹²⁶ Figure 11.

Materials:

FIGURE 10: A PRAYER TO WELCOME THE DAY

A Prayer to Welcome the Day

I quiet my mind, and body, while opening my spirit to hear your voice. I breathe deeply into your breath of life. I choose to be aware of the sight, sounds, smells, of my surroundings. Jesus, I invite you into this time, to speak to me. I am waiting, watching, and listening to what you want to share with me, about myself, you, and what you have prepared for me today.

I welcome this new day you have created. It is a new day for me to start afresh.

I open my hands to welcome everything you bring into this day for me.

I trust you that whatever I experience it is for my very best, to heal, restore, and instruct me.

I choose to be present in all my thoughts, feelings, emotions, people, situations, and events to receive the gifts you have hidden within them.

"I let go of my desire for power" over others and "control"¹²⁷ over my circumstances.

"I let go of my desire for affection, esteem, approval, and pleasure"¹²⁸ and expectations of others to meet these needs, as I choose to look to you as the only one who can fully fill the ache in my soul.

I release my need to secure my future through my own efforts by working, worrying over finances, or attempts to manipulate my environment to ensure my survival.

Help me, Jesus, to take my hands off people, situations, problems, and myself in attempts to change them. You are the only One who has the power. to transform me, the people within my world, and circumstances. I entrust all these situations into your gentle hands.

I fully open myself up to your gracious and transformational presence in my life. Awaken my senses to your presence throughout my day to see you.

Show me where you are working within my world today and speak to me as to how you would have me join you. Use today to mold and shape me more into your image.

¹²⁷ Richard Rohr, *Just This: Prompts and Practices for Contemplation* (London: SPCK, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2018), 117.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

Adapted from Richard Rohr's "the welcoming prayer"¹²⁹ an interpretation of Mary Mrozowski's Welcoming Prayer.¹³⁰

FIGURE 11: PRAYER OF EXAMEN:

Prayer of Examen¹³¹

Quiet your mind and body. Breathe deeply. Become aware of the sights, sounds, smells, and you within your environment. Imagine Jesus comfortably sitting near you. He looks at you with love and acceptance. He is eagerly waiting to hear every word of your evening conversation. Intentionally, open your mind, heart, and ears to hear what Jesus' response to your sincere words. Allow Jesus to replay the video of your day. Let him filter all the events, feelings, disappointments, joys, hopes, and dreams through his grace and forgiveness.

Pray

- Almighty God I come to you in humble prayer fully aware of how small and needy I am. I choose to enter this time as quietly and peacefully as a dove. I am so very thankful to the Lord, for your Spirit who gently leads and guides me, if I would only remember to ask. I thank you for all the seen and unseen things you do for me and all people.
- Papa, open my eyes, heart, and mind to see the events, feelings, thoughts and behaviors of today from your perspective. Where did I recognize your presence? Where did your Spirit touch me or someone else? When were my thoughts and actions the most like you, Jesus? When and where did I fall short of who you and I know I can be.
- Jesus, I trust you and receive your grace, forgiveness, and healing for any actions that have been uncaring or harmful to other people, creation, or myself. Specifically, _____. Help me to fully forgive myself.
- Tomorrow I decisively choose to be more aware of my thoughts, words, and actions and how they impact those around me. I ask you to help me recognize your presence within me, and to respond more like you, moment by moment.
- Help me to be aware of your presence. Open my eyes to where you are working. Let me be open to being used by you where you are already working.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 131. Mary Mrozowski developed the basic practice and structure of the Welcoming Prayer, which was based on ideas from Jean Pierre de Cassuade and Fr. Thomas Keating. Many individuals have adapted the prayer through the years. This is my form.

¹³¹ Community of Christ International, "Prayer of Examen" (Community of Christ International, n.d.), <https://cofchrist.org/prayer-of-examen/>.

- I leave this time of prayer in the same attitude of quietness and peace that I entered. I am full of gratitude for the time you shared with me. Thank you for the gift of today. I trust you, with your help and my intentional focus I will be more aware of your loving presence tomorrow.

Adapted from Prayer of Examen,| Community of Christ International Headquarters (cofchrist.org) 's Adaption of Marvin Rice's, "Open Our Eyes," Healing the Body of Christ (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 2003).

FIGURE 12: POST – SELF-REFLECTION SURVEY:

First & Last initials: _____ Age: _____ Date: _____

Please rate the following questions 1 being the least and 5 the most often

1. I read my Bible 3 or more days a week:

1 2 3 4 5

2. I think about the scripture I have read throughout my day/week:

1 2 3 4 5

3. I regularly ask the Holy Spirit to help me apply the scripture I have read:

1 2 3 4 5

4. I intentionally put Holy Spirit prompted scripture to memory:

1 2 3 4 5

5. I regularly introduce myself to someone I don't know:

1 2 3 4 5

6. I regularly talk to people who are not like me (age, look different, etc.):

1 2 3 4 5

7. I regularly invite someone "new" to meet (coffee, home for a meal, watch kids sports, game night, etc.).

1 2 3 4 5

8. I regularly pray for people in my circle of influence that don't know Jesus.

1 2 3 4 5

9. I regularly pray for God to use me and my life for His service:

1 2 3 4 5

10. I feel comfortable sharing my story with Jesus:

1 2 3 4 5

11. I regularly write in a personal journal:

1 2 3 4 5

12. I regularly pray for my spiritual leaders:

1 2 3 4 5

13. I regularly pray for the leaders in my community:

1 2 3 4 5

14. I regularly pray for missionaries:

1 2 3 4 5

15. I regularly ask Jesus to show me how He sees my world:

1 2 3 4 5

16. I regularly ask Jesus what He has for me to do today:

1 2 3 4 5

17. I look at scripture differently than before this experience:

a. Same b. a little more c. more d. a lot more

18. I am more intentional about praying for non-Christians than before this experience:

a. same b. a little more c. more d. a lot more

19. I am more aware of the voice of God speaking to me:

a. same b. a bit more c. more d. a lot more

20. I am more open to being used by God in my community:

a. same b. a bit more c. more d. a lot more

21. I have attended _____ sessions:

a. 1 b. 2 c. 3 d. 4

Assessment

Project Execution

God tasked the local church with the spiritual development of its members and engaging them missionally. It is this researcher's findings that the best means for doing this is through an experiential format that replicates the natural development, learning, and implementation found in the extended family type context.¹³² This intergenerational the small group will engage with scripture through the reflective practice of Lectio Divina. Questions promoting reflective thought as to what the Holy Spirit may be speaking to everyone for discussion and journal entries.¹³³ The goal is to support and encourage one another in their individual Holy Spirit activated areas of growth over the four sessions. The group will individually and collectively seek the Holy Spirit's direction in intentional mission. This template of spiritual practices is to provide a framework of tools that will take any believer from where they are and develop meaningful skills that enhance their identity, within a supportive, spiritual community, while fulfilling their missional purpose.

Group Participants

This small group accurately reflects the intergenerational composite of this specific church. It was a multi-ethnic group ranging in age from five to seventy-five. The twelve participants were equally split male and female, with two children of each gender. The uniqueness of this fellowship is the lack of teens and college aged individuals.

Therefore, there is no data to reflect the relevance of this discipleship format for those ages. However, if children at the early ages that participated continue to be engaged and feel like they have significant input, it is reasonable to assume that they would continue as teens. This would be particularly true if they have opportunities to impact their circle of influence because of their prayers and fulfillment of their missional purpose.

Content Themes

The themes have corresponding scripture within the designated context. The entire group of verses are read in a Lectio Divina manner. The homework portion of the text is located on the back side of the handout to reduce confusion about the directions for the session. The main text is divided into smaller portions to assist stakeholders to mediate on a smaller portion within the greater context.

The main text does not include verse numbers. This is to encourage individuals to use their own Bible. It did not appear to pose a challenge or deterrent for the stakeholders.

¹³² Steven Bouma-Prediger and Brian J. Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Pub, 2008).

¹³³ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*.

- What God Thinks of Me (Psalm 139:1-18,23-24)¹³⁴
- I am God's Representative (Luke 9:57, 59-62; Luke 10:5-11, 16-20; 1 Peter 3:15)¹³⁵
- Living in Community (Ephesians 4:1-4, 11-13, 16-17, 30-32)¹³⁶

The texts and activities were reviewed at the beginning of the following session. At times, unplanned activities were injected to assist in comprehension of the text. Sometimes these reviews took a significant amount of time due to absences in the preface sessions. This monitoring and adjusting is in keeping with the primary goals of the project for stakeholders to be familiar enough with the content and practices to apply them to their lives.

¹³⁴ Figure 2.

¹³⁵ Figure 4.

¹³⁶ Figure 7.

Methodology

The four sessions followed the same basic format. The first session started with organizational tasks and an art project for participants to introduce themselves. The fourth session reviewed the previous session and ended feedback exercises. There was finger food available every session to eat as desired.

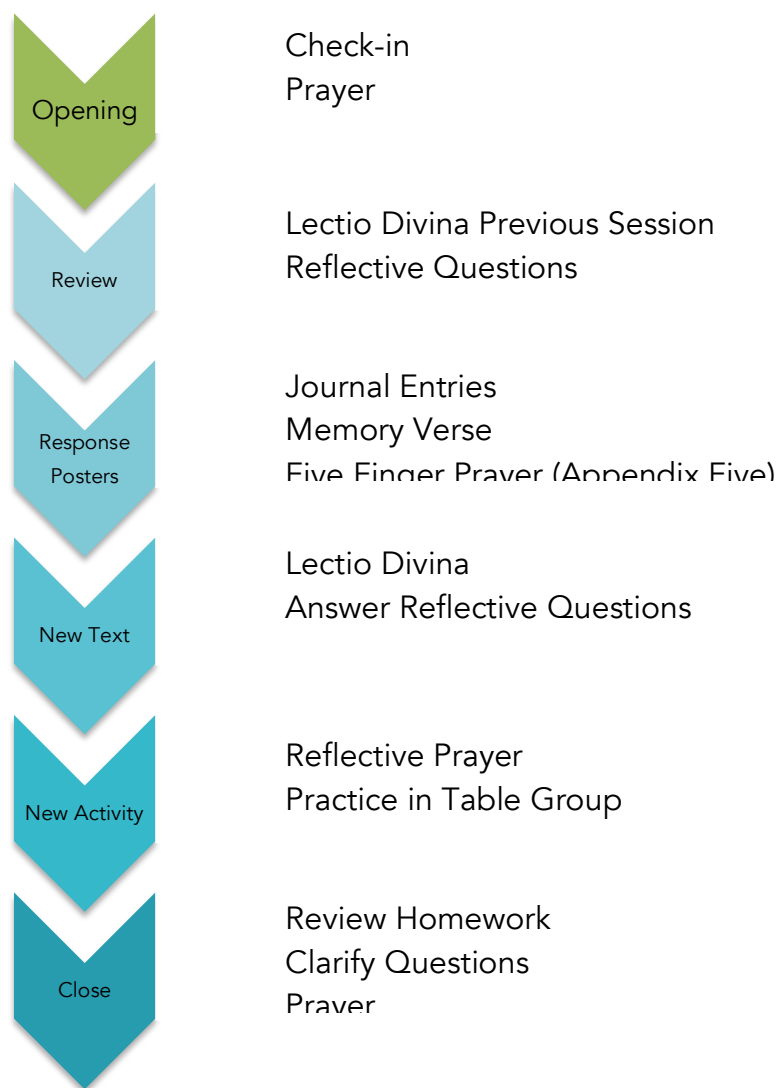


FIGURE 13: SEQUENTIAL STEPS

BENCHMARKS

The primary challenge in the creation of these SMART goal benchmarks was determining concrete elements that can be measured and not interfere with the Holy Spirit's voice to the individual. This mostly self-selected group of individuals, though they attended the church, did not previously engage in a social manner. Therefore, they had very little relational history or equity. The trust grew from zero despite inconsistent attendance by everyone.

All benchmark data was severely impacted by the high degree of absences due to illness and holiday challenges. These absences also prevented the implementation of establishing partner work within the sessions and accountability partners for homework between sessions. The participants' unfamiliarity and relational equity with each other inhibited the trust and natural connection. The following activities would have benefited significantly from this type of partnership: journaling, memory practice, and reflection questions. There was not one session that all participants were present, nor was there a single individual that attended every session. While this is disappointing it does reflect the challenge most congregations have in equipping their people. Therefore, I added an additional feedback poster to assess the value of the activities themselves and what might be done to improve participants' acquisition of the various practices.

BENCHMARK 1: STAKEHOLDERS WILL DEMONSTRATE JOURNAL PARTICIPATION ON FEEDBACK POSTERS AND IN DISCUSSION.

TABLE 1: JOURNAL PARTICIPATION

Session	Number of Participants	Post it Note/ Discussion	Percentage
1	4 (+1 Drop-in)	No Journal Entries	NA
2	9 (+1 Drop-in)	All shared insights from the previous text	100%
3	8 (+1 Drop-in)	All shared insights	100%
4	3	Rescheduled*	NA
4a	9	All Shared insights	100%

* The facilitator used the insufficient attendance for an evaluative session to demonstrate and instruct the three who attended how to use the opportunity to pray for the sick and each other.

BENCHMARK 2: STAKEHOLDERS WILL SELECT 3-5 VERSES FROM THE TEXTS PRESENTED TO COMMIT TO MEMORY. OF THOSE SELECTED THEY WILL SELECT ONE TO BE MEMORIZED BY THE COMPLETION OF SESSION FOUR.

TABLE 2: MEMORY VERSE PARTICIPATION

	Select 3-5 verses	%	Select 1 to Memorize	%	Memorized	%
Over 4 Sessions	NA	NA	10	83%	0	0

All stakeholders actively selected at least one verse by the end of the second session. It became clear that more time was needed within the context of the group time to practice their verses. This activity would also benefit from an intergenerational buddy system of encouragement between sessions.

BENCHMARK 3: STAKEHOLDERS WILL SELECT 3-5 PEOPLE TO PRAY THE FIVE FINGER PRAYER DAILY AS REFLECTED IN AN 80% POSTER FEEDBACK IN THE FINAL SESSION.

TABLE 3: FIVE FINGER PRAYER PARTICIPATION

Participants	Selected 3-5	%	Use of Five Finger Prayer	%
9	9	100%	6	67%

This activity would have benefitted from one session being totally devoted to learning and practice. Then by following it up with five minutes of each proceeding session with the group praying for their own list and sharing with an accountability partner.

BENCHMARK 4: STAKEHOLDERS WILL DEMONSTRATE OWNERSHIP OF THE COMMUNITY BY 80% SHARED SERVICE EACH SESSION IN THE AREAS DESCRIBED IN THE TABLE 4:

TABLE 4: COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP PARTICIPATION

Session	Setup	%	Clean-up	%	Food # needed 2	%
1	3	75%	4	100%	NA	NA
2	7	78%	8	88%	2	100%
3	8	100%	8	100%	2	100%
4	8	88%	9	100%	2	100%
Total		85%		97%		100%

BENCHMARK 5: STAKEHOLDERS WILL SPONTANEOUSLY EXPRESS AFFIRMATION TO OTHERS IN THE GROUP WITH 80% PARTICIPATION ON AN AFFIRMATION POSTER BY SESSION 4

TABLE 5: AFFIRMATION PARTICIPATION

Session	Number present	Number of comments	Percentage
4	9	5	56%

This was a spontaneous activity. The high absenteeism impacted participants' opportunities to know one another. The most significant feedback from this activity was those who did give feedback and to whom. It was the children who led the number of comments. It was also the least likely individuals in the group who received encouragement.

BENCHMARK 6: STAKEHOLDERS WILL DEMONSTRATE 60% GROWTH AS REFLECTED IN A PRE/POST SELF-REFLECTION SURVEY COMPLETED IN THE FINAL SESSION.

TABLE 6: PRE/POST SELF-REFLECTION SURVEY

Person	Age	Pre	Post	Change	%	Sessions attended
KR	79	34	46	+12	35%	3
SW	75	41	37	4	10%	1
HS	34	40	51	+7	28%	3
JS	34	28	35	+7	25%	3
ES	9	40	39	1	2%	3
LS	11	61	66	+5	8%	3

Stakeholders were also asked to evaluate the overall experience by addressing the following questions on a scale of one to five, with one being no change, two being some change, three more change, and four a lot more impact:

PERCEPTION OF OVERALL GROWTH

TABLE 7: OVERALL GROWTH FEEDBACK QUESTIONS

Question	1	2	3	4	Total
I look at Scripture differently than before	1	3	2	0	5/6 see Scripture differently than before
I am more intentional about praying for non-Christians	1	2	3	0	5/6 more intentionally pray for non-Christians
I am more aware of the voice of God speaking to me.	1	2	1	2	3/6 are more aware of the voice of God. 2/6 are a lot more aware.
I am more open to being used by God in my community	1	3	2	0	5/6 are more open to being used by God in the community.

Note: The individual that indicated no change only attended one session and it happened to be the final session.

SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDBACK: USEFULNESS OF ACTIVITIES

TABLE 8: ACTIVITY FEEDBACK

Activity	Comment 1	Comment 2	Comment 3
Prayer of Examen & Prayer of Welcoming	Looking forward to doing this at home	This is good for thinking about the direction our life is in the morning. I like how it helps us to slow down and live more intentionally with God.	It is great for intentionally starting the day with Jesus and seeing it through His lens.
Affirmation	This is good to have a way to speak well/recognize the good in people around us.	Thinking of affirmation helps to encourage others, particularly about the fruit of the Spirit.	
Title Scripture	I can get so bogged down in pieces of Scripture that these "big picture" titles were a good exercise.	I like this because it gave insight into how others perceive the Scripture and wanted to categorize the passages.	
Memory Verse	Very helpful	Post it at home.	
Homework sheets	Having a family, this was positive for us to all participate together.	It was a great prompt to discuss more with the kids, than has normally come up.	Helpful. I needed more time to go deeper into the Word.
Wesleyan Covenant Prayer	Opened my eyes to what God is telling me.	The outline of the prayer really spoke to a desire to pray with truth.	
Lectio Divina	Opens my mind to think of what God wants and is saying	It was more helpful in class than at home.	
Focus on Community	Practical exercises. Good to be more outward minded.	It is nice to be next to others in the church and trying to listen to each other's thoughts and insights.	It is good to be with others in the community.
Drawing/play dough	Gets out of so much wordiness and into a big picture.	Using expressions that I do not normally use made this more memorable.	I didn't finish
Sticky notes	Very helpful for group discussions and other perspectives.	Writing the words down and seeing other's responses was encouraging. More vulnerable than just speaking.	Writing words down makes it more meaningful.

Shield exercise	It was positive to step back and look objectively at what my life stands for.	This activity was my favorite! To self-reflect and to appreciate our family individually was a conversation starter and encouraging for us and the kids.	I have a hard time expressing myself.
Five Finger Prayer	The prayer concept was very helpful. Choosing one person per week may have been easier.	I like the simplicity of this and that it is focused on people that we know and need more of Jesus in their lives.	It helped me to understand how to pray for others and bring them to salvation.
Other	Using different activities enhanced the thinking over just discussion.	More paired or group activities, like the title Scriptures would be good.	

The impromptu chart above provides the best input moving forward. The activities and concepts are fruitful. However, it is clear that to achieve the desired results of assimilation of these spiritual principles more intentionality time must be placed on repeatedly doing the exercises.

SUMMARY OF BENCHMARK INSIGHTS:

The benchmarks highlighted the challenges of working within the local church setting. Unlike a course that requires a commitment with certain obligations for attendance and participation, most church activities are more susceptible to being replaced by more exciting events. I was surprised by how much the participants enjoyed the various activities. The supplemental feedback chart also revealed that much more time is necessary for participants to master any given task. Table 1 demonstrated the importance of effective journaling. I would like to start with a group that just journals together. Then through that process gradually introduce the other activities as similar topics arise within the journaling group.

Project Launch Plan

Doctoral Project Description

My NPO is: The integration of identity, community, and mission within small spiritual communities, which empowers, develops, releases, and sustains intergenerational disciples on mission. This project is a theoretical framework for intergenerational disciples on mission.

To address my NPO I have developed a 4-week intergenerational small group, which provides participants with various exercises to develop awareness of their individual identity, grow their intimacy with God, while building a network of supportive interpersonal relationships, and missional engagement.¹³⁷

Audience

This project's primary audience is an intergenerational, ages five to eighty, multi-ethnic small group of individuals seeking a deeper relationship with Jesus. The project group ranged in age from five to eighty years old. This multi-ethnic, non-gender exclusive, intergenerational small group was representative of the hosting congregation. The twelve stakeholders were divided into two equal sized table groups by gender. The diversity of age provided a range of maturity necessary to add perspective and skills to each member's development.¹³⁸ During the four week group, I invited the participants to engage with various reflective spiritual practices, artistic, and prayer exercises to activate the portion of their brain which is designed for relationship, curiosity, and joy.¹³⁹ Each individual shared the stories of their journey with the scriptures focusing on identity, community, and mission through discussion and collective brainstorming.

Development Plan

I noticed that congregants are often well-versed in cognitive knowledge of God but struggle to walk in on-going transformation.¹⁴⁰ This has translated into individuals who can rehearse biblical text but struggle to understand their identity in Christ, and God's amazing work in creating them unique. They seem to be unaware of their value to the community of faith, and the importance of their story to grow and encourage others. There are expectations of missions following a particular format, thus requiring special training of which congregants either do not have and fear, such as street witnessing.

¹³⁷ Warner and Wilder, *Rare Leadership*, 108.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 180-183.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 74.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 44.

This project is focused on developing individual identities in Christ which celebrates each person's unique journey of redemptive transformation. While awakening them to recognize God's predesigned good deeds, for the person they are today, thus fulfilling their ever-growing missional purpose.¹⁴¹

There are three main areas which need to be developed. First, further development of relationships with individuals to identify their giftings. Second, invite individuals to provide insight into other spiritual practices and modalities of spiritual expression within their giftings. The third area is the development of how to help participants engage with their circle of influence. This engagement would be congruent with their identity, spiritual maturity, and growth.

- Spend intentional time within three to four individuals from different generations to build relation, between May 2023 and August 2023.
 - Exploring different spiritual practices, non-academic forms of expression, and their adaptability to various generations with those individuals by October 2023.
- Create an incremental missional engagement plan by December 1, 2023:
 - Abiding in the presence of Jesus
 - Intercessory prayer for our perspective circles of influence.
 - Prayerful observation of our community.¹⁴²
 - What do we see and what does Jesus want of us?
 - Organize at least one Treasure Hunt Evangelism outing.¹⁴³
- Initiate at least one intergenerational small group from January 31st through May 31st, 2024.
 - Drawing from existing relationships and empowering individuals to facilitate from their strengths.
- Create a branded version of Generations in Community on Mission (GCM) for presentation by September 30, 2024
- Present the revised project to the current ecumenical pastors meeting of Port Angeles, Washington by October 31, 2024.

Development Process

The goal of GCM is to produce a culture within a congregation, where individuals have a clearly defined identity in Christ, which forms a cohesive community, and who enthusiastically partner with God to share his love with their community. It is difficult to build the necessary trust and vulnerability without shared time in the church community. The opportunity to lay a foundation for an intergenerational small group in a community went amazingly well and the participants were excited.

¹⁴¹ "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." Ephesians 2:10, NLT.

¹⁴² Figure 68.

¹⁴³ Figure 69.

Therefore, it is critical that I take the time and make the effort to become an active member in this community.

The research revealed that one of the foundational elements of the success or failure of this project is trustworthy, authentic relationships. This relational component must meet a real need in the potential participant for there to be a strong enough motivation to continue participating. Below are the primary factors in evaluating the relevance of this project moving forward.

- Enthusiasm to participate.¹⁴⁴
- Prioritize the growth community.
- Actively assimilate new spiritual practices.
- Welcome those who would not usually be in your group.
- Invite people from their circle of influence to a GCM group.

Individuals' commitment to further development is the most important factor. This will require me to know them well enough to match their passion with an aspect of the project that is in need. This slow and methodical process is an ongoing dialog of listening to individuals, acknowledging their struggles, and challenges while finding meaningful ways to connect them with what God is doing around them. This project is not the creation of something that can be completed, rather the development of tools to work in concert with the perpetual transformation process of the Holy Spirit.

The future project development and launch will be in cooperation with the local church calendar and in connection with the overall discipleship goals for the congregation. Benchmarks will be adjusted and evaluated as congregants participate. There will be on-going dialogue with the lead pastors as to the project effectiveness and the necessary adjustments.

¹⁴⁴ Appendix F.

Appendix A— Milestone 1 The NPO Charter

INTRODUCTION

This NPO Charter explores the disconnect between local Foursquare congregations and Foursquare foreign missionaries. It also looks at the impact of the relational void on the congregations in creating a reciprocal relationship with field long term partnerships.

PERSONAL RESEARCH MANIFESTO

My approach to researching this NPO is to remember that there are some things that I can learn from someone who is like me and some things that I can only learn from someone who is different from me. In our collective listening, sharing, and processing there is a greater understanding.

NPO STATEMENT

There seems to be a significant disconnect between the local church, and the mission field (missionaries), within the Foursquare movement.

NPO SCOPE AND CONSTRAINTS

By the end of this doctorate program, a pilot program will equip pastors and small group leaders on how to integrate missions into their existing systems of discipleship. A component of this pilot will be a support church network to develop, strengthen, share the burden and joy of being in a relational partnership with the field. An integral component if this pilot will be reframing and defining missions, its essential role in the development of the local church and the transformative benefit in the lives if the congregant, while equipping them to be transformational agents.

NPO CONTEXT

My NPO context is designed specifically for local churches, their leaders, and their involvement in international missions. These fellowships will be primarily in the Pacific Northwest, but it is not confined to this area. The limitations of this context are the willingness of local pastors to participate.

ROOT CAUSES

A significant root cause for my NPO is the lack of a workable process that provides authentic, meaningful, mutually beneficial relationships between church leaders, their congregation and the missionary. The current societal make up is such that people are less likely to engage in anything or with anyone purely out of obedience. There is an awareness that congregants and missionaries need to have more meaningful relationships. The inequity of responsibility for the relationship strains the missionaries' openness with their supporting churches, and often occupies a large amount of their time. Senior pastoral leadership often carries responsibility for the relationship on the US side, and it can get lost in the day to day challenges of the local church.

DISCOVERY WORKSHOP STAKEHOLDERS

1. Outreach/Missions pastor of a local church in Oregon

2. Lead pastor of a mid-size local church in Oregon
3. Lead pastor of a simple church in New York
4. Lead pastor of small local church in Washington
5. Missions' communication contact for a district in Eastern USA
6. Co-lead pastor of a mid-size church in California
7. Co-lead pastor of a mid-size church in rural Washington
8. District Missions Representative Eastern USA
9. Executive Director of a Para-Church mission organization
10. Former missionary to Africa
11. Former missionary to Africa & Asia
12. District Mission Representative Western USA

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

1. Middle-aged field worker couple
2. Single female field worker to closed countries.
3. Area Missionary over a region of international missions
4. Senior field worker couple
5. District Missions Representative Western USA/Emissary
6. Single 30+ male field worker

3-5 KEY BIBLICAL TEXTS

Biblically, I will explore the following scriptures, regard to developing a meaningful, authentic, transformational, community of believers:

1. First Corinthians 12
2. Romans 12:8
3. Ephesians 4:1-16
4. First Peter 2:17
5. First Peter 3:13-16
6. Revelation 3:20
7. Philippians 2:3-4

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Within my research, primary voices include Michele Borba (Ph.D.), a psychologist in educational development; Marty Folsom (Ph.D.), theologian in relational theology; Brené Brown (MSW, Ph.D.), researcher in courage, vulnerability, empathy and leadership. Other areas of research include Growth Mindset Theory, meaningful gatherings, inclusivity in the workplace, the current nature of societal commitments and gatherings. It will be important to understand the significance of mutual commitment to long distance relationships and how to make those relationships equally beneficial.

My Discovery Workshop was held on November 7, 2020, via Zoom, from 9:30am-2:00pm. The following were in attendance:

1. Outreach/Missions pastor of a local church in Oregon

2. Lead pastor of a mid-size local church in Oregon
3. Lead pastor of a simple church in New York
4. Lead pastor of small local church in Washington
5. Missions' communication contact for a district in Eastern USA
6. Co-lead pastor of a mid-size church in California
7. Co-lead pastor of a mid-size church in rural Washington
8. District Missions Representative Eastern USA

One participant was not able to fully participate due to a poor internet connection; the remainder of individuals were able to fully participate. The session followed the predetermined format as given in our DMIN 750 syllabus assignment and demonstrated during orientation. All participants were encouraged to prepare snacks and beverages in advance. The topic they came ready to discuss was "The disconnect between the local church and the mission field."

DISCOVERY WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

Our workshop started with introductions, setting communication guidelines and outlining the plan for the day, followed by one of the participants opening us in prayer. I explained the desired outcome for the day and how to engage with Mural. We clarified the NPO by identifying the needs, thoughts, emotions, and root causes. Desired outcomes were explored, all elements were combined to create the amended Discovery Statement:

DISCOVERY STATEMENT

Considering Pastors, Congregants and Field Workers

We have discovered that there is a need for cultivating connections and meaningful, authentic, family-like relationships, which is caused by a lack of reasonable means to know and be known by the three groups.

If solved, it would mean all three groups will feel known, supported, and inspired to be more engaged missionally.

After settling on the new Discovery Statement, I asked them to send me any readings that might be helpful in my exploration of the topic.

CRITICAL INSIGHTS FROM DISCOVERY WORKSHOP

One of the biggest insights that came out through the workshop was just how real this disconnect is for these participants, the majority of whom are local pastors. It was clear that they wanted a closer and more authentic connection. Yet they all seemed to be overwhelmed with doing more. They all felt that the system they are currently working with was cumbersome and did not facilitate meaningful relationships unless they were already in a close relationship, even though it was difficult to spend the time necessary to maintain those relationships as family. One of the most interesting pieces to me is there was almost no mention of the denomination's role in assisting with

communication or connecting. The participants also expressed their own feelings of isolation, and I had the sense that they felt obligated to “fix it.” There was an overall consensus that missions needed to be more integrated into their church life. It is as if the three groups represented in this NPO are all isolated from each other and missing out on the mutual benefits of encouragement, support, and spiritual growth.

There was overall agreement that there is a very real need for a means that creates meaningful, authentic relationships. It was also clear that there needs to be some sort of system that has relational “brokers” within the church and from outside the church to introduce, communicate. People who can make the information more personal, engaging so that the missionary is really known so that they are perceived to be actual family members.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW DISCOVERIES

It is important to keep in mind that I chose to focus my interviews on primarily missionaries, while the workshop participants were mostly pastors. The purpose of this was to ensure that the missionaries would feel completely free to say what they really felt. I believe that all asked at least once to be sure their answers would not come back to them. I found this to be disheartening that they do not feel that the organization they work for is a safe place.

The feedback I received from the six one-on-one interviews was overwhelmingly in agreement that there is a disconnect. Four of the five actual missionaries (**A.** Middle aged couple, **B.** Single Female, **E.** District Missions Representative/Emissary, **F.** Single Male) I spoke to felt that they had at least one meaningful pastor/church relationship. Three of those attributed that depth of relationship to individuals that they had pastored together with. The fourth individual, **B.** Single Female, attributed it to finding a “person of peace”¹⁴⁵ within a particular congregation. All actual field missionaries, which are required to raise their support, were the driving force behind the relationships (**A.** Middle aged couple, **B.** Single female, **D.** Senior couple, **F.** Single male). Although they all value those relationships, staying connected can be a full-time job. They also felt that the churches and individuals on the other side were not equal partners in the relationship.

The one outlier among the interviewees was **C.** Area missionary. Although this individual did agree that there was a disconnect, the sense I got was that he felt that that is just the way it is. That missionaries who want to be connected will be and those who do not need as much connection will not be. I also got the impression that the missionaries need to extend grace to the churches and not expect too much. This led me to wonder if this is what contributed to the pastors having little to no expectation of the denominational leadership.

¹⁴⁵A person of peace is referred to in Luke 10:5-7. Jesus instructs the one-hundred-twenty to go to the towns to share the good news. When they were offered hospitality by individuals of peace, they were to extend God’s peace and blessing to the household.

SYNTHESIS

The information shared in the discovery session and the one-on-one interviews was similar, like opposite sides of the same coin. Thirteen of the fourteen stakeholders agreed that there is a serious disconnect between the local church and the mission field. This disconnect needs a less burdensome process for those who serve in the field to connect not only with church leadership but also the person in the pew. These key elements emerged:

- The need for family-like bonds to be built.
- A reimagining and defining missions.
- The need for a system or template that makes it easy for pastors to integrate missions into the very fiber of church life.
- The need to engage and empower “people of peace” in the pew who have the passion, time and access to the resources to take point.

Addressing this complex relational issue will require a multi-discipline approach at various levels. First, developing an easily adaptable discipleship tool that can be integrated into the churches’ discipleship process. Second, engage pastors in the implementation and solicit their active participation in integrating the tool. Third, establish a network of participating churches that can work cooperatively in sharing the responsibilities and communication. Finally, there needs to be regular assessment and adjustments to ensure that it is in fact mutually beneficial and resulting in meaningful, authentic, family-like relationships.

NEXT STEPS

Areas for further academic research include exploring the nature of meaningful, working relationships. Building a strong, supportive, community in today’s mobile society. Integrating missions into the fiber of the discipleship process. It will be necessary to develop a menu of best practices for communicating long distance that can be adapted to the various missionary assignments.

DISCOVERY WORKSHOP DOCUMENTATION

On November 7, 2020, I met with eight individuals to methodically discuss the broad problem:

The apparent disconnect between the local church and the mission field.

This is the initial problem surrounding my Need/Problem/Opportunity (NPO) for my Doctor of Ministry Project at Portland Seminary. During our session we explored the various aspects necessary to define the audience, potential symptoms and causes, and prospects in the development of a more concise NPO statement.

The **audience** that the stakeholders decided would benefit the most from possible solutions would be pastors, their congregation, and the field missionaries. Although denomination leadership was mentioned it seemed to play a lesser role, as they are not impacted directly.

Symptoms experienced: isolation, overwhelmed, out of sight out of mind, lack of clear direction, the need for more teaching in regard to the role of missions, lack of true family like relationships with the missionaries, the need for introductions.

Causes of these symptoms included:

- Incomplete or inaccurate view of God and missions
- Lack of easy ways to meaningfully connect the congregation to the missionary.
- There are few opportunities for two-way communication.
- Physical distance
- Time zone differences
- Not enough of a relational base for the relationship to be a priority.

Hopes the group would like to see achieved included:

- A practical model for connecting the congregation.
- More natural and meaningful relationships.
- A family type relationship
- The congregation will be more actively involved in all aspects of relationship with the missionary for mutual growth and support.

The group developed the following statement:

Considering pastors, their congregations and missionaries, we have discovered the need to cultivate meaningful connections and relationships across physical, practical and emotional distance, which is caused by a lack of authentic and mutually fruitful relationships.

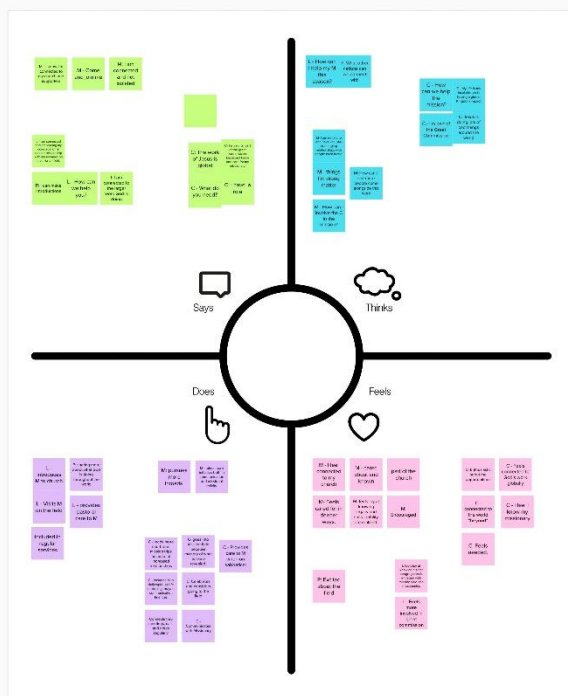
If addressed church leaders, missionaries, and congregants' relationships with one another will resemble a joyful and fruitful family.

FIGURE 14: EMPATHY MAP

Understanding Who is Impacted

Using the NPO, consider these questions: “if solved, what would it mean for the audience? What will they think, say, feel, or do differently when the NPO is addressed?”

The new NPO



Considering Pastors,
Missionaries,
Congregants (Who),
we've discovered The
need for cultivating
connections &
relationships across
physical, practical &
emotional distance

FIGURE 15: WHAT WILL BE SOLVED?

Timeline:

- 9:30 Welcome & Introductions
- 9:45 Overview & NPO description
- 10:00 NPO Definition & Audience
- 11:15 Break
- 11:30 Understanding Who is Impacted by this NPO
- 11:55 Summary
- 12:00 Finding the Cause
- 12:30 Break
- 12:45 Putting it Together
- 1:05 Discussion & next steps
- 1:30 Close

Outcomes:

- If solved the "Who" will think L/P "Networker" Win/Win, my struggle is not unique-unity. M life exchange, Person that is valued, I fit (part of the family), integrated, Part (not sent away), same team. WE C part of the great commission, impact, expanded worldview
- If solved the "Who" will say...L/P M We're in this together, I have a confident, mutual commitment to international/interdenominational. C Let's go!, Our church is relevant, relevant to their personal life
- If solved the "Who" will feel...L/P more fulfilled, satisfied, authentic connection, equipped, capable, strengthen & supported. M more hopeful, successful...tangible. C part of something bigger, more courageous, mystery is gone, more responsible, prayer burden, less intimidating, empowered
- If solved the "Who" will do...L/P take more initiative, take ownership, investment, cast vision to the church, expand their role, M focus on assignment (energies won't be divided), more effective (further),

FIGURE 16: POWERPOINT UNDERSTANDING THE WHO

Reshaping the NPO

Review and Refine the NPO

Key issue and why? Who is it for? Social/cultural factors? Evidence of worth? Refined NPO

Apply verbs to strengthen relationship between Church & missionaries

Compare and Reflect Responses			
Patterns & Commonalities	Differences	Surprises	Outliers

REVISED Need, Problem, Opportunity (NPO)

Considering _____ (audience), we've discovered _____ (NPO), which is caused by _____ (root cause). If solved, it would mean _____ (outcome).

FIGURE 17: REVIEW AND REFINE THE NPO

Definition and Audience

- 9:30 Welcome & Introductions
- 9:45 Overview & NPO description
- 10:00 NPO Definition & Audience
- 11:10 Summary
- 11:15 Break
- 11:30 Understanding Who is Impacted by this NPO
- 12:00 Finding the Cause
- 12:30 Break
- 12:45 Putting it Together
- 1:05 Discussion & next steps
- 1:30 Close

NPO Discussion:
The Disconnect Between the Local Church & The Mission Field

- Considering Pastors, Missionaries, Congregants (Who), we've discovered The need for cultivating connections & relationships across physical, practical & emotional distance (What), which is caused by _____ (Why). If solved, it would mean _____ (outcome).

FIGURE 18: POWERPOINT DEFINITION & AUDIENCE

FIGURE 19: FINDING THE ROOT CAUSE

Finding The Cause

Use this template to make sure you're solving a problem at its root, not addressing a symptom.

The new NPO:

Considering Pastors, Missionaries, Congregants (Who), we've discovered The need for cultivating connections & relationships across physical, practical & emotional distance

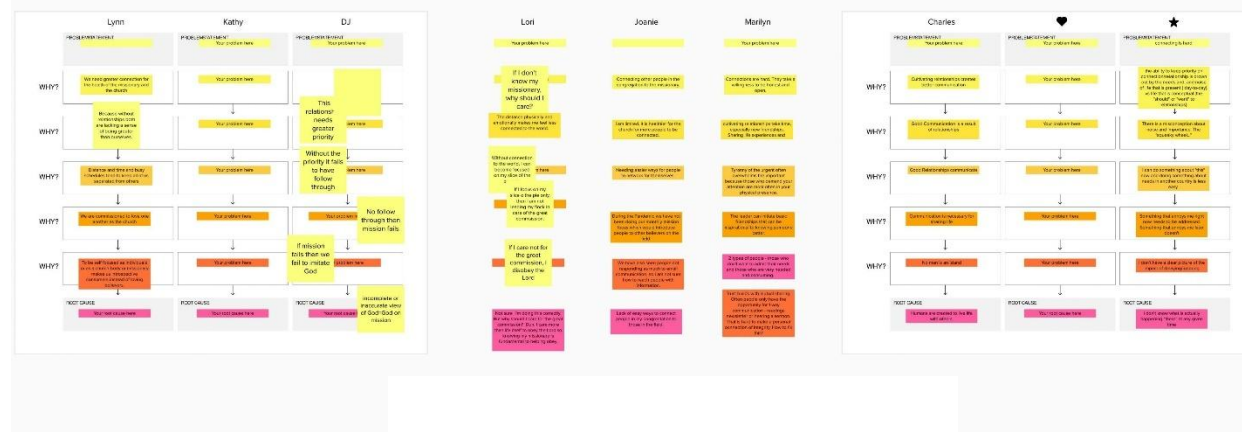
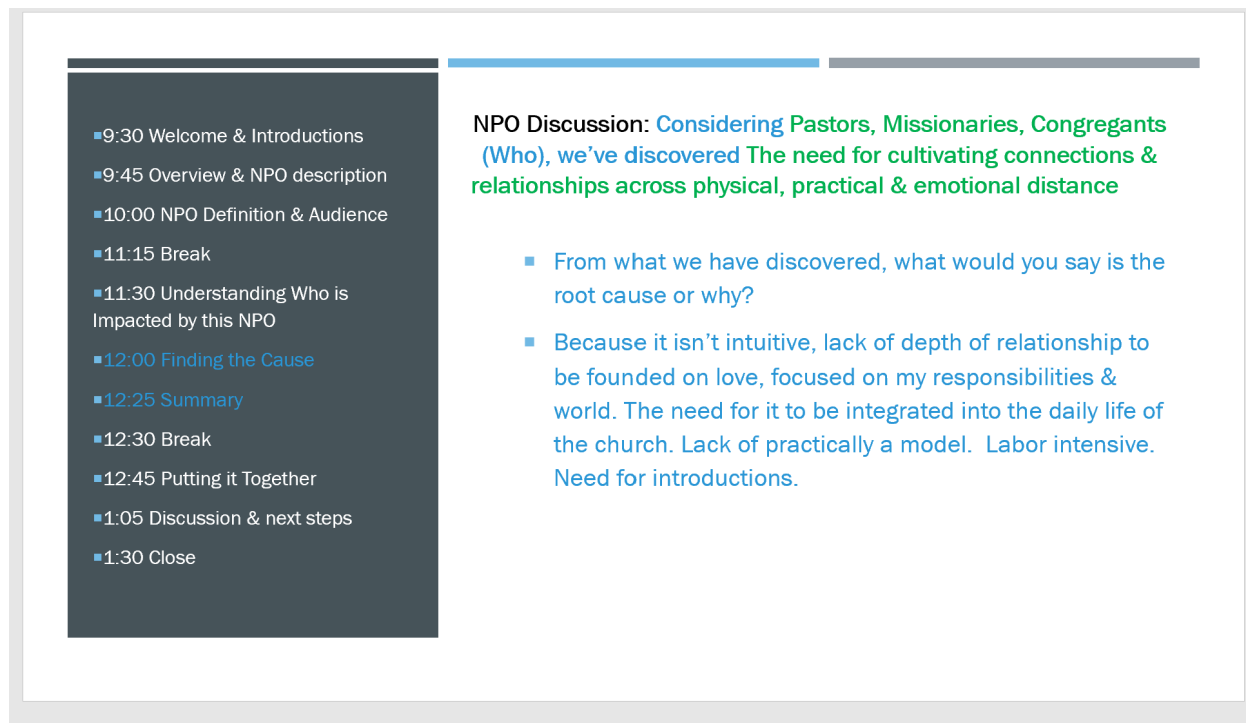


FIGURE 20: DEFINING THE ROOT CAUSE



Workshop Notes:

Discovery Workshop

TABLE 9: DISCOVERY WORKSHOP NOTES

Activity	Notes:
<p>Welcome & Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is here? • Ground Rules <p>Purpose & Goals</p> <p>After the Discovery Workshop, we will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate the boundaries of the primary audience. • Gain a better understanding of the Need, Problem, or Opportunity (NPO) affecting the primary audience. • Identify potential root causes of the NPO. • Determine how a solution may impact the audience. <p>The activities in the Discovery Workshop will help us fill in the blanks of the discovery statement, which touches on each of the goals previously stated:</p> <p>Considering _____ (audience), we've discovered _____ (NPO), which is caused by _____ (root cause). If solved, it would mean _____ (outcome).</p>	<p>Share: Mural room link:</p> <p>You can either write on an existing post-it or click in an empty spot.</p> <p>We will try to do discussion with our mute off.</p>
<p>Activity 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review initial NPO. • Answer each of the following questions on Mural: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is the key issue? & why is it important? ○ Who is it an NPO for? ○ What social/cultural factors shape this NPO? ○ What evidence is there that this is worth the time investment. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How might we think of this NPO in a different way? How might we reframe it? • Compare responses to find patterns, commonalities & differences & cluster similar ideas together. • As a group, reflect on patterns, differences, surprises, & outliers. <p>Write a revised NPO Definition draft then show drafts w/ other participants. Explore significant divergences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agree on who the audience is. For the purpose of identify the group of individuals that provide the greatest impact & highest level of significance for the least amount of effort invested. 	
<p>Activity 2 Understanding Who is Impacted Using the NPO that emerges from Activity 1 consider these questions: <i>"if solved, what would it mean for the audience? What will they think, say, feel, or do differently when the NPO is addressed?"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Mural activity label the top "think, say, feel, or do." • Identify as many things as you can. • You will be placing virtual post-it notes on a white board in the corresponding quadrant. • The facilitator will read them aloud after everyone has posted all of their responses. • Review the Post-it's on the board collaboratively & cluster similar notes within the same quadrants. • Label the clusters with themes that represent each of the groupings. • Ask the group: "Why wouldn't they say (think, feel, do) that now?" • Review the responses. Note them on a common "white board." 	
<p>Activity 3 The Five Whys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the NPO selected in Activity One & discuss a reframing of the NPO as a statement (not a question). • Using The Five Whys Mural, ask each stakeholder to complete a column of whys ○ Ask the participants to review the NPO and ask themselves WHY it's a need, problem, or 	<p>Write the "New NPO" at the top of the activity during the break.</p> <p>Note: Write the first thing that comes to your mind, each time you are asked why.</p>

<p>opportunity. Then ask them to write their first response in the top ROW.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask yourself WHY the answer in row 1 is true and write the next response in the next row. ○ WHY is the response in row 2 is true and write your reply in row 3. ○ WHY is the response in row 3 is true and write your reply in row 4. ○ WHY is the response in row 4 is true and write your reply in row 5. • Review the commonalities and differences. • Rewrite the NPO on a virtual whiteboard. ○ Let's find a consensus on which of the five "WHYS" offer the most meaningful insight into the problem. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What can we agree on? ○ The final "why" is the functioning "root cause." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It may take more than 5 whys to actually reach the root cause. 	
<p>Activity Four: Putting it together - NPO Statement</p> <p>The facilitator reviews with the group what they have accomplished during the workshop and summarizes what was learned.</p> <p>The facilitator identifies the key takeaways from each activity and records them on the flipchart or whiteboard.</p> <p>Discuss any points of friction, clarification, or questions that arise as a group.</p> <p>The group completes this statement, using what was identified in the activities:</p> <p>Considering _____(audience), we've discovered _____(NPO), which is caused by _____(root cause).</p> <p>If solved, it would mean _____(outcome).</p> <p>Questions to consider: As I continue researching this NPO, what should I be sure to examine?</p>	

As I continue researching this NPO, what are potential blind spots that I best explore? As I continue researching this NPO, what are potential pitfalls that I best avoid?	
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ONE-PAGE POST-WORKSHOP MESSAGE TO STAKEHOLDERS

Overview of Discovery Workshop

Thank you so much for participating in The Discovery Workshop. You all gave me so much to think about and process. It has really allowed me to begin to mold and shape my research. You are at the very beginning of this process. Please feel free to send your input at any time in the future, especially since this will be a three-year process. Below you will find what we discovered on Saturday November 4, 2020.

The original NPO (Need, Problem, Opportunity): *There seems to be a significant disconnect between the local church, and the mission field (missionaries), within the Foursquare movement.*

The refined NPO from the workshop: *Considering Pastors, Missionaries, and Congregants we have discovered the need for cultivating more authentic, meaningful connections that are both organic and systematic. These relational connections need to be able to reach across physical, practical and emotional divides. This has been caused by several significant factors:*

- *These relationships are not intuitive.*
- *They lack sufficient depth to be founded on love.*
- *They are not integrated into the daily life of the church.*
- *There is a lack of a model that shares the responsibility for development and maintenance of the relationship.*
- *The current "relationship" model is labor intensive.*
- *There is a need for people to take initiative to introduce others.*

If solved it would provide a workable means for authentic, meaningful relationships that produce mutually beneficial support and transformative change for all.

The Key issues:

- *Pastors, local leaders and missionaries all have feelings of isolation and are overwhelmed by the task of connecting & maintaining those connections.*
- *Congregants are generally disenfranchised with the whole concept.*
- *Reasons for this:*
 - *Lack of clarity as to who is responsible*
 - *Lack of direction on where to start and what to do*
 - *Priority often goes to the squeaky wheel right in front of us.*
 - *Lack of being known or knowing one another*
 - *Unaware of the psychological challenges of living in the field, regarding loss of identity, discomfort, and what it is like to have a passport country stay.*

I have a few follow up questions:

1. *How likely are individuals of your congregation to take a step of faith that will cost them:*

On a scale of 1-10, 1 being the least likely:

- short term missions.
- long term missions.
- Financially
- Physical comfort
- Social network
- Family connection

2. How often does your congregation:

- Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly, Yearly
- Hear about missions.
- Have an opportunity to give.
- Participant in missions
- Connect with a missionary.

3. Would you prayerfully consider piloting a discipleship tool that integrates missions?

Once again thank you so much for your investment in this project.

Blessings,

Denise

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW DOCUMENTATION

Interviewees A – Middle Aged Missionary Couple

- Agrees there is a disconnect.
- Agrees that Pastors and churches need training in partnering with the field.
- There is a sense that pastors feel obligated to give to missions.
- There is a need to develop a family-like connection within the spiritual community.
- Lack of a model that shares the responsibilities and maintaining the relationship.
- Need for denominational leadership to train the District Mission Representatives (DMRs) to train and collaborate with missionaries.
- More than anything there is the desire for authentic partnership in prayer.
- A person of peace within the congregation is often a more reliable connection than the pastor.
- There is a need for the denomination to highlight the full-time missionaries in the field that are NOT funded by the denomination.
- Currently there is a lack of respect for missionaries.
- The sense that they need to change their expectations.
- Need for mutually partnership: equal give and take.
- Lack of denominational leadership listening to the suggestions of field workers

Interviewee B – Single Female Missionary

- The American church is black and white.

- Personal relationships are the key.
- American churches are overwhelmed with life.
- Including missionaries in church family relationships is NOT intuitive.
- The church being aware of missions gets them out of their comfort zone and more engaged with the world around them.
- Current relationships with churches are perceived as an agreement for services rendered.
- Missionaries cannot be honest about what they are going through for fear of it affecting the relationship.
- An apparent lack of faith in regard to how the church engages with missions.
- Church involvement needs to be slow because they quit easily.
- Needs to be integrated into daily life.
- Church programs can detract from hearing and obeying the Holy Spirit.
- There is not a connection between people in the congregation.
- Pastors and missionaries are under the same pressure to perform.

Interviewee C- Area Missionary

- Lack of intentional behavior.
- Need for clarified expectations.
- Missionaries need to be flexible.
- A need for a pre-deployment ministry agreement plan.
- Missionaries need to take responsibility for establishing and maintaining the relationship.
- Pastors can have a limited vision.
- Emil Brunner said the church exists by mission as a fire exists through burning and they are inseparable, without mission the church does not exist.
- Some pastors cannot see beyond their border.
- The average church spends 1% of its budget on anything related to mission.

Interviewee D – Senior Missionary Couple

- Missions feels like an accessory.
- Real relationships require facetime.
- Family relationships have a sense of commonality.
- Partnership includes sharing the financial burden of travel to connect.
- Lack of direction or clear vision
- Lack of partnership by denominational leadership to facilitate connection.

Interviewee E – District Missions Representative/Emissary

- Difficult to get US pastors involved in missional discovery.
- Lack of direction in how to make relationships more intuitive.
- Alan Hirsch, The Forgotten Ways
- Engaging the field must be taught.
- Missions must be integrated in the daily life of the church.
- The model must share responsibility for the development and maintenance of the relationship.
- Missions must be part of the spiritual formation of the believer.

- Pastors need to recognize the growth opportunity benefits that come with engagement with the mission field.
- Pastors need to take responsibility to champion the missionaries they know.
- Attraction based ministries take the attention.

Interviewee F- Single male missionary

- Lack of a model
- Current model is labor intensive.
- A need for these connections to be rooted in love.
- Lack of personal connections with denominational leadership.
- Lack of practical support in dealing with issues with national works.
- Need for actionable goals.
- Lack of accountability for denominational leadership.
- Lack of behavioral actions that demonstrate value by denominational leadership.
- Hope deferred makes a heart heavy and longs for death, stop deferring my hope.
- If national partners are asking for our help, there should be some skin in the game on their part.
- Lack of trust.
- Lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities of denominational leadership

Appendix B– Milestone 2 NPO Topic Expertise Essay

Introduction

Christianity has been described by Foursquare theologians as a “living organism,”¹⁴⁶ implying there are elements of union, presence, unified purpose, growth, and adaptability. These unique characteristics of liberty are the aspects that make Christianity relevant, and transformative across all social, economic, cultural, status, and gender barriers. The United States (US) Christian community’s adaptation, together with our ever-changing society, seems to have created religious institutions that may be culturally relevant but at the expense of an organic, vibrant, presence of God within those institutions. A presence that has a transformative voice in the lives of neighborhoods and individuals. The average church attendee today has no idea what their unique identity is, or how it fits in the larger purpose. Each member of the community has an essential role in the discovery, and maturation of one another as they join in mission with God. Perhaps the disconnect between the local church, particularly the Foursquare church, and the mission field has more to do with the church’s disconnect from its essence as a living organism.¹⁴⁷ This paper engages with the biblical, historical, and contemporary literature on how to integrate unique individual and collective identity, into a meaningful, reciprocating, community that is on a joint transformative mission with their Creator

Section 1: Biblical and Theological Foundations

Old Testament Textual Discussions

Identity, Community, and the Integration of the Missional Call

In Genesis 1, the author describes creation in a way that foreshadows an image of the redeemed Church as unique individuals functioning in unity and love for one another to accomplish a mission. While this is the primary text used to describe the nature and purpose of God at creation, most theologians agree that it is incomplete without references from other biblical locations.¹⁴⁸ As this paper addresses the identity of humans, the communities they form, and how those individuals fulfill their purpose, it is important to explore the identity of God, the role of the Triune God at creation, and His intent from the beginning.

¹⁴⁶ Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, Revised & updated, vol. 2 (Los Angeles, CA: Foursquare Media, 2016), 92.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 2:82.

¹⁴⁸ James Dixon Douglas, N Hillyer, and Frederick Fyvie Bruce, *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 245.

The first three verses reveal that God, "Elohim"¹⁴⁹ can be both a plural and singular term. It has a nature that is divinely¹⁵⁰ unique as His personality represents "three personal identities"¹⁵¹ in one "supreme and true God."¹⁵² These distinct expressions or essence are equal in dignity, honor, and nature, although they have different functions. Creation in its entirety was the "work of the triune God,"¹⁵³ that being the Father, Son, and Spirit. They worked together in unison to accomplish the same mission or purpose. This is demonstrated through the following roles: The Father the source of all existence (Malachi 2:10),¹⁵⁴ the Son who is the Word through whom all things have been created (John 1:1-3),¹⁵⁵ the Spirit who "brought light out of darkness and order out of chaos" (Genesis 1:2-3).¹⁵⁶ The "Father works through the Son by the Spirit,"¹⁵⁷ indicating that creation was done in unified "fellowship of three equal and distinct persons,"¹⁵⁸ rather than by delegation.¹⁵⁹ This image of the One God in three unique identities, each valued and working in community to accomplish the mission of creation¹⁶⁰ provides. This is the ideal model for a harmonious community of people. A model where people live in the fulness of their identity through the accomplishment of God's purpose.

¹⁴⁹ Zondervan Bibles (Grand Rapids, Michigan), ed., *NIV Study Bible 10th Anniversary Edition*, Fully Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Bibles, 2020), 6.

¹⁵⁰ Douglas, Hillyer, and Bruce, *New Bible Dictionary*, 1259.

¹⁵¹ Guy P Duffield and Nathaniel M Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology (Revised & Updated) Volume 1*, vol. 1 (Los Angeles, CA.: Foursquare Media, 2016), 94.

¹⁵² Douglas, Hillyer, and Bruce, *New Bible Dictionary*, 249.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 245.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 428.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 245, 1221.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 427.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 1222-3.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 428.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 245.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

The latter portion of Genesis 1 is dedicated to the creation of humans (Genesis 1:26-31). At the actual core of the human existence is the very image, "eikon,"¹⁶¹ or the essence of God. Humanity has been fashioned, "asah,"¹⁶² with the fundamental characteristics exhibited when the godhead exercised His free will and purpose in creation.¹⁶³ This nature is fulfilled in each person exercising their choice to be in relationship with the Creator.¹⁶⁴ This relationship is one of adoption as a child of God, whose image fully reflects God's glory when it is lived in a harmonious community.¹⁶⁵ This community of God's children embodies a similar unity in diversity, and expression of harmony in the completion of the Creator's purposes.¹⁶⁶ It is in the individual's and the collective expression that the image of the triune God, who is separate, yet unified can be fully visualized.¹⁶⁷

God's Intention, Identity, and Purpose: Psalms 139

The author of Psalm 139 is particularly intimate, attesting to how well his Creator knows him, the meticulous detail, and attention God put into forming him.¹⁶⁸ God has taken great care to make each individual exactly the way he desired.¹⁶⁹ The Psalmist declares that he is "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14),¹⁷⁰ he is referring to being fashioned, "asah,"¹⁷¹ or formed in the image of God. This is a reference to the same "asah" used in Genesis 1. He goes on to explain that this very personal attention occurred before any human plans could be made, in the "secret place"

¹⁶¹ W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words: With Topical Index* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1996), 318.

¹⁶² Ibid, 52.

¹⁶³ Douglas, Hillyer, and Bruce, *New Bible Dictionary*, 732.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 731.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 1223.

¹⁶⁸ Jack W. Hayford and Thomas Nelson Publishers, eds., *The Hayford Bible Handbook*, Updated & revised. [ed.] (Nashville, Tennessee: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 2005), 157.

¹⁶⁹ Zondervan Bibles (Grand Rapids, Michigan), *NIV Study Bible 10th Anniversary Edition*, 989.

¹⁷⁰ Zondervan Bibles, *NIV Study Bible 10th Anniversary Edition*, 925.

¹⁷¹ Vine, Unger, and White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 52.

(Psalm 139:15-16), or womb.¹⁷² The description of God's involvement indicates great care, and intentionality to who each individual is from before birth.¹⁷³

In verses 15-18, the author recounts his relationship with God from his early development, "My frame was not hidden from you when I was made" (Psalm 139:13-15).¹⁷⁴ The Psalmist attributes the God of Creation with intimate involvement in the details of his identity before it was known to anyone. The use of "ordained,"¹⁷⁵ in Psalm 139:16, or "set in place,"¹⁷⁶ indicate that everyday has an appointed purpose by the Creator before one day has been lived.¹⁷⁷ He continues, by contemplating God's many thoughts about him, so many are those thoughts that the Psalmist is flooded "with the sense of" God's "presence"¹⁷⁸ (Psalm 139:17-18). This reflection resembles the wonder, and awe¹⁷⁹ in verses 1-10, describing the many situations where God's involvement was observed, by the writer. This reveals God as an involved entity that extends His strength, guidance, and presence to His creation¹⁸⁰ (Psalm 139:10). These passages together indicate a person's lifespan is never outside God's thoughts, care, presence, and purpose.¹⁸¹

New Testament Textual Discussions

Genesis 1 provides the church with a model of unique identities, working as a community on the mission with God as each entity fulfills their purpose. Psalm 139 describes God's intimate and intentional engagement of the formation of each individual, for a divine purpose, in unity with the Creator. Together these passages lay a foundation for the first century, Christian church to demonstrate. Lesslie Newbigin suggested in *Living Epistles*, the divine unity of God's people must

¹⁷² Zondervan Bibles (Grand Rapids, Michigan), *NIV Study Bible 10th Anniversary Edition*, 925.

¹⁷³ Tyndale House Publishers, *Life Application Study Bible: New Living Translation.*, 2016, 989.

¹⁷⁴ Zondervan Bibles (Grand Rapids, Michigan), *NIV Study Bible 10th Anniversary Edition*, 925.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 926.

¹⁷⁷ Douglas, Hillyer, and Bruce, *New Bible Dictionary*, 861.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Douglas, Hillyer, and Bruce, *New Bible Dictionary*, 862.

¹⁸⁰ Tyndale House Publishers, *Life Application Study Bible*, 990.

¹⁸¹ Zondervan Bibles (Grand Rapids, Michigan), *NIV Study Bible 10th Anniversary Edition*, 926.

be observable in their relationship with each other and the community. These harmonious spiritual and relational practices fulfill the true essence of the church on the mission with God.¹⁸²

One Body of Differing Parts Working Together: 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

At the time of Paul's writing of this letter, the early believers were in the midst of disunity. Therefore, to address this issue the Apostle challenged them to unify around the spiritual nature of the essential truths in the gospel, that they were all baptized by the Holy Spirit into the same community, for communion with one another, and the Holy Spirit¹⁸³ (1 Corinthians 12:13).¹⁸⁴ In verses 21-25, Paul further explains how this fellowship of diverse individuals can maintain harmony through "mutual interdependence."¹⁸⁵ He highlights the need for each individual to fully express their individual identity and divine purpose for the good of the whole community. He further emphasizes that each part has an essential role to play¹⁸⁶ and must be treated with an attitude of "indispensability."¹⁸⁷ The Apostle defines the practice of bestowing "special honor" to those individuals, who otherwise would be perceived to be somehow "weaker," out of sight, or unnecessary.¹⁸⁸ This type of deference strengthens the whole community in mutual honor of individual gifting, and the affirmation of their unique value to the collective mission. These beliefs, and values surrounding the community's shared spiritual experience, individual worth, honoring the least likely, and caring for one another, creates an environment for the church to function in unison on mission.¹⁸⁹ This portion of the letter reminds the readers that the community of God is composed of connected individuals. The hardships, joys, losses, and victories that are experienced by one member "affects the well-being" of the whole body,¹⁹⁰ whether or not the community is aware of it or not. It is in the best interest of everyone to maintain an atmosphere of empathy, openness, and love as the community encourages, and supports one another. This atmosphere of harmony is expressed in love, respect,

¹⁸² J. E. Lesslie Newbigin, "Living Epistles: Impressions of the Foreign Mission Work of the Church of Scotland in 1938." (Church of Scotland Foreign Missions Committee, Edinburgh, Scotland, 1939), 6.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 264-265.

¹⁸⁴ Zondervan Bibles (Grand Rapids, Michigan), *NIV Study Bible 10th Anniversary Edition*, 1753.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 10:265.

¹⁸⁷ Zondervan Bibles (Grand Rapids, Michigan), *NIV Study Bible 10th Anniversary Edition*, 1753.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 10:177-79.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

honor, grace, and a conscious awareness of one another as the whole community celebrates the least likely among them and mourn life's sorrows together (1 Corinthians 12:26).

The description of the uniqueness of the various body parts and their function to the whole body, in verses 15-20 concentrate on the nature of relationship, and attitude toward the other parts. The implication is that each member needs to rejoice in the unique qualities they contribute to the whole body and celebrate those same qualities in one another.¹⁹¹ The Apostle Paul is intent on ensuring that no member has a sense of inferiority, rather that they are aware of their essential purpose they have in the whole community.¹⁹² When this type of honor and respect are exchanged, it plants in the hearts of all members of the community a protection against exploitation, jealousy, or division.¹⁹³

The God of Creation is one God comprising three unique individuals, yet because of their love, honor, and respect for one another they work together in community to accomplish their purpose or mission. The Christian church is encouraged to be the physical representation of that same identity, harmony, community, expressing the love of the one who created each one of them missionally. This multifaceted, organism of believers comprised a wide variety of diversity, through their ethnicity, thought, focus, religious backgrounds, giftings, and approaches, toward their newfound faith in Christ. The Apostle Paul finds it necessary to instruct them on how to maintain unity in faith, fellowship, and function. Paul illustrates the diversity, and function of the church as resembling that of the human body (1 Corinthians 12:12-14), each individual embodying the identity of unique giftings with a specific purpose. Every person, or part is necessary, and must function in the manner it was created, enabling the individual to be fulfilled, and the community to be a healthy representation of the triune God of Creation (1 Corinthians 12:15-22).¹⁹⁴ It is only when each member of Christ's body is fully connected, and they are functioning in the manner the Father intended, the body accurately reflects Christ, in all power, unity and strength.¹⁹⁵ Then this harmonious expression of giftedness on mission in unity, reveals God's divinity.¹⁹⁶

Synthesis of Themes, Values, and Commitments

The God of Creation is one God, whose divine identity defines love, honor, and respect for one another. It is these qualities that establish the foundational unity of community, the revelation of

¹⁹¹ Douglas, Hillyer, and Bruce, *New Bible Dictionary*, 265.

¹⁹² Zondervan Bibles (Grand Rapids, Michigan), *NIV Study Bible 10th Anniversary Edition*, 1753.

¹⁹³ Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 10:265.

¹⁹⁴ Zondervan Bibles (Grand Rapids, Michigan), *NIV Study Bible 10th Anniversary Edition*, 1752.

¹⁹⁵ Douglas, Hillyer, and Bruce, *New Bible Dictionary*, 146.

¹⁹⁶ Zondervan Bibles (Grand Rapids, Michigan), *NIV Study Bible 10th Anniversary Edition*, 1752.

each person's divine identity that is fulfilled in their purpose or mission, and the model for all creation. The Apostle Paul encouraged the New Testament church to endeavor to be the physical representation of that same identity. This diverse group of individuals embraced their redeemed identity in Jesus, through expressing that same love, honor, and respect in community as they engaged in a joint mission with God.

SECTION 2: TOPIC HISTORY AND KEY VOICE

A Brief History of the Relationship between the Church and Its Missional Call

The exploration of historical influences is essential to unearthing the elements that resulted in the exponential growth, and unity of diverse individuals of the early church, as well as the similar fruitfulness exhibited in the early Foursquare Church. This two-pronged examination of history will provide the foundational base to unlocking the divide between the local Foursquare church, the community in which it resides and the mission field abroad.

The Early Church: Diversity, and Unity in Action

This survey of the early Christian church is dedicated, firstly to the diversity of individuals in leadership, their unique callings. Exploring the means in which they were able to unify in love and purpose while empowering those that they lead to do the same. Secondly, the elements of the early church's unity and purpose, while continually being dedicated to their own spiritual growth.

Leadership: Diversified in Identity, and Calling, while Unified in Purpose

The Apostles Peter and Paul are an example of diverse identity, while working to maintain unity in the fulfillment of God's purposes through their background, status, and calling. Peter, a married, literate¹⁹⁷ individual of a middle-class working family,¹⁹⁸ who was found among Christ's original disciples. Whereas Paul was a single, religious zealot¹⁹⁹ of societal privileged status,²⁰⁰ entrusted with significant role in the persecution²⁰¹ of the early church (Acts 8:3).²⁰² Their life changing encounters with Jesus were dramatically different. Peter's worst day at work, no fish after toiling all night, miraculously transformed into the best day, with more fish than the family's nets could hold.

¹⁹⁷ Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 10:916.

¹⁹⁸ John L Amstutz, *Disciples of All Nations Continuous Mission Until He Comes* (Los Angeles, California: Foursquare Missions International/Foursquare Media, 2009), 11.

¹⁹⁹ Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 10:890.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 10:1071.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 10:890.

²⁰² Zondervan Bibles (Grand Rapids, Michigan), *NIV Study Bible 10th Anniversary Edition*, 1660.

This event led to a personal invitation for Peter to leave²⁰³ it all, to follow Jesus (Luke 5:1-14).²⁰⁴ In contrast to Peter's personal interaction, and discipleship, Paul encountered the risen Jesus while in the act of persecuting the disciples, resulting in his blindness and subsequent miraculous healing (Acts 9:1-19).²⁰⁵ Peter received his intimate training directly with Jesus over approximately a three year period,²⁰⁶ while Paul submitted himself to the disciples instruction, and ministry oversight, for some three to ten years.²⁰⁷

Although these two early leaders of the church were from quite different backgrounds, and societal influence, they both had a miraculous encounter with Jesus. Their personalized interactions with Jesus were so significant that it radically changed the trajectory of their lives. Resulting in the lifelong pursuit of the Kingdom of God Jesus taught, while partnering with God on the mission of reconciling humanity to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:18).²⁰⁸ Their sacrificial devotion to God, and the community they served eventually lead to them being martyred.²⁰⁹

Both Peter²¹⁰ (John 21:15) and Paul,²¹¹ were commissioned as Apostles within the community believers. Although they "had the same content"²¹² their unique identity expressed it differently. This is particularly true when the church leadership "set" Paul and Barnabas "apart for the work to which they had been called" (Acts 13:3).²¹³ The leadership released these men to follow the Holy Spirit in what He had prepared for them. Peter extended "the right hand of fellowship," recognizing that his mission was "to the Jews and Paul's to the Gentiles," yet they were "part of the same ministry."²¹⁴ There were no expectations that either leader needed to fit the framework of an existing structure.

²⁰³ Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 10:916.

²⁰⁴ Zondervan Bibles (Grand Rapids, Michigan), *NIV Study Bible 10th Anniversary Edition*, 1545.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 1663.

²⁰⁶ Gaebelein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 10:576-77.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 10:890.

²⁰⁸ Zondervan Bibles (Grand Rapids, Michigan), *NIV Study Bible 10th Anniversary Edition*, 1770.

²⁰⁹ Douglas, Hillyer, and Bruce, *New Bible Dictionary*, 918.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 916.

²¹¹ Ibid., 917.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Amstutz, *Disciples of All Nations Continuous Mission Until He Comes*, 15.

²¹⁴ Douglas, Hillyer, and Bruce, *New Bible Dictionary*, 917.

Nor were they abandoned to struggle in isolation, but they continued to partner with one another as needs, and issues arose.²¹⁵

A Model to Create a Community of Diverse Disciples

The early church as described in the book of Acts is a model for the modern church. The purpose of this exploration of the literature here is to expose the essence of the first church in the hopes of reintegrating the local church today with its missional soul. This examination of the essential elements which created the cohesive, relational community of believers, and who were dedicated to growing in not only the knowledge of God but also the nature and purpose of God.

The New Testament church was a dynamic force from its infancy, touching lives, transforming cultures, all while under persecution. Alan Hirsch attributes this phenomenon to the Holy Spirit being the foundational component to all aspects of the believer's life.²¹⁶ The Holy Spirit is the very source that "birthed, empowered, sustained, and in the end effectively deliver(ed) (the) message"²¹⁷ of Jesus. Hirsch continues by attributing the on-going process of redemption, sanctification to become like Christ, awakening and empowering mission within each member in the community to drive the whole church into the future.²¹⁸ It is the creative, empowering presence of the Holy Spirit that was manifested in, and through the lives of the apostles.

The community that formed was one of *koinonia*, or fellowship. Despite their vast differences the early believers were bound by an inexplicable love that emerged from their shared redemptive experience with Jesus. These individuals understood that this community represented more than being recipients of God's loving grace. They now formed a new family. One that comprised people devoted to living out a new identity that reflected the character, and culture of Father God. Therefore, as heirs to His Kingdom they endeavored to be like Him, encouraging each other on their journey to fulfill the Father's plan. This is particularly significant as there was no division in regard to sex, race, status, or ethnicity.

Lesslie Newbigin, refers to this as a type of mutuality of respect and interdependence.²¹⁹ The depth of connection was far more authentic and significant than an event or social gathering, it was an all-inclusive lifestyle. The *Koinonia* lifestyle comprises five key elements. The first of which involved a

²¹⁵ Amstutz, *Disciples of All Nations Continuous Mission Until He Comes*, 15.

²¹⁶ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating Apostolic Movements*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2016), 82.

²¹⁷ Ibid, 83.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Newbigin, "Living Epistles: Impressions of the Foreign Mission Work of the Church of Scotland in 1938," 6.

willingness to sacrifice one's own treasures generously out of genuine love. This desire sprung forth from an awareness that all members are joined together and that what an individual has is a result of what God had given them.²²⁰ Second, is the strong sense of belonging to all believers everywhere. The concept of oneness is further illustrated by the use of the word *adoption* in Ephesians 1:5; Romans 8:15, 23; and Galatians 4:5, to convey that the community is in fact, composed of members of the same family. The third and fourth expressions of *Koinonia* are similar in that it is the shared participation in the body of Christ within the fellowship and extend to those who have yet to hear the good news.²²¹ Finally, it is in our joint fellowship in and through the Holy Spirit that the community is knit together.²²² This image of the fellowship of believers is one that is unified in nature and progressive purpose.

The Early History of the Foursquare Gospel

The Foursquare Church sprung forth in the early 1900's as an example of an organic, exponentially replicating, Holy Spirit movement.²²³ The founder Aimee Semple McPherson's ecumenical upbringing impacted her view of ministry, to the point that she declared a commitment to the unity of "interdenominational world-wide evangelization."²²⁴ McPherson set an early precedent at a time when racial divides were profound.²²⁵ The early Foursquare church embodied the evangelistic heart dedicated to unified involvement. This is exhibited in the denomination value of "moderation in all things: in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity."²²⁶ The founder was intent on a balanced foundation of Jesus that begins with humanity's salvation through Christ's blood sacrifice and resurrection. The final cornerstone of faith for McPherson was that Jesus will return as King. This is the believers' greatest hope in the broken world. Elements beyond these essentials were to be met with freedom. All these essentials, non-essentials, as well as those elements not yet defined were to be encompassed in a culture of unifying love.²²⁷

²²⁰ Duffield and Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology (Revised & Updated) Volume 1*, 1:82.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Nathaniel M Van Cleave and Ronald D Williams, *The Vine and the Branches: A History of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel* (Los Angeles: The Church, 1992), 29-45.

²²⁴ Ibid., 34.

²²⁵ Ibid., 5.

²²⁶ Ibid., 24.

²²⁷ Ibid., 26-27.

This foundational understanding opens up possibilities for creative expressions of worship, outreach, inclusion, while not losing sight of the clearly stated biblical directives. While there was a focus evangelistically, the founder was just as concerned with those who were being reached. This went beyond the spiritual needs of the individual to include physical, and practical needs, their family, and the overall community.²²⁸ The Angelus Temple Commissary²²⁹ was established to meet the tangible needs of those in the community and the Little Sisters²³⁰ to follow-up with those who had received resources, as a way of expressing the love and nature of Jesus. Mrs. McPherson was always tying the practical actions to the Gospel message. This was reflected in the Commissary motto: "Jesus Christ, the Same Yesterday and Today and Forever."²³¹ This simple message expresses the full nature of Jesus' redemptive power without limit by time or space. That same Jesus of the early church is in fact here to empower God's people to continue the fulfillment of His purposes.

The ministry of Aimee Semple McPherson was initially organized as a movement of churches that birthed from the flagship church Angelus Temple and its various creative evangelistic ministries.²³² Foursquare's founder's innovative and unique means for communicating the Gospel encompassed means that had not been considered before. One such example is McPherson's acquisition of the first "religious radio station in the United States and the first station licensed to a woman."²³³ In the four years that transpired following the establishment of Angelus Temple in 1923, the work had planted more than one-hundred new churches.²³⁴ The early years of the movement saw incredible growth, increasing from thirty-five churches in 1925 to two-hundred-fifty-five at the end of 1933.²³⁵ The focus of the ministry had an even greater focus internationally with a foreign missionary support budget that was nearly four times that of home missions.²³⁶ Consistent with the founder's whole person ministry, mission efforts found support through the flow of new workers from newly established Bible Institute,²³⁷ the Women's Auxiliary that worked to meet the tangible needs of the

²²⁸ Ibid, 24.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² "Foursquare Licensing Process Guide," n.d., 3.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Van Cleave and Williams, *The Vine and the Branches*, 5.

²³⁷ Ibid.

workers and to be the connection to the church family on the home front, and the Foursquare Mission Press that produced and ships needed resources for evangelism.

Although these examples of the Foursquare movement seem to exemplify a type of early church unity, influence, and growth the time that has elapsed since has transformed into a more organized denomination. This trend parallels what J.I. Packer and Gary A. Parrett describe about how St. Augustine of Hippo's organization of the catechist teaching, "...in the early days the principal catechists might have been mature believers, whether elders or not, in the formalized church structures the catechist was typically a pastor or the bishop."²³⁸ This shift from an organic movement have set in motion a trend toward the professional clergy, church structures, buildings, programs, and a decline in member participation in the kingdom, resulting in an overall disconnect,²³⁹ as Alan Hirsch states.

Contemporary Voices and the Missional Divide

The historical review of literature in terms of mission and the church has highlighted a number of important elements that need to be further explored, particularly unity of the church in nature and mission. First, Lesslie Newbigin's as an experienced missionary of the twentieth century discusses the ramifications when the congregation is separated from its missional purpose. His insight as an advocate of the unification of the World Council of Churches with the International Missionary Council provides greater depth to the struggle of bridging the gap. Second, re-evaluating an approach to church through Alan Hirsch's work by re-introducing the offices and unique ministry styles of the apostle, prophet, and evangelist to the church ministry team. His belief is that this diversified team would instill a maturity, resulting in a congregation of individuals fulfilling their missional nature similar to the first century church.

The Integration of Mission and Unity with the Church

In order to best tackle the concept of integration of mission and the church it is necessary to consult Lesslie Newbigin's exhaustive writings. Newbigin's many years as a missionary while working toward bridging the gap between the church and newly emerging fellowships. His work theorizes the divide in the church stems from a loss of organic, collective, mission being birthed out of our unity.²⁴⁰ This divide is exemplified by the number of churches and their leaders expressing the desire, and even the importance of being more intricately connected to the mission field. This challenge often results in a model that resembles an event driven structure instead of an integrated lifestyle of missional partnership. In the eyes of the long-time

²³⁸ Gary A Parrett and J. I Packer, *Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Pub. Group, 2010), 53.

²³⁹ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 34.

²⁴⁰ Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1986), 30-34.

missiologist Newbigin, this type of divide is “totally foreign to the New Testament and destructive of any growth in Churchmanship.”²⁴¹ He suggests that the well-intentioned model of missions many congregations engage in, whether short term missions or the sponsorship of a missionary, embody a mentality of self-sufficiency, even to the point of pride because the resources are generated out of the church’s surplus, opposed to a practice of joint partnership in word, faith, and deed.²⁴²

Therefore, the leadership must re-evaluate every aspect of church, and how those elements actively engage in the missional nature.²⁴³ As Newbigin so amply put, “It is not possible to account for the contentment with the divisions of the Church except upon the basis of a loss of the conviction that the Church exists to bring all people to Christ. There is the closest possible connection between the acceptance of the missionary obligation and the acceptance of the obligation of unity. That which makes the Church one is what makes it a mission to the world.”²⁴⁴

This re-evaluation of how church is related to mission, starts with a redefining of mission as each believer actively joins with their Creator daily to share His Kingdom, in their neighborhood, area, and globally. Newbigin emphasized that the foundation of mission itself is integration with the local congregation. The unity of the body in this way is the very basis for our faith as a model of the integration of the godhead.²⁴⁵ The essence of the church and the life of its people, is as Newbigin states, in “...the ultimate purpose of union in one fellowship of all who accept Christ as Lord; belongs to the very nature of the Church. It is in its very nature, a pilgrim people.”²⁴⁶ One of the most profound results of salvation is the unity of vastly diverse individuals, who would not otherwise be able together.²⁴⁷ Newbigin’s “primary concern” in addressing the church’s

²⁴¹ J. E. Lesslie Newbigin, “Relations of Older and Younger Churches in India: Uncensored Remarks,” 1947, 1.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ J. E. Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 14, 18, 151.

²⁴⁴ J. E. Lesslie Newbigin, *The Reunion of the Church: A Defence of the South India Scheme* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 11.

²⁴⁵ Mark Thomas Bowie Laing, “‘Calling of the Church to Mission and to Unity’: Bishop Lesslie Newbigin and the Integration of the International Missionary Council with the World Council of Churches” (Dissertation, Edinburgh, Scotland, University of Edinburgh, 2010), ii. Laing’s Dissertation provides an extensive overview of Lesslie Newbigin’s writings, conversations including denominational and interagency notes.

²⁴⁶ Newbigin, *The Reunion of the Church*, xxx.

²⁴⁷ Newbigin, *The Household of God*, 149.

divide is that "in developing, articulating, and defending this view of unity was that the church might remain true to its missionary nature."²⁴⁸

The U.S. evangelical community has embraced the process of church growth by means of leadership vision, education, programs, communication techniques, and strategic plans, which are often evaluated by the number of people in the building, and dollars in the collection. Newbigin viewed this focus as being the "development of self-sufficient, introverted congregation(s), lacking all sense of the Church,"²⁴⁹ or community. This mentality is a combination of self-sufficiency, pride, and generosity out of the surplus as opposed to a practice of joint partnership.²⁵⁰ The model Newbigin suggests is an organic unification of the body. He understood that it is in the collective Christian experience of the Protestant, Catholic, Evangelical, Pentecostal that the complete picture of the Church.²⁵¹ It is by our shared salvation through Christ and the Holy Spirit's expression through each member in a continual process of collective transformation and mission, the church itself will be more in line with the nature of Christ.²⁵² It is only in the embrace of the diversified approach to the Gospel that is represented in a multi-denominational, and the full range of Holy Spirit giftings that one can avoid "...the disfigurement of the Church and distortion of its message."²⁵³ To come to a place of common ground in unity, the ecumenical church leadership, as Laing highlights, under Newbigin, were able to pare down the essentials of their faith, and mission, in order to work together on the foundation of Christ.²⁵⁴ The image described here is that of mutual respect and interdependency that were reflected in the "Nature of the Pauline church."²⁵⁵ Newbigin has argued that the time has come that we shift from a territorial understanding of Christianity that

²⁴⁸ Michael W. Goheen, *"As the Father Has Sent Me, I Am Sending You": J.E. Lesslie Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology*, Mission, nr. 28 (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2000), 201. Michael Goheen is director of Theological Education at Missional Training Center, scholar-in-residence for the Surge Network of Churches (Phoenix), and professor of missional theology at Covenant Theological Seminary (St Louis). He is the writer of two books on Lesslie Newbigin's missionary ecclesiology: *The Church and Its vocation*, and *"As The Father Has Sent Me. I Am Sending You."*

²⁴⁹ Newbigin, "Relations of Older and Younger Churches in India: Uncensored Remarks," 1.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Newbigin, *The Household of God*, 4.

²⁵² Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda*, 114.

²⁵³ Newbigin, *The Household of God*, 30.

²⁵⁴ Laing, "'Calling of the Church to Mission and to Unity': Bishop Lesslie Newbigin and the Integration of the International Missionary Council with the World Council of Churches," 2.

²⁵⁵ Newbigin, "Living Epistles: Impressions of the Foreign Mission Work of the Church of Scotland in 1938," 6.

is defined by particular adherence, buildings, and the like, to embrace a spirit of brotherly love, creating a true "sense of community."²⁵⁶ This is the same oneness that was expressed through each member, regardless of gender, age, length of time in Christ, ethnicity, doing their part that made the early Church complete.²⁵⁷

Finally, the heart of missional growth, as described by Newbigin, is in the development of worship, lay leadership training, the equipping of evangelistic teams through practical implementation and the empowering of women in the ministry.²⁵⁸ It was the missional walk of those individuals that prompted a realignment to the fundamental priorities of Jesus first. It was the very elements of oneness of thought on the basic elements of the Gospel; salvation through Christ, the practice of basic sacraments (baptism, communion), and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit for the sharing of one's life in Christ that will regain the ground that the western church has lost.²⁵⁹

The Integration of Mission in the Church Through the Apostolic Ministry

The call to the Church to return to a simple Gospel, founded in unity and missional partnership with one another and their God, has been resounding since the early 20th Century; the tendency to return to comfort of the known, predictable, and safe ways continues to resurface. Hirsch believes that "...the answer to the crisis of our time is found in our most primary and defining story of Church-the New Testament Church," and returns to an Apostolic led ministry team.²⁶⁰ The challenge remains how to maintain that same core of values that will continually replicate past one or two generations. Hirsch refers to Bishop Stephan Neil, as saying that the church has been out of date for decades, dedicated to models of church that are static and not missional.²⁶¹ As John Maynard Keynes suggests, "...the difficulty lies, not in the new ideas, but in escaping from the old ones, which ramify . . . into every corner of our minds."²⁶² Hirsch further explains that there is a need to go back to the very core of the New Testament Church life in order for the modern church to break free of the mindset that is holding it back from living in that same

²⁵⁶ Ibid, 4.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Newbigin, "Relations of Older and Younger Churches in India: Uncensored Remarks," 3.

²⁵⁹ Newbigin, *The Household of God*, 144, 152.

²⁶⁰ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 309.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 387.

²⁶² Ibid., 279.

dynamic world changing paradigm.²⁶³ Much like Newbigin, Hirsch believes that this paradigm is accessed when the church grasps that its purpose is mission and that all that the church does must be organized around that very purpose, only "when the church is in mission, it is the true church."²⁶⁴ Church is an organism on mission not a place that believers go to.

The answer to this seemingly staggering chasm between the church and its purpose as a missional, transformative, force in today's world may be in Hirsch's call to the return of a unified unit composed of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, and teacher.²⁶⁵ Although the presence of the prophet, and evangelist have equally been absent from most church settings, he particularly notes the importance of awakening the voice of the apostle. The Apostolic ministry is specifically tasked with equipping the body of Christ to be missional and adaptable.²⁶⁶ Hirsch sees their primary responsibility is to be the catalyst that moves the church away from a static existence and to a missional lifestyle.²⁶⁷ Further exploration of Hirsch's views on the apostolic voice reveals that through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it is the impetus of the apostle that keeps the community moving forward and outside of itself. Their broad perspective and experience in new ventures, and networking with people causes them to be masters of integrating and applying these doctrines to themselves but also teaching others.²⁶⁸ This is in stark contrast to what most fellowships are used to in the nurture and care of the shepherd, teachers that fill most pulpits.²⁶⁹ Hirsch further explains that while all the voices are necessary, if there is to be any hope of bridging the gap between the church and it's missional purpose there must be a reuniting of the full spectrum of ministry gifts.²⁷⁰ Therefore, for the missional nature of the church to be integrated in, and through all of God's people, encompassing every aspect of life collectively and individually, it necessitates that the apostolic ministry be reactivated.²⁷¹

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid, 87.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 188.

²⁶⁶ Ibid, 189.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 193-4.

²⁶⁹ Alan Hirsch, *5Q: Reactivating the Original Intelligence and Capacity of the Body of Christ*, 2017, 110.

²⁷⁰ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 190.

²⁷¹ Ibid, 9.

For such a major shift of ideology and practice in the church to occur, Hirsch calls for the full inclusion of the unified leadership team including the apostle, prophet, and evangelist, collaborating with the pastor and teacher.²⁷² This bold move brings with it the potential for instability, chaos, and uncertainty. It is the unique giftings of the Apostle, Prophet, and Evangelist (APE) that unlocks the unrealized capacity of the individual by assisting in the clarification of the person's gift and releasing them to partner with God in their own world. This approach empowers everyone to serve according to their unique identity.²⁷³

Hirsch highlights a number of foundational components to an integrated missional church movement. Firstly, he emphasizes the need for every believer to embrace the profound understanding that our purpose comes from the Creator Himself. The individual's fulfillment is achieved in and through partnership in the Creator's purposes designed for them.²⁷⁴ The second element he brings forth is the importance of giving the Holy Spirit freedom. His conviction is that the Holy Spirit inspired freedom activates believers with the power to engage missionally with the courage to voice the gospel message (Acts 2:1-41).²⁷⁵ Hirsch encourages church leaders to shift from an emphasis on a belief in Jesus to the cost of being a disciple by submitting to the Lordship of Jesus. This implies a profound awareness of self and that in Christ is all identity, meaning, purpose, and community. This type of intimate transformational relationship with Jesus is the defining source of life, nature, worldview, and behavior of a disciple.²⁷⁶ He clarifies that this type of disciple is committed to actively participating in the life and growth of others in the community as they all realize their missional journey.²⁷⁷ The components of personal awe of one's divine design for a godly purpose, coupled with submission to the Lordship of Jesus, and the freedom of the Holy Spirit to transform, empower, and release God's representatives are the foundations that Hirsch describes. These elements transform a sinner into disciples who begin to resemble the nature and purposes of Jesus. Hirsch sees this as the Holy Spirit interacting with the transform disciple's God created gifting, in a way that touches the world.²⁷⁸

²⁷² Ibid., 48.

²⁷³ Ibid., 21.

²⁷⁴ Ibid, 224.

²⁷⁵ Ibid, 83.

²⁷⁶ Ibid, 90-107.

²⁷⁷ Ibid, 111-113.

²⁷⁸ Ibid, 138-139.

The final three features Hirsch describes are primarily concerned with the structure, function, and leadership of the community that forms as a result of the aforementioned characteristics. In his experience, a group of individuals who experience all life's joys and sorrows in community have a unique bond, particularly if they have been contributors in one another's journey. As they participate in one another's transformation into Christlikeness, a community that is resilient, creative, and adaptive.²⁷⁹ Secondly, Hirsch finds it necessary that the organizational systems of church fellowship are decentralized in power, allowing for the fellowship to engage in the greatest possible growth. For any church to be "a church-planting movement" it must be "characterized by instinctive, habitual, and incarnational mission"²⁸⁰ Finally, Hirsch believes that to achieve the flexibility necessary for a dynamically growing community of believers on mission, the culture of a unified leadership of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (APEST) is developed. As Ephesians 4:11-13 states it is the diverse unity of these individuals that ensures all members fully live out their identity in partnership with their Creator, and harmonious community.²⁸¹ The unity and uniqueness of the APEST are intended to model the oneness, described in the godhead, and the Church as one body.²⁸²

The writings, experience, and vision of Hirsch, provide hope of a type of renaissance for the church. His description of the essentials of the early church identity as a new culture developed by the character and perspective of Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, working itself in a community of like-minded disciples on a missional journey together. Hirsch emphasizes the need for an integrated vision that allows God's people to encompass every aspect of community.

Synthesis and Analysis

The pandemic, racial upheaval, and the encroachment of personal and religious freedoms experienced globally in 2020 and on into 2021, have revealed that many church bodies are struggling to find their identity in a new reality. These historical and global events have exposed what Hirsch refers to as the over legitimization of Pastor (Shepherd) and or Teacher leadership while

²⁷⁹ Ibid, 162-172.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 234.

²⁸¹ Alan Hirsch, Tim Catchim, and Mike Breen, *The Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church*, 1st ed, Jossey-Bass Leadership Network Series 57, loc. 1233.

²⁸² Ibid, 189-193.

disregarding the significance of the Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist (APE)²⁸³²⁸⁴. Thus, rendering church "largely ineffective in its primary function of equipping and releasing God's people for service."²⁸⁵ These leadership teams scrambled to address the needs of the individuals through various technological means, but the primary objectives were to gather, protect and care for those in their fellowships. Many parishioners seemed to be lost and greatly hampered in their ability to sustain their own relationship with God without actually meeting in the church building. It is as if this pressure has revealed how closely tied membership's spiritual identity is to the church building and the meetings therein.

Recent events highlight what the contemporary voices agree on, that the identity of the believer and that of their fellowship is fulfilled in unified missional partnership with the Creator. Hirsch encourages the church that each person's design "for world transformation," is unlocked when they are inspired by a Holy Spirit inspired team of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers (APEST).²⁸⁶ Newbigin states it strongly, "The life of the Church is radically corrupted if it is separated from the missionary task, and evangelistic effort is corrupted if it does not spring from the Church and lead back into the Church."²⁸⁷

There seems to be some confusion around the world, the very concept of mission and missions. Is it a person, action, or event? Newbigin would say that "the Church exists by mission and mission is a function of the Church."²⁸⁸ Hirsch would clarify this further, "the church's true and authentic organizing principle is the mission of God revealed in Jesus. When the Church is in mission, it is the true church."²⁸⁹ Their definition is that the very identity of the Church is fulfilled in its unified mission with Jesus. Michael Goheen,²⁹⁰ a missional scholar, states that "Newbigin believes that Church

²⁸³ Alan Hirsch, Tim Catchim, and Mike Breen, *The Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church*, 1st ed, Jossey-Bass Leadership Network Series 57 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012).

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 189-93.

²⁸⁵ Hirsch, Catchim, and Breen, *The Permanent Revolution*, loc. 1034.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 1057.

²⁸⁷ Newbigin, "Relations of Older and Younger Churches in India: Uncensored Remarks," 1.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 3.

²⁸⁹ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 87.

²⁹⁰ Michael Goheen is director of Theological Education at Missional Training Center, scholar-in-residence for the Surge Network of Churches (Phoenix), and professor of missional theology at Covenant Theological Seminary (St Louis). He is also the author of two books on Newbigin's writings: *The Church and Its Vocation: Lesslie Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology*, and *"As the Father Has Sent Me, I Am Sending You"*.

leadership must take on the responsibility to equip and nourish believers for the calling in public life of culture."²⁹¹ Hirsch continues that it is in the unified ministry of the APEST that produces a catalytic balance of maturity with all aspects of the body of Christ. This in turn enhances the congregation's ability to adapt missionally to societal changes, while empowering each person's unique gifting.²⁹²

This raises the question that perhaps if local congregations were actually led by a unified fivefold ministry team would there be fewer burned-out pastors because they are able to function fully in their strengths, while the apostles, prophets, and evangelists engage in those elements of leadership that they are best suited for to provide a balanced equipping of the parishioners to maturity? The political, racial, and overall societal discord during this time, raises the issue of the Christian community's viable impact. If the Christian voice is an important and credible voice in the community, why does it not seem to be seen or heard as a unifying, inclusive, healing presence of hope? Could this be why Newbigin, and Hirsch encourage the church to be unified in the character and culture of Jesus, as much in the community as a whole, as in the fellowship of believers?

Tensions

The primary tension is around the mindset defining the identity, purpose, and practices of what is known as church, and those individuals most likely charged with this definition. The US Church has become a place primarily of gathers and caretakers. Although the leadership of these same churches realize the need for the congregation to be unified with a missional purpose, few in leadership have the time or energy to address the separation. Newbigin saw this "idea of a permanent dichotomy of the Church and Mission as two separate" thoughts as being "totally foreign to the New Testament and destructive of any growth."²⁹³ Hirsch agrees that this struggle to be missional within the local and global context has resulted in intentional or unintentional disregard of God's design and purpose of the church.²⁹⁴ This challenge manifests itself in all aspects of church leadership: including denominational, organizational, in the local fellowship leaders, and the congregation. This point is concretely stated by Hirsch, "what we tend to lack is a theoretical framework, an integrative vision, which makes sense of the knotty crisis we face and gives us a viable way to reconceive and redesign the church going forward."²⁹⁵

One of the most challenging aspects of this type of leadership change, is inviting apostles, prophets, and evangelists to assist with equipping congregations, due to what can be perceived as radical,

²⁹¹ Michael Goheen, *The Church and Its Vocation: Lesslie Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology*, 74.

²⁹² Hirsch, Catchim, and Breen, *The Permanent Revolution*, 1583.

²⁹³ Newbigin, "Relations of Older and Younger Churches in India: Uncensored Remarks," 1.

²⁹⁴ Hirsch, Catchim, and Breen, *The Permanent Revolution*, 960.

²⁹⁵ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 346.

and disruptive to the nurturing environment by the pastoral leader. Creating a transitional plan that honors a unified five-fold ministry team that engages the congregation in such a way that they are empowered in missional partnership needs further exploration.

Finally, the congregants' current mindset necessitates a major shift from the church as the place where they are fed and their needs are met, to an integrated, empowered, community of disciples who are transforming the world where they live. This requires them relinquishing the comfort and safety of having the professional spiritual leader direct their relationship with God, in exchange for a life of adventure, risk, defeat and victory as they partner with God Himself.

Gaps

Hirsch and Newbigin refer to historical missteps of the church that have not been sufficiently investigated here. Newbigin talks about the need for a different culture within the church, one of unity and missional engagement, however he does not explain how that might be done. Hirsch on the other hand actually uses the word culture to discuss the impact of the APE on church maturity and missional empowerment of congregants. In this research there are gaps in the nature of this culture, resulting in holes in the transitional implementation from a static system to one that is more fluid, organic, mysterious, and uncertain. The tendency for churches to become "inadvertently...safe" and culturally acceptable, resulting in an "attractional," event-oriented model, as Hirsch suggests.²⁹⁶ What are the specific steps necessary for a congregation to take to become an organically, empowered, missional driven, disciples on the cutting edge of their partnership relationship with their God? Both Newbigin and Hirsch stress the importance of believers being actively engaged in their personal community. This indicates an exploration of research in the secular world of psychology, and the development of a healthy culture.

Conclusion

The overall theme that is woven through all sections of this paper reveals the significance of the individual identity as it blends in unity with others while fulfilling a divine missional purpose. The New Testament provided an example that local congregations and movements have struggled to maintain that same identity and missional purpose. The consideration of contemporary voices has various possibilities for regaining that identity of missional purpose by implementing characteristics of the early church. Particularly insightful is the use of a unified APEST leadership and the empowerment of the congregation. Finally, the role of the Christian community in discipleship and the ramifications for creating a support system for the fulfillment of missional purpose needs further exploration.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 25.

Appendix C—Milestone 3 Design Workshop Report

INTRODUCTION

This paper is an overview of the information gathered from stakeholders within a design workshop and one-on-one interviews. The stakeholders engaged with the NPO stated below to assist in the development of a clearer NPO, root causes, and the necessary steps in the development of three concept pitches. An annotated bibliography provides resources for the implementation of those concepts. At the conclusion of this paper is an appendix of links to the procedures of the design workshop, materials, photographs, and transcripts of the workshop as well as the interviews.

NPO STATEMENT

The integration of identity, community, and mission within the local church setting results in the empowering, developing, releasing, and sustaining of disciples on mission.

NPO SCOPE AND CONSTRAINTS

The scope of this NPO is the local church and how to create an organic means of equipping believers in such a way that they are continually developing personally, spiritually, and engaging in being Christ's representatives on a missional assignment.

NPO CONTEXT

The primary context of this NPO is the local church, its leadership and congregants. However, the desired outcome would have an impact on the local community where each church resides and how the congregation engages in international missions.

ROOT CAUSES

The broad scope of this NPO has revealed four key root causes:

- A lack of clear biblical definitions of the following terms: disciple, identity of individuals and the church, mission, and kingdom culture.
- The need for clear, attainable, and individualized markers of what it means to be a disciple.
- A spirit of scarcity, a lack, or fear of something drives church leadership decisions.
- Church practices create a dependency on the local pastor for spiritual health.

The results of these causes were a type of consumerism or a cycle of church programs and events that are enticing to potential members. While they may attract individuals, they do not produce the transformation of character which reflects the hope of Jesus to society.

The current means of discipleship has created perpetually immature spiritual children. These individuals are unable to hear from God for themselves and to respond obediently to what the Holy Spirit says to them.

THREE BIG IDEAS

- Pastoral professional learning community
- Accountability partners group

- Missionally Engaged Church Survey

DEFINITION OF 'DONE'

The ultimate goal of this NPO is a workable discipleship template that is organic, relational, and individual. This template will have clearly defined goals and concrete markers that each person can meet fluidly within a supportive community, where each individual is known and valued. Resulting in individuals that are partnering with God on daily assignments that are fulfillment of God's mission and their personal growth.

3 CONCEPT PITCHES

Pastoral professional learning community:

- Create a professional learning community of pastors/leaders similar to what is used in education. That would be willing to explore concrete characteristics of disciples and the necessary practices to develop those characteristics.

Audience:

- Pastors and spiritual leaders interested in creating an innovative way of developing mature, reproducing disciples.

NPO areas being met:

- Development of pastoral leadership community as disciples.
 - A diversified input from individuals expressing themselves in their uniqueness to inform local church decision making.
 - Gives leadership an opportunity to experience a discipleship approach that is fluid and individualized to each specific individual's needs.
 - A continuous learning, evaluating, and supportive community.
- The specific focus is the development of a means of empowering, supporting, and releasing parishioners on mission.

Benefits:

- The real time, organic, evolution of ideas and practices for the development of disciples.
- Support system of like-minded people.

Approach:

- A group of 3-5+ spiritual leaders meet bi-monthly.
- They determine the characteristics, behaviors, and benchmarks for maturity.
- Share successes and missteps with the intent of mutual growth.
- Utilize the individual strengths and differences of the group leaders to support the community atmosphere.

How is this novel?

- Within the group of pastors, I am connected with they have no real support system, place to explore other options of doing church, nor do they have authentic accountability partners.

Risk:

- No one will actually commit to the time.
- Participants will not see meaningful change fast enough and quit.
- Participants will be distracted by the tyranny of the urgent.

Assumptions/hypothesis:

- Pastors know their people:
 - The people in their churches are not living like disciples.
 - Are immature.
 - Need to be more missionally engaged in their circle of influence.
 - Will benefit from a life that intersects more with the will of God and his mission.
- God has designed us uniquely different for a purpose:
 - When we work together, we fulfill a piece of that of his larger purpose.
 - Within our various perspectives we have a more complete answer to any issue.

Benchmarks of success:

- An actively meeting a group of pastors.
- Participants will create a list of characteristics & behaviors of a disciple and one who disciples.
- Pastors can document specific growth markers for themselves as they identify markers for their parishioners.

Other approaches:

- Women in Ministry Leadership:
 - A cohort Leadership development model.
- Healthy Spiritual Leadership group:
 - Emotional health based which is focused on specific emotional markers.

The above stated approaches:

- Target a specific group or area.
- Do not allow for flexibility to address membership generated issues outside of the focus area.
- Have a limited emphasis on missional engagement and empowering of congregants.
- These approaches emphasis is primarily with leadership or potential leadership audiences.

Accountability partners group:

- Pilot group of accountability partners who are desiring to be mature and influential in their faith.

Audience:

- Church congregants

NPO areas being met:

- Creating a supportive community of congregants that are maturing in:
 - Personal relationship with Jesus.
 - Uncovering their unique identity and connecting it with God's purposes.
 - Actively applying God's word in their daily life.
 - A safe place to learn and grow.
 - Network to assist in one another's mission with God.

Benefit:

- Congregants:
 - Empowered.
 - Engaged in the work of God within their personal circle of influence.
 - Feel important to the group and God's work.
- Pastors
 - The church is making a difference in the societal community.
 - They feel more supported by mature believers in their churches.
- Researcher:
 - Demonstrates that parishioners:
 - Are an untapped resource.
 - Are capable of hearing and responding to the Holy Spirit.

Approach:

- Identify 3-5 five members who desire to grow in their relationship and usefulness to God willing to meet for four sessions.
- Establish a regular meeting time:
 - Once or twice a month
- Focus on discovering the individual uniqueness:
 - Group affirmations of those giftings.
 - Seeking God for how and where He wants to use those gifts.
 - Provide support for one another in the use of their gifts.
 - Emotionally exhibiting care and concern for one another.
 - Spiritually: helping one another to grow in their understanding on how to apply the scripture to their lives.
 - Tangible support for specific needs.

Engagement in building community

- Mutual vulnerability.
- Shared ownership.
- Confidentiality.

- Shared mission.
- Encouragement.

Accountability:

- What is Jesus saying to you about the execution and completion of your individual missions?
 - An environment of non-judgmental evaluation of individual missions
 - What went well? Why?
 - What could have been done differently? Why?
 - What was learned:
- What is Jesus saying to you about yourself:
 - About God and His ways?
 - About Satan and his practices?
 - About the unique gift that He created you to be.
- What is Jesus saying to you about how you can serve your church community?
- What is Jesus saying to you about your societal community?

Risks:

- It will become a Bible Study where they focus on intellectual knowledge without practically applying it.
- It will become ingrown.
- It will become legalistic.
- The same people may become overused.

Assumptions:

- Christians:
 - Want to be useful to God.
 - Want to be more like Jesus.
 - Do not know that their uniqueness is good and created for a godly purpose.
 - Are called to impact the cultures in which they live.
 - Are empowered when they partner with God and each other.
 - Grow best in meaningfully connected community

Benchmarks of success:

- People want to join or create another group.
- Participants will begin to share their real life stories of being used by God through everyday actions.
- Preferably, everyone in the group is sharing something every meeting.
- The congregation has a good reputation in the societal community.

Other Approaches:

- Operation Solid Lives (OSL).
 - An intensive personal Bible Study program to develop spiritual practices.
- "Doing What Jesus Did" by John and Sonja Decker Groups.
 - Also, an intensive development of spiritual practices.
 - Practical intensive application of ministry practices weekly.
 - Leading people to Jesus.
 - Praying for the sick.

- Praying for people to receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

These approaches are specific programs with unique areas of focus:

- They do not allow for the individual to develop within their unique giftings and according to the Lord's prompting.

Missionally Engaged Church Survey:

- A tool to assess a congregation's maturity spiritually in terms of individuals that are:
 - Congregants are responsible for their own spiritual growth.
- Congregants can:
 - Hear the voice of God and respond in actions that fit their identity:
 - Know and recognize personal growth areas.
 - Reach individuals in their circle of influence for Jesus.
 - Engage in solid spiritual practices.
- Every believer has a story of God's work in their lives to share.

Audience:

The local leadership will use this to determine where to begin increasing their parishioners' maturation as Christians

This tool would provide a baseline of information to evaluate the effectiveness of this NPO. It also assists in determining the starting points for this more organic approach to discipleship

Benefit:

- Pastors and Researchers:
 - Measurable data.
 - Identify concrete areas to focus on.
 - Could be used as a post assessment to evaluate progress.

Approaches:

- Determine a list of Biblical characteristics of disciples:
 - Which matches specific behaviors.
 - Solicit stakeholder's input.
- Determine a list of church practices that:
 - Develop those characteristics and behaviors of disciples.
 - Discourage those characteristics and behaviors of disciples from developing.
 - Determine a list of characteristics and behaviors of a healthy sacrificial community.
 - Promote a healthy sacrificial community.
 - Discourage healthy sacrificial community.
- Explore the behaviors and practices that:
 - Develop individual missional purpose.
 - Are counterproductive to individual missional engagement.

Risks:

- Critical areas may be missed.
- It can become a measure of success instead of a learning tool.

- There is no real change in the church members' lives.

Assumptions/hypotheses:

- That there is no such tool available.
- That church leadership is open to learning and evaluating the effectiveness of their church in:
 - Congregants' individuality.
 - Interpersonal community health.
 - Engagement in releasing their parishioners on mission.

Benchmarks of success:

- Lists of:
 - Biblical characteristics and behaviors of disciples.
 - Church practices that encourage or discourage:
 - Growth of biblical disciples.
 - Sacrificial meaningful community.
 - Missional engagement of parishioners.
- Other Approaches:
 - I am currently not aware of any other assessments of this kind.

DESIGN WORKSHOP STAKEHOLDERS

My workshop was missing individuals that I had hoped would bring to light aspects of discipleship from the perspective of the para-church organizations where they serve. I hope to get their input at a later date.

- African American male, in his sixties. He currently works bi-vocationally as at Microsoft and as a pastoral care pastor for online participants.
- Caucasian female, in her sixties. She is actively involved in the leadership of the local Rotary Club and is an Associate Pastor.
- Caucasian male, in his late sixties. He is a retired pastor and church planter.
- Caucasian female in her fifties. She serves as a first responder chaplain.
- Caucasian female, in her thirties. She has served as a youth leader.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

- Caucasian female, in her fifties. She serves as a denominational evangelist.
- Iranian Immigrant, in his sixties. He serves as a pastor/mission outreach to the Muslim world.
- Caucasian female, in her fifties. She serves as a house church pastor.
- Caucasian female, in her twenties. She serves as a support pastor of a local church.
- Hispanic female, in her twenties. National Guard person.
- Asian American female, in her sixties. Founding pastor of a street church.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Borba, Michele, Ed.D. *Esteem Builders: A K-8 Self-Esteem Curriculum for Improving Student Achievement, Behavior and School Climate*. Second. Torrance, CA: Jalmar Press, 2003. Michele Borba's *Esteem Builders* is a comprehensive curriculum of activities that systematically addresses five key foundations for empowering students in an academic environment. Borba uses educational theory, and psychological principles to produce the optimal growth in young people in Security, Selfhood, Affiliation, Mission, and Competency. These five foundations correspond with the focus of this NPO. Although the activities may be juvenile for adults, they could be adapted to provide a starting point to know oneself, others in the group, creating a healthy environment for change, encouraging mission, and learning from those experiences. She also highlights the importance of Security. I have not specifically addressed Security, or boundaries in this NPO but it may need to be.

Coloroso, Barbara. *Kids Are Worth It! Giving Your Child the Gift of Inner Discipline*. Rev. ed., 1st Quill Harper Resource paperback. ed. A Harper Resource Book. New York: Quill, 2002. Barbara Coloroso is an educator, who in this parenting classic outlines specific elements of creating an emotionally healthy environment for children to develop ownership for engagement. This book provides psychological and sociological concepts to assist in the development of leaders who are desiring to empower those under them. The two elements that could provide extremely helpful are her insights on conflict resolution and how to constructively non-threatening corrective feedback.

Kegan, Robert, and Lisa Laskow Lahey. *An Everyone Culture: Becoming a Deliberately Developmental Organization*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Review Press, 2016. Robert Kegan, and Lisa Laskow Lahey in their book *An Everyone Culture*, unearth the pluses and minuses of releasing people of an organization to be more than elements of an organization and to actually embark on a journey of lifelong learning. Their work within the context of business and organizational leadership exposes the benefits and potential setbacks that could potentially arise in this NPO. The pushback that Kegan, and Lahey have encountered from upper leadership in business organizations is similar to what I expect to encounter in the church setting.

Poole, Eve. *Leadersmithing: Revealing the Trade Secrets of Leadership*. London; New York, NY: Bloomsbury Business, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017. Eve Poole's *Leadersmithing* is a business handbook designed to provide concrete goals and objectives in the development of mastery-based apprenticeships. The fluidity of the acquisition of skills and behaviors is similar to the organic concepts I desire to implement in this NPO. Adaptation of the goals and objectives together with the five foundations, adapted activities mentioned in *Esteem Builders* may provide a very dynamic starting point for this NPO. Appendix A

DESIGN WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

I hosted my Design Workshop on November 13, 2021, in person with one stakeholder virtual. The workshop was from 10 am to 2 pm PST. Five ministers from various ministries who participated. One retired pastor and church planter. One youth pastor. One first responder chaplain. One bi-vocational pastor who serves as the virtual presence. One associate pastor and sermon coach. There were three

women and two men. The group reflected the demographics of the area with four Caucasians and one Black stakeholders.

The session opened with prayer, introductions, and an overview of the day's activities. A significant amount of time was spent on refining the NPO, particularly defining what is a disciple and who is doing the discipling. I then led the participants through three brainstorming activities to define the target audience, the value of this type of template to various groups, and the cost benefit to the local congregation. We also discussed what elements would be necessary for a prototype to be transformative. The workshop concluded with prayer.

Working NPO:

IDENTITY, COMMUNITY AND THE INTEGRATION OF MISSION FOR EMPOWERING, DEVELOPING, RELEASING, AND SUSTAINING DISCIPLES ON MISSION

The NPO that emerged:

*IDENTITY, COMMUNITY, AND THE INTEGRATION OF **MISSION WITHIN THE LOCAL CHURCH***
SETTING: FOR THE EMPOWERING, DEVELOPING, RELEASING, AND SUSTAINING OF DISCIPLES ON MISSION.

The conversation that ensued was quite robust and informative. I am attaching three files that highlight that discussion in a bullet point or chart format. The topics covered here are as follows:

- What is a Disciple?
- Empathy Map summary of who will benefit from this NPO and how they will feel if it is successful.
- What will it take to Create a Community of Missionally Engaged Disciples?

The overall theme of our discussions revealed the need for the Christian church as a whole to recalibrate and constructively look at how the behaviors of the leadership encourage and facilitate the development of mature disciples who walk in concert with their God, and His plans or are contrary to those plans.

Activity #1: What is a Disciple:

TABLE 10: WHO IS A DISCIPLE, WHAT ARE THEIR CHARACTERISTICS AND BEHAVIORS.

Is	Does	Has	Wants
Is IN the world but not OF it. Member of the church community New converts	Obedient (<i>to whom</i>) Loves people (<i>Unconditionally?</i>) Willing to learn.	Has a genuine love for his neighbor. An authentic connection with the human experience.	Love their neighbors well. Share the goodness of God.

<p>All who believe. Believes Jesus is Lord Loves Jesus <i>Bold</i> <i>Brave</i> <i>Courageous</i> <i>Person who knows how to commune (comfortable with themselves, & God. Connect on multiple levels in conversation & response) with Jesus.</i> <i>Has an accurate picture of who they are and are not.</i> <i>Creative</i> <i>Authentic</i> <i>Trustworthy</i> <i>Values their own uniqueness & others.</i> <i>Owens their spiritual growth and journey.</i> <i>Understands and behaves as a representative of Jesus.</i></p>	<p>Lives their life in front of others. Willing to go outside their comfort zone to obey Jesus. Emulates the grace of Jesus in daily conversation. Brings glory to God. Becoming more and more like Jesus. Doing What Jesus Did (Concrete examples needed). Promoting Jesus...making Him famous (<i>In what ways?</i>) Recreates themselves in new disciples. Actively in relationship within the community of need. Proclaim Jesus. Heal the sick. Actively interacts with Jesus. Follower of Godly guidance (<i>What determines Godly guidance?</i>) Doer of the Word of God <i>Person who seeks out help to accomplish the tasks God asks them to do.</i> <i>Eagerly assists others in the tasks God has asked them to do.</i></p>	<p>Holy Spirit Filled (Why? And what does this look like...practically?) Integrity Good reputation in the community. Accountability (To whom? What does this accountability look like? Entail?) Has an authentic, growing, changing, story of their journey with Jesus, which connects with others</p>	<p>Seeks the Lord in prayer, scripture, etc. Desires to be used by God for His plans. To partner with the Holy Spirit in another person's life.</p>
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Italicized areas need more attention and clarification. Fewer church words and more concrete characteristics. In the process of working toward 1 Timothy 3:1-13 (see chart on page 1840 of NIV Study Bible).²⁹⁷

²⁹⁷ Richard Sasanow, *The NIV Study Bible/10th Anniversary Edition* (Place of publication not identified: Zondervan, 1995), 1840.

Galatians 6

New questions that arose:

- What behaviors in the “church” are directly developing these characteristics?
- What behaviors in the “church” are counterproductive to the development of Disciples as defined above?

Activity #2: Affinity Map

What will it take to Create a Community of Missionally Engaged Disciples?

SACRIFICE:

- Sacrificial Leadership not just servant leadership (*What would this look like?*)
- Of “church” style or liturgy
- Of self: all individuals who call themselves believers/Christians.
- Of position
- Of property

ACCESS:

- To God (How does one access God? What behaviors, attitudes, etc. are necessary?)
- Prayer, prayer, prayer (What might this type of prayer access look like?)
- To resources
- To instruction by individuals who have a proven ministry in the offices of apostle, prophet, and evangelist, so that they would fully mature. (*Ephesians 4:12-16*)

A Culture:

- Like-minded people that are empowered to accomplish a common goal.
- Authority is delegated (Beyond “paid” leadership).
- Mistakes are allowed.
 - Learning opportunity
 - Messes are encouraged.
 - Assistance is provided to learn from the experience and responsibly manage the consequences of the mistake.
- Humility (That is visibly practiced at all levels)
- Teach on Mission (What would this look like so that it is not just a lecture but practical application to the lives who are hearing? A redefining of what mission is. The implementation of a network of support, resources, feedback, to assist individuals on their journey on mission.)
- OK with being uncomfortable.
- Perseverance
 - In tasks
 - Relationships
 - Development of community
 - Assisting one another in their individual development
- Willing to change.
- People living out their personal purpose in God.

The "Product"

- Wild-Ass idea
- Community with a shepherd who is willing to change & go outside the norm.
 - Someone who is able to demonstrate how to follow.
- A New Ministry Tool
- Clear path and expectations (What might this look like? How do we keep it organic and fluid depending on the individuals, yet replicable?)
- A system to track the results. (Is there an organic way to do this?)

Italicized areas need more attention and clarification.

Activity #:3: Empathy Map x3

Identify the people groups impacted by this type of discipleship.

The group identified four distinct groups that would benefit from this type of discipleship.

- Local pastoral leaders #1.
- Parishioners # 2.
- The community in which the local church exists #3.

TABLE 11: SUMMARY OF EMPATHY MAPS:

Who	Hear	Think	Feel	Do	See	
1	Honesty Encouragement Cuss words Unconventional new Ideas Thank You "I want to do this for God"	What if this doesn't increase "my numbers"? Feels like chaos. Where is everyone? I can't manage all this. I never knew (this person) had these gifts & passions. I have to develop different skills. My old timers aren't going to like this. I'm losing control	Threatened Like a parent watching a child succeed. Frustrated Encouraged Relieved Envy Church making a difference	Redesign-replace "programs." Sink or swim. Equip Fight or Engage Living out the Word of God	See true humility. Piercings & tattoos People coming who don't fit. More gifts exercised. Smokers at the door Growth in people's lives More ministry happening. People changed: in the church & community. True spiritual growth	How do I count these numbers? Nobody is reporting! We haven't done it this way before. What makes you feel alive? How do I Affirm the callings of people in the congregation?
2	What I See: They care about Me Who I am, not what I can do to accomplish their goals. I have value. I CAN hear God's voice.	Being a missionary is normal. This is more work than before. I have a purpose. God needs me. I belong	Stability I matter. Feel great about their purpose. I feel like I matter to our community. Important I have not been doing	I am bearing fruit that will last. Service in the community. Reproducing Responding to the needs as they arise. Acts of service.	Kindness toward others. Fruit in me and others. People actively serving. Authentic faith	I am a missionary. Gentle/firm Speech I can empower others to find their purpose/mission.

	God wants to inspire me to act. Difficult truth		Christianity right. My cause (personal assignment) is greater than my church's cause ("programs")	I am impacting my world. I am growing in Christ		I have a voice
3	Normal language No judgment Words of inclusion	I want to be a part of this. Why are they doing those things? That church is making a difference. What I thought about Christians is wrong. They are not like I thought they were. I am SEEN. Someone cares about me.	Valued Loved Loved I matter. Accepted I am valued. They care about us. Curiosity	Ask questions. Accept an invitation to learn more. Expanding creativity towards those in need.	Someone sees my pain. Empathy Compassion Diversity of needs being met. Authentic faith being lived out.	Can/will you help me? Let's work with those people to get something done. Words of inclusion. Maybe they will help me do that thing God is calling me to do or meet that need in the community?

DESIGN WORKSHOP DOCUMENTATION

Activity #1: What is a Disciple?

FIGURE 21: DEFINITION OF DISCIPLES

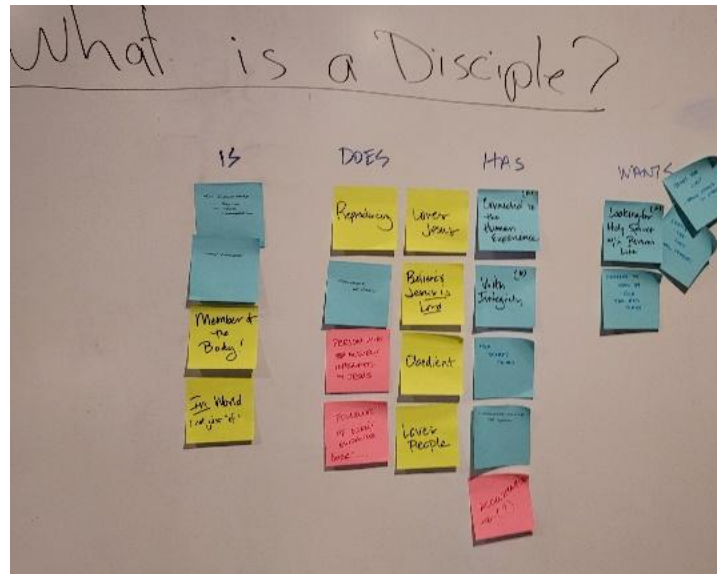
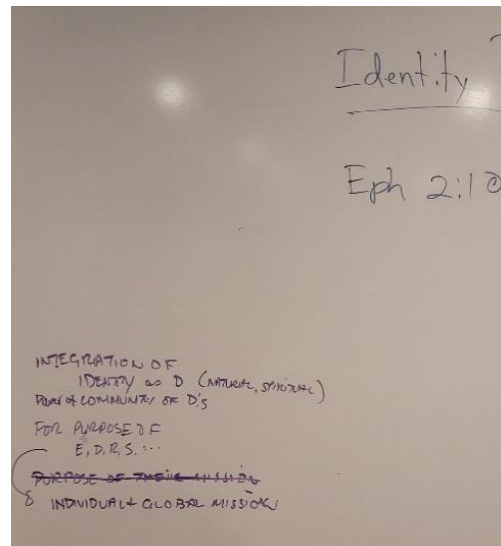


FIGURE 22: DEFINITION OF MISSION:



FIGURE 23: INTEGRATION OF IDENTITY:



Activity #2: Affinity Map

FIGURE 24: WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO CREATE A COMMUNITY OF MISSIONALLY ENGAGED DISCIPLES?



Post Workshop Documentation:

ONE-PAGE POST-WORKSHOP MESSAGE TO STAKEHOLDERS

Dear Friends,

Thank you so very much for your participation in The Design Workshop and the follow-up interviews for my doctoral research. Your investment of time and energy has provided a volume of information that I will be sorting through for over the next few weeks. I am including those of you who were unable to participate at this time, so that you can add your input.

Our discussion began with determining if the title of my NPO (Need, Problem, Opportunity) accurately reflected the focus of the research. Although the ideas and concepts around the NPO resonated with the group; there was a need for further clarification and refinement. The NPO we started with was *IDENTITY, COMMUNITY AND THE INTEGRATION OF MISSION FOR EMPOWERING, DEVELOPING, RELEASING, AND SUSTAINING DISCIPLES ON MISSION*. Your input has led to the following revision: *IDENTITY, COMMUNITY, AND THE INTEGRATION OF MISSION **WITHIN THE LOCAL CHURCH SETTING**: FOR THE EMPOWERING, DEVELOPING, RELEASING, AND SUSTAINING OF DISCIPLES ON MISSION*.

The conversation that ensued was quite robust and informative. I am attaching three files that highlight that discussion in a bullet point or chart format. The topics covered here are as follows:

- What is a Disciple?
- Empathy Map summary of who will benefit from this NPO and how they will feel if it is successful.
- What will it take to Create a Community of Missionally Engaged Disciples?

You will note that I have added some notes in red. These reflect my questions moving forward. I would appreciate any other input you might have.

The overall theme of our discussions revealed the need for the Christian church as a whole to recalibrate and constructively look at how the behaviors of the leadership encourage and facilitate the development of mature disciples who walk in concert with their God, and His plans or are contrary to those plans.

I want to wish all a very Merry Christmas and a new year full of the King's presence and peace.

Denise

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS DOCUMENTATION

Interview 1

Iranian Immigrant, in his sixties.

He serves as a pastor/mission outreach to the Muslim world.

More than 30 years in ministry

Zoom interview conducted on November 16, 2021

Take away:

- The local church has delegated the responsibility to create disciples to coaches, spiritual directors, and counselors.
- Local pastors are too concerned about appeasing parishioners, for fear of losing them to a congregation that provides better services.
- Lack of clarity between a disciple who wants to be like Jesus and a convert who is interested in the benefits of the Kingdom.
- The need to develop practical practice in sitting at the feet of Jesus in adoration and silence. Such skills as:
 - Lectio Divina
 - The three types of silence: words, thoughts, and prayers.
- Mission comes out of our being one with our Beloved Jesus.
- We must struggle with the Holy Spirit for real change and oneness with God.

Interview 2

Caucasian female, in her fifties.

She serves as a house church pastor.

More than 20 years in ministry

Zoom interview conducted on November 16, 2021

Take away:

- Intergenerational mentoring is a valuable asset to building trust and community.
 - Reverse mentoring: Older members learning from younger.
 - This must be an intentional way of relational interaction.
- The culture is based on the gifts within members that the Holy Spirit brings to the community.
- The Holy Spirit wants to be the conductor of a full orchestra of many parts.
- It is important to create opportunities for people to function in their strengths.
- The measurement of success is based on individuals' obedience to Jesus.
 - Give individuals opportunities to choose to set SMART personal growth goals.
- Individuals need to submit both strengths and weaknesses to the Holy Spirit for refinement.
- It is essential to honor a person's free will.
 - They are responsible for their choices and consequences.
 - Everyone needs to be consciously aware of the effects of their behavior on others within the community.
- The need for mutual non-age bias respect.

Interview 3

Caucasian female, in her fifties.

She serves as a denominational evangelist.

More than 30 years of experience

Zoom interview conducted on November 16, 2021

Take away:

- It is important to help people to discern the voice of God and what he is saying and doing.
- Ministry is done on the way of life. It flows out of the abundance of hope, love, and grace a person has received in the presence of God.
- The practice of fasting creates an expectancy for the message of God.
- A Kingdom community is one that lives out being the family of God.

Interview 4

Hispanic female, in her twenties.

National Guard officer.

Bible school graduate and completed a discipleship school.

Zoom interview conducted on November 16, 2021

Take away:

- Mentoring was an important part of her spiritual development.
 - Mentor developed a trust relationship-relational equity.
 - Exhibited the character qualities.
 - Reflect to the mentee of those problematic areas.
 - Are invested in walking through those areas.
- Missional prayer is important in a non-receptive environment to the Gospel.
- Important to teach how to hear the voice of God.

Appendix D—Milestone 4 Design Research Report

INTRODUCTION

This prototype design demonstrates that a Holy Spirit led disciple development cohort is not only feasible, but it creates enthusiasm with the stakeholders. Although these cohorts did not manage to identify specific steps necessary for mature disciples, they did provide clarification of philosophy, definition, process, culture, and group framework. The consistency between philosophy or beliefs and participation in activities or practices created an atmosphere of empowerment.

In the next phase of development, it will be important to have a more defined framework for the sessions. The groups would benefit from a multi-generational configuration, shared responsibility of facilitation of the various sessions, and the practice of various skills within the group over a number of sessions. The organic nature requires the structure to be rooted in the Word of God, by means of empowering individuals to substantiate their growth by scripture with the possibility of input and context added by the group. There are some strong indicators that this discipleship process could empower church members and clergy to be more fully engaged disciples, in their church family, to see their neighbor with the love of Jesus, and to actually be an ambassador of the Kingdom of God.

PROTOTYPE SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

NPO STATEMENT

The integration of identity, community, and mission within local church practices which empowers, develops, releases, and sustains disciples on mission.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Is it possible to create a small group environment which is creative in its nature, to release congregants in their God given unique identity to creativity partner with the Holy Spirit in their personal growth and God designed mission?

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC

Group A: The composition consisted of three local pastors, two online pastors, one parachurch leader, one overseas field worker, and two first responder chaplains. Five of the participants are female and four males, ranging in ages from thirty-eight to sixty-nine. All participants are Caucasian except for one Black (the participants preferred identification word).

Group B: The composition initially consisted of seven lay people from a local fellowship in Port Angeles, Washington. Two individuals dropped out due to time constraints but are interested in participating in the future. The five remaining individuals consisted of four females and one male, ranging in age from twenty-nine to forty-two. The ethnic mix consists of three Caucasians, one Black, and one Native American. Two of the women are currently stay at home moms, with one who homeschools her children. One woman is an educator and the other one is in the military. The one male did not indicate his profession at this time.

PROTOTYPE DESCRIPTION

The two prototype disciple cohorts participated in the same four sessions process. Both groups decided to meet in person.

Group A: had a field worker who Zoomed in each session from Romania. The chaplains had conflicts resulting in them joining Zoom. They probably would have been able to join us if they were closer. This group met in a private home that was halfway between the two participants living the furthest away.

Group B: met in person at the church on Sunday after service. The third session two people participated in Zoom because of illness in the family.

The goal of the first session was that the stakeholders would identify attributes of a disciple, and the supportive behavioral steps to master a group selected attributes, through the completion of the following activities: Context Map, Dot vote, Atomize.

Sessions two and three group members participated in the of the following activities to enhance the knowledge and understanding of themselves, each other and promote engagement in the community: The activities used during this session included: Worship, Personal Coat of Arms, Personal brainstorm of positive characteristics, Five Finger Prayer, Prayer Partners, Journal.

- Open ended and reflective questions, were used to empower, encourage, and release one another in their God designed missional adventure (Ephesians 2:10), which is in alignment with their gifts, talents, and current maturity level.
- "If this song is true, what does it say about you, others, God?"
- "What action is Jesus saying to you as a result?"
- "Can you find a scripture reference for that?"
- "How can we support you in this action?"

Participants in Groups A and B in the fourth session evaluated their experience. This session included the following:

- Empathy Map
- Word Cache to compare with the Context Map and Atomize flip charts from the first session (This activity was cut due to time constraints).
- An individual survey
- Action Planning (The Storyboard activity was used to achieve a direction).

ASSESSMENT BENCHMARKS

Participants:

- Identify and spontaneously verbalize their own strengths and those of other group members.
- Identify and respond to the Holy Spirit

Individual growth points

In meeting a need or reaching out to someone from the group

In responding to someone in the community in which they live

Are more aware of the world in which they live and verbalize these new observation.

Follow-up questions as to the reason the Holy Spirit revealed this situation.

Have a clearer understanding of how the Holy Spirit speaks to them.

Greater confidence in being visibly obedient.

Reduction of fear when sharing what Jesus is doing in their lives.

Expect

To hear from God

To receive correction by the Holy Spirit

Supported by cohort

Receive a personal assignment from God daily

LEARNING SUMMARY

What worked?

The prototype group sessions:

Authentic bonding:

- Group A seldom wanted to disperse and their conversation within the sessions were so lively it was difficult to keep them on task.
- Group B did a better job of engaging with the prayer partner idea which has continued to be a point of encouragement.

Missional Engagement:

- The activities got them to be more intentional about engaging with their communities without seeing the people as projects or putting pressure on them to close the deal on a salvation response.

Personal reflection and storytelling:

- The activities caused there to be more focused attention on what the Holy Spirit was doing in their lives, and community, while challenging a specific response to the Holy Spirit's promptings.

The evaluation session:

- The storyboard was very insightful, especially in that all three groups provide a different analysis of how to move forward, which created a more complete image.

What could be improved?

- The first session that explored the attributes of a disciple and the steps to develop those characteristics did not produce the desired results. The characteristics were too abstract, and participants were unable to identify progressive steps to the desired goal. It is possible that the activities I chose were not a good fit. It would have been a better use of the participants time to have another session participating in the activities.
- The two sessions of fellowship were too crammed. It would have been better to do less and have more sessions. If we had more time practice the activities in the group multiple times.

The aspects that were the most significant to participants were:

- Intentional missional connection
- Building trust
- Recognition of their personal role in the community

Relationships:

- Within the group
- Means for forming groups
- Including others

Visuals and multi-dimensional interaction

- Authenticity
- Vulnerability
- Honesty
- Humility
- Unity of purpose

THE MOST IMPORTANT DISCOVERY

The most important discovery was the overwhelming significance of relational investment and the impact it plays in people's participation, involvement, investment, engagement, and sense of safety

in the group. This is coupled with the need for there to be a culture of home where safety, vulnerability, meaningful practice, and identity can be nurtured and developed. The final insight is an expansion of the home concept, in that true families are multi-generational and provide the best opportunity for meaningful learning of skills, stories, and connection to shared history.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH ESSAY ON THE EMERGING SOLUTION

This prototype has emerged from my literature research in this program and my experiences as foreign missionary, in connection with the identifying gaps between expressed ideals of church leadership and parishioner mature, missional, engagement. This disconnects between beliefs and meaningful practices contributes to low participation and inactivity within the local church setting, as well as the mission field. The practices implemented in this prototype provided an opportunity to learn new ways for parishioners to hear the voice of God (John 10:4) for themselves and engage in a missional activity that was unique to the individual and what they heard Jesus say to them. These activities provided a lab type experience for the Holy Spirit to use each persons' wide variety of skills and giftings, breaking them free from the limitations seen in the lecture format of a Sunday morning service. When individuals are able to apply learning in ways which make sense to who they are and how they relate to the world, that learning becomes transformative. It is this lab type format within the context of home, family, and relational interaction that seems to be the key to this prototype.

Culture of Home

If people are going to step into the vulnerable arena of change and personal growth, they need to be in a healthy home environment. That home culture begins with the establishment of stability through clearly defined expectations and procedures, which communicate "consistency, firmness, and fairness as well as the calm" and peace needed for individuals to "flesh out their own sense" of their identity. Individuals overcome their inhibitions and courageously take on the risky unknown of new relationships, personal continuous character growth and sharing their faith with others because of the supportive family within their cohort. The prototypes experienced great excitement and investment in accepting new risks because they were in control of their involvement. The individualization of the prototype opens up the possibility for it to be appropriate of children that are able to make choices.

Relational Equity

Relational Equity is the currency of all meaningful interpersonal exchange. Without such investment we become victims of "control tactics, positive or negative," whose "objective (is) to compel or prevent actions and coerce" others into acceptable behavior. It is the essence of a godly home which builds bonds of affiliations through the sharing of stories within an atmosphere of mutual respect, support, and encouragement. It is this atmosphere that creates a long-lasting ownership of the goals and purposes of the family.

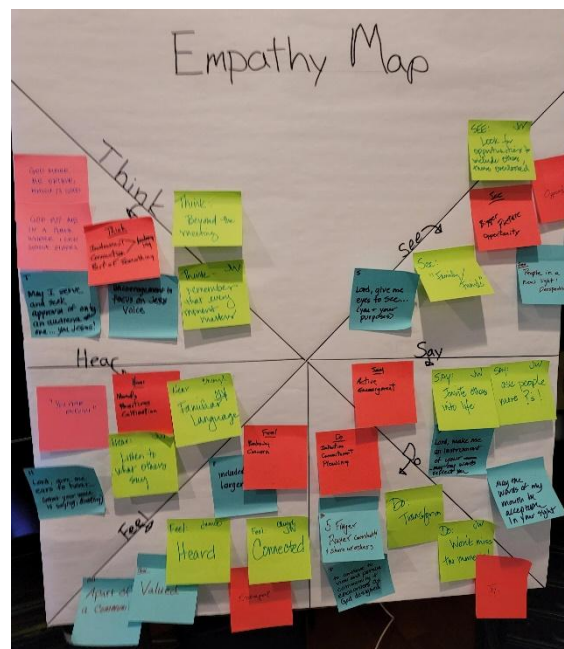
SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

The prototype cohorts utilized a few creative spiritual practices that challenged and encouraged the participants, but to develop a wider range of growth there is a need for more input. I will be looking into the following books: *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* by Richard Foster, and *Just This, and Falling UpWard* by Richard Rohr.

MVP (MOST VIABLE PROTOTYPE)

Based on what I learned from the literature and the execution of the prototypes the most viable option is a four to five session discipleship cohort within the local church setting. I am aware that my skill set as a result of my counseling background will need to be addressed moving forward. Particularly, since most pastors and lay facilitators are unlikely to have those skills, making it difficult to duplicate in other settings.

The church base prototype group created so much enthusiasm that it will be feasible to create a multi-generational group. The pastors of this fellowship were participants in the spiritual leaders' group and are anxious to assist in any way possible in the next phase. This helps in dealing with babysitting issues for little ones, should I choose not to include the smallest children. Most importantly, now that I have been attending this congregation regularly, and they have had numerous opportunities to get to know me, there is the much needed relational investment.



Storyboard: Disciples/Leaders Do/Are:

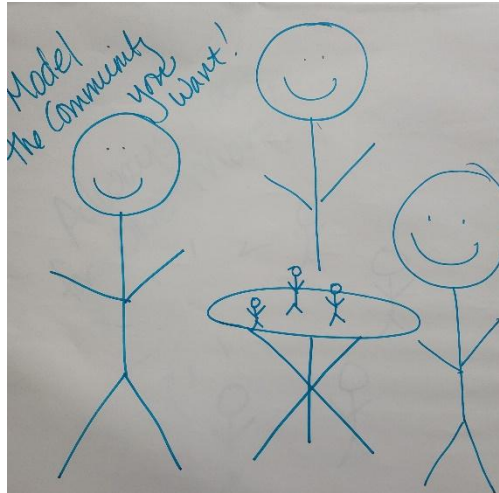


FIGURE 32: MODEL THE COMMUNITY THEY WANT

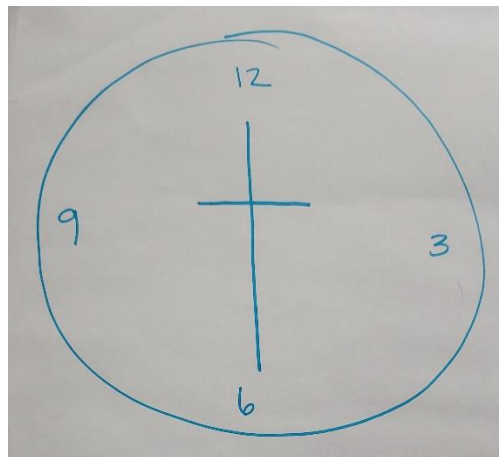


FIGURE 33: THEY HAVE TIME

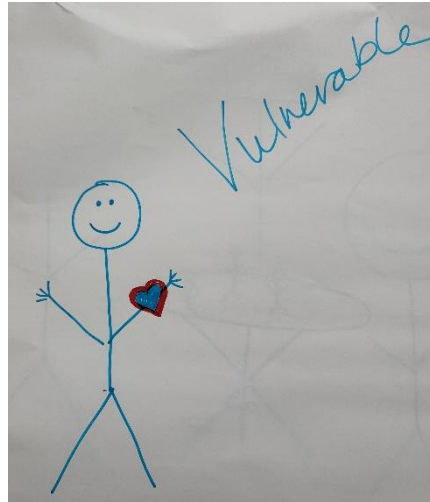


FIGURE 34: THEY ARE VULNERABLE



FIGURE 35: THEY DO LIFE TOGETHER WITH THOSE THEY DISCIPLE

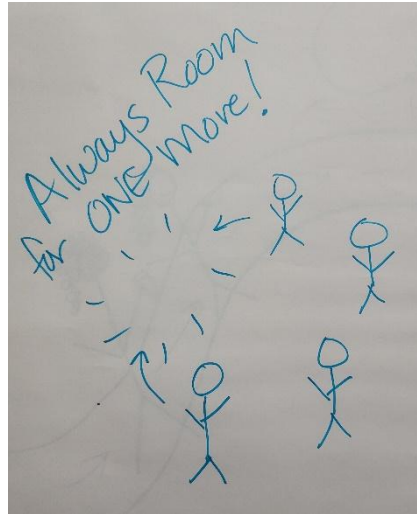


FIGURE 36: THERE IS ALWAYS ROOM FOR ONE MORE

FIGURE 37: GROUP A: SURVEY

Spring 2022 Prototype Group A Survey

The Integration of Identity, Community, and Mission Within the Local Church
Practices Which Empowers, Develops, Releases, and Sustains Disciples on Mission

Sex _____ Age _____ Ethnicity _____

1. To what degree did our sessions provide an environment for the development and sharing of personal identity:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

2. To what degree did our sessions provide an environment for the development and sharing of mission or purpose:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

3. To what degree did our sessions provide an environment for the development and sharing in a meaningful community:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

4. To what degree did our sessions provide an environment for the development and sharing of acquisition, application, and internalization of new learning:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

5. To what degree did our sessions provide an environment for the development and opportunity of sharing your journey with Jesus:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

6. To what degree did our sessions provide an environment for the development and sharing of intentionality of missional engagement:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

Group A: Survey page 2

7. How important or valuable was it to have an active missionary in the group:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

8. To what degree did the format of our sessions provide an environment for the development of meaningful & personal practices:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

9. Did having people Zoom in, positively impacted the of building connection and meaningful bonds:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

10. As a participant, how likely would a group similar to this meet your needs for support, fellowship, and accountability:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

11. Please list any elements that would be helpful to build a meaningful community of growth for you:

12. What were the most meaningful elements our sessions together?

13. Anything else you think is important for me to know:

FIGURE 40: WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DEVELOP A DISCIPLE?

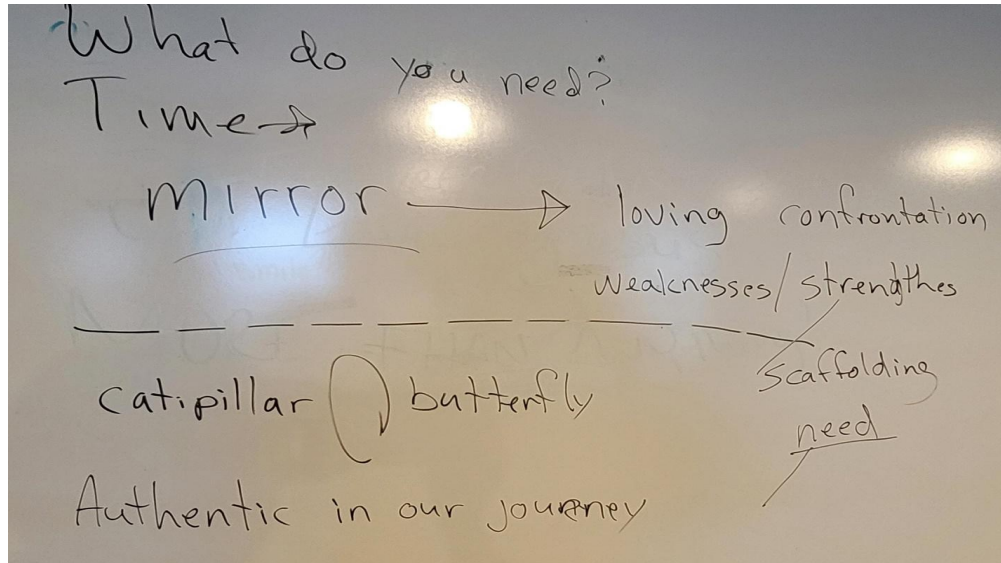


FIGURE 41: ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY

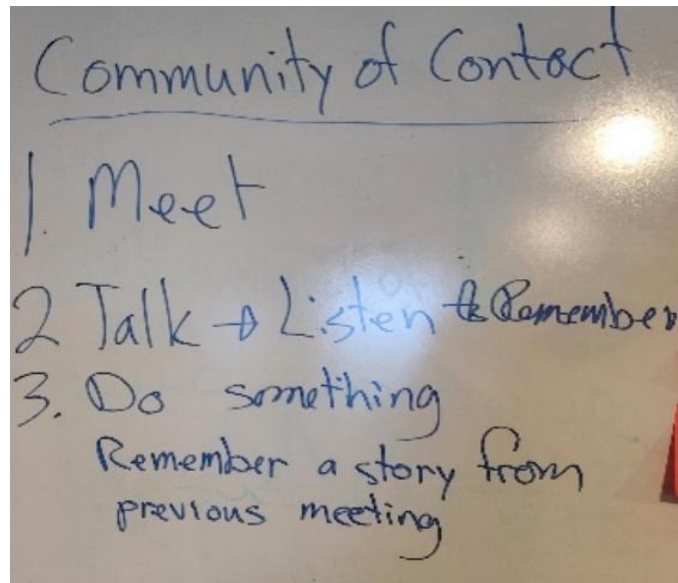


FIGURE 42: EMPATHY MAP FOR A DISCIPLE:



Storyboard

FIGURE 43: STORYBOARD: IDENTIFY ONE ANOTHER'S GIFTS

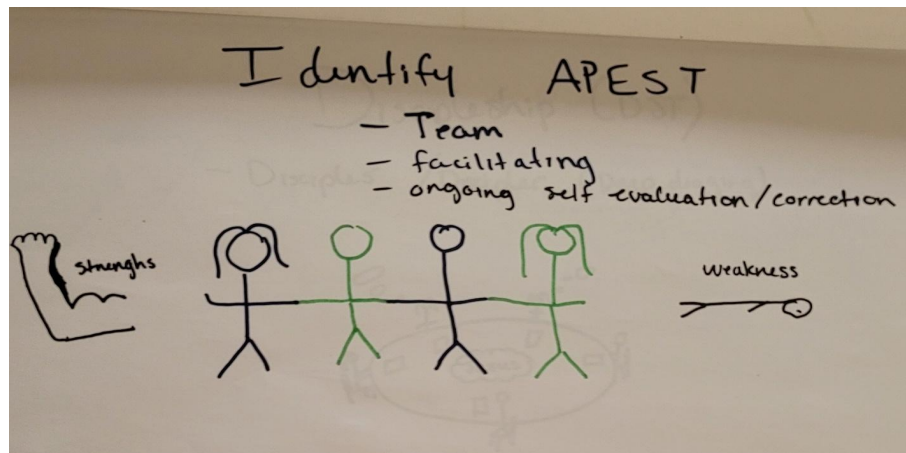


FIGURE 44: DISCIPLES/DISCIPLERS DO DEEP DIGGING

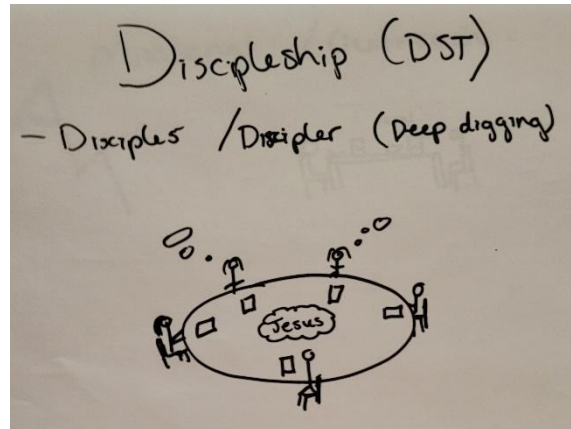


FIGURE 45: A DISCIPLESHIP COMMUNITY IS:



FIGURE 46: GROUP B: SURVEY

Spring 2022 Prototype Group B Survey

The Integration of Identity, Community, and Mission Within the Local Church
Practices Which Empowers, Develops, Releases, and Sustains Disciples on Mission

Sex _____ Age _____ Ethnicity _____

1. To what degree did our sessions provide an environment for the development and sharing of personal identity:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

2. To what degree did our sessions provide an environment for the development and sharing of mission or purpose:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

3. To what degree did our sessions provide an environment for the development and sharing in a meaningful community:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

4. To what degree did our sessions provide an environment for the development and sharing of acquisition, application, and internalization of new learning:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

5. To what degree did our sessions provide an environment for the development and opportunity of sharing your journey with Jesus:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

6. To what degree did our sessions provide an environment for the development and sharing of intentionality of missional engagement:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

Group

B:

Survey

page

2

7. How important or valuable was it to have an active missionary in the group:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

8. To what degree did the format of our sessions provide an environment for the development of meaningful & personal practices:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

9. Did having people Zoom in, positively impacted the of building connection and meaningful bonds:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

10. As a participant, how likely would a group similar to this meet your needs for support, fellowship, and accountability:

Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
1	2	3	4	5

11. Please list any elements that would be helpful to build a meaningful community of growth for you:

12. What were the most meaningful elements our sessions together?

13. Anything else you think is important for me to know:

PowerPoint Slides:

FIGURE 47: NPO

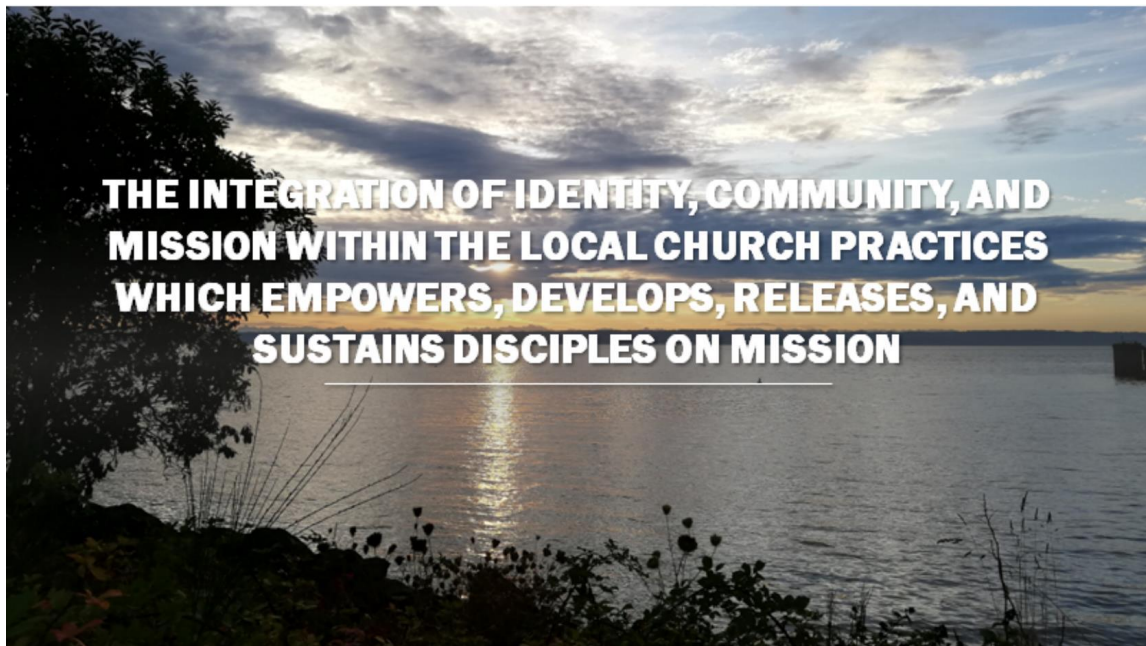


FIGURE 48: INTRODUCE YOURSELF SHIELD:

MAKING MY MARK-HERITAGE



- Flip to the back - 60 second positive
- What have you learned about yourself, community, purpose, and boundaries?
- How can we support you in your growth areas?
- What is 1 thing Jesus is challenging you to do differently?

FIGURE 49: FIVE FINGERS PRAYER

FIVE FINGERS PRAYER

FOCUS

1. **FATHER'S LOVE**
2. **OPPOSE SATAN'S INFLUENCE**
3. **CONVICTION & REPENTENCE – HOLY SPIRIT**
4. **USE LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES TO POINT TO JESUS**
5. **(YOUR) SERVANT IS AVAILABLE**

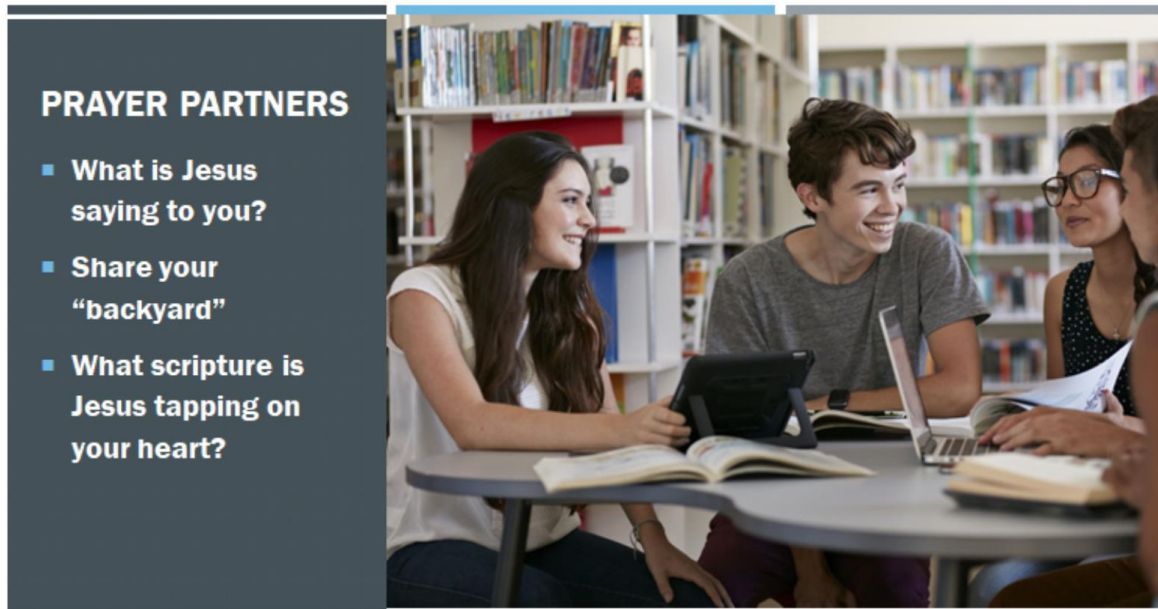
FIGURE 50: WHO IS IN YOUR BACKYARD?

BACKYARD



- "Territory" Jesus has entrusted to you
- Draw a shape that reflect the places you find yourself regularly
- People who are there or wander in & out like a deer
- Pray:
 - Take the territory for the Kingdom
 - For open eyes
 - Heart of compassion for those the Lord brings into your yard
 - Ask Jesus to reveal Himself to you & those you meet
 - Where is Jesus already working & how can you join Him in it?
- Remember:
 - Jesus isn't interested in "Good Ideas" but H.S. inspired opportunities
 - People are not projects, or spiritual goals
 - They ARE God's BELOVED, WORTHY of our time & attention
- What did Jesus reveal to you? How did he communicate it? What scripture confirms the lesson? What scripture is Jesus challenging you to memorize?

FIGURE 51: FIVE FINGERS PRAYER: PRAYER PARTNERS



Appendix E—Project Appendix Documentation

Observations from the four sessions

Session 1:

Observations:

Unanticipated Events:

- The loss of a confirmed meeting space.
 - Due to a church activity postponed from the previous week because of illness.
 - There was no wall space for discussion posters.
 - No white board to write discussion responses on.
 - Two participants were committed to the rescheduled activity.
 - One drop-in participant.
 - Their ride was involved in other activities.
 - This person preferred to do our activities.
- A family of six was absent due to illness.
 - A make-up session was scheduled at their home.

Session 2:

Observations:

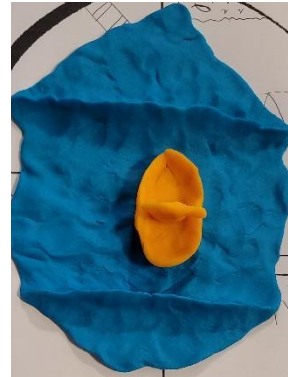
Unanticipated Events:

- How much time it took to get those who had been absent caught up.
- Three different individuals were absent.
- The discovery just shows how many adults in this group lack confidence in their reading and writing abilities.

Photos:

Artistic Expression: Clay

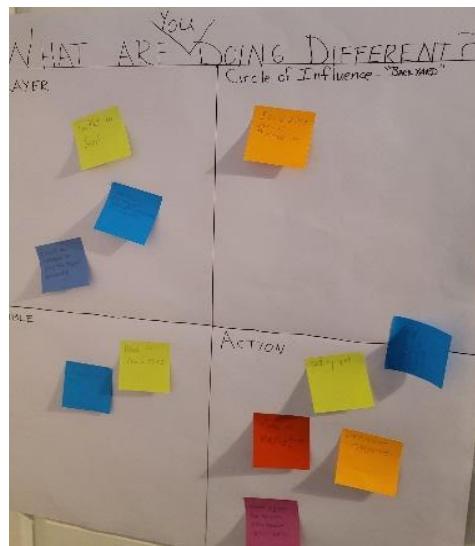
FIGURE 52: HOW GOD SEES ME:



Response Posters:

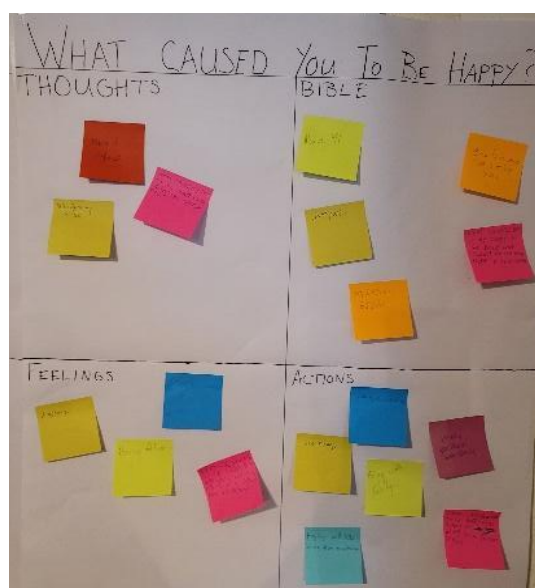
What are you doing differently?

FIGURE 53: WHAT ARE DOING DIFFERENTLY?



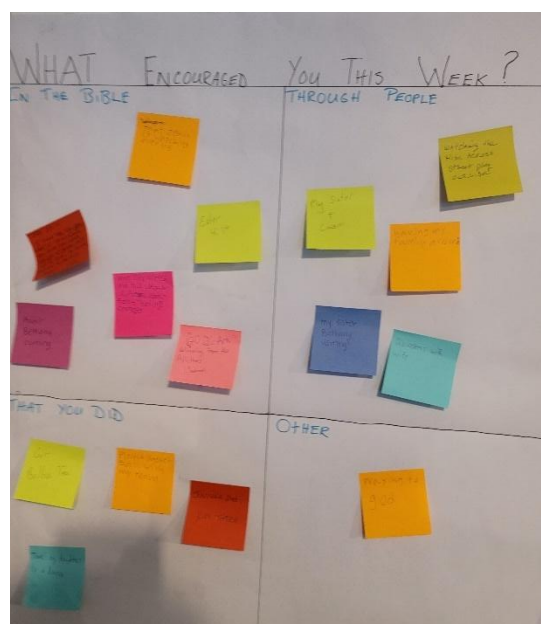
What caused you to be happy?

FIGURE 54: WHAT CAUSED YOU TO BE HAPPY?



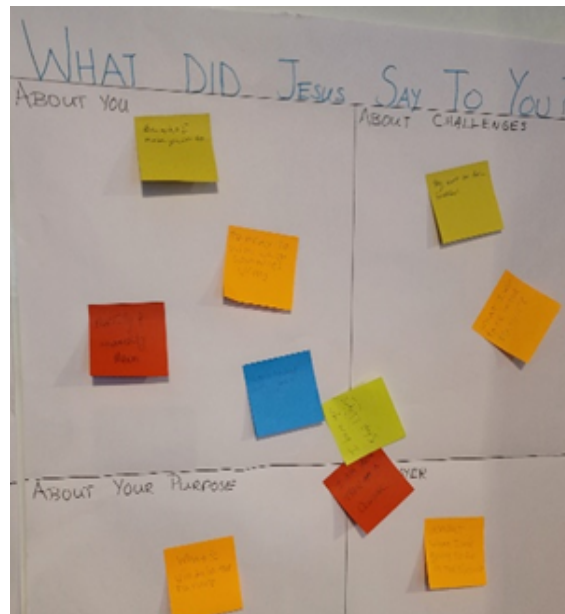
What encouraged you this week?

FIGURE 55: WHAT ENCOURAGED YOU THIS WEEK?



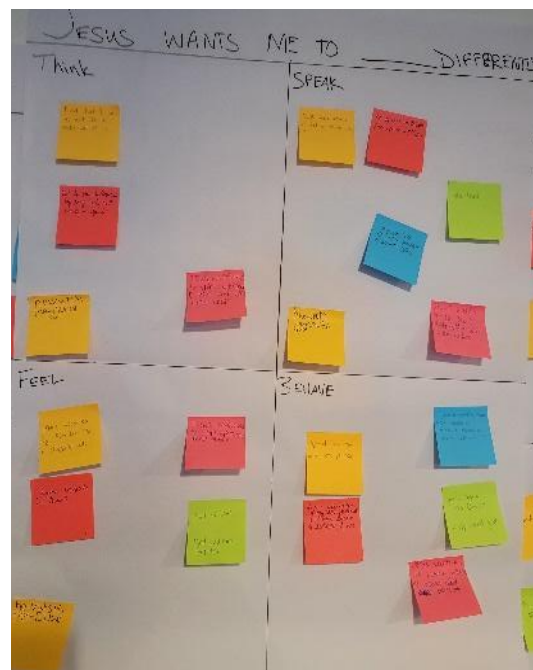
What did Jesus say to you?

FIGURE 56: WHAT DID JESUS SAY TO YOU?



Jesus wants me to ____ differently.

FIGURE 57: JESUS WANTS ME TO _____ DIFFERENTLY.



Session 3:

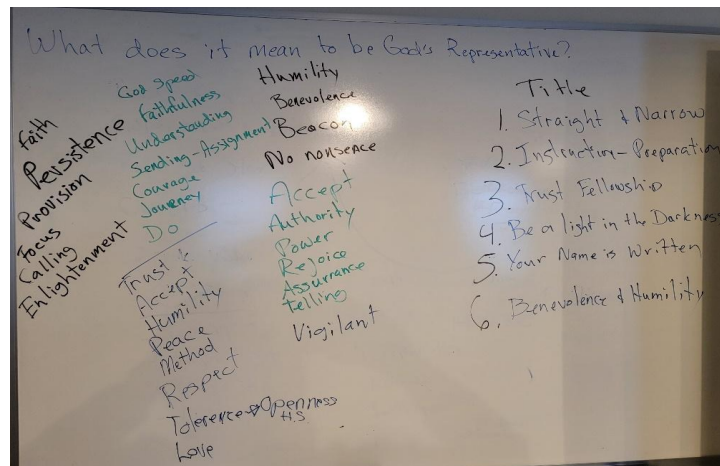
Observations:

Unanticipated Events:

- A different person dropped in.
 - This person was a family member of a participant.
 - The family member had reviewed previous content with them ahead of time.
 - Having different people drop-in is an opportunity to demonstrate inclusion.
 - The review of previous sessions makes it easier for people to join at any time.
- Two participants were absent.

Photos:

FIGURE 58: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE GOD'S REPRESENTATIVE AND
TITLE THE SCRIPTURE:



Session 4:

Observations:

Unanticipated Events

- Conflict with competing church events:
 - Loss of pre-reserved due to rescheduling.
 - No wall space to hang response posters.
 - Individuals were committed to both events.
- Absents:
 - Family illness: half the group.
 - Illness.
 - Holidays.
 - Excessive amount of time in review.
 - Weak data due to excessive absences.
- The challenge of drop-ins who were not part of the group.

Seasonal and Church Rhythms

Seasonal and church rhythms are unique to each fellowship. It is important to recognize the potential competitive or disruptive events. This is particularly important at the onset of the group.

- It is important to be aware of church, and community events that could compete. This is especially true at the onset of the group.
 - It was not difficult to recruit individuals for this congregation in the Spring.
 - It was more difficult in late Fall.
- Many families participated in the community events.
 - Community children's drama.
 - Pump track competitions.
- Young families have special challenges.
 - Several potential participant families got pregnant.

- o The family that participated, lost a pregnancy.

Photos:

FIGURE 59: JESUS WANTS ME TO _____DIFFERENTLY.



FIGURE 60: AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF GOD _____



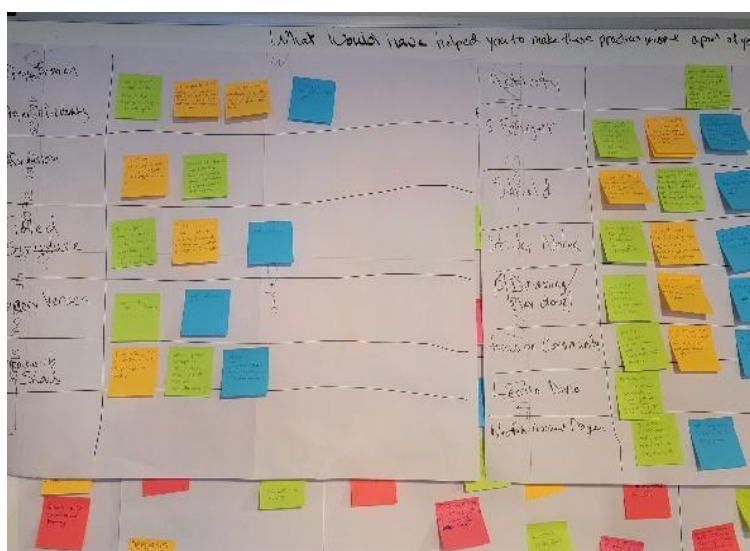
FIGURE 61: WHAT GOD _____ OF ME.



FIGURE 62: I APPRECIATE ____ABOUT ____!



FIGURE 63: WHAT I LIKED AND WHAT WOULD HELP ME APPLY THESE ACTIVITIES BETTER



A summary of session observations:

Summary of Discoveries

Unanticipated Events:

The fourth session had to be rescheduled due to illness. Nine participants were absent due to illness. The rescheduling of the session provided opportunity for the three who were present to care and support those who were ill in prayer.

The next possible date being four weeks later, contributing to a loss of continuity. When the fourth session was rescheduled, there were three absent and one came for the first time.

The individuals that were guests during these sessions were less disruptive to the overall results than the stakeholder absenteeism. Several individuals were absent multiple times, and often more than one session in a row.

Inconstant Attendance:

The excessive absenteeism impacted the flow and relational development of the group. Contributing to the absences was the rhythms of the church calendar which conflicted with the timeline for research deadlines. Working around winter holidays and the illnesses that occur at that time of year were also factors. The lack of consistent attendance greatly limited the depth of relationships, continuity of activities, and cohesiveness.

Church Life Assumptions to Avoid:

There were several erroneous assumptions which were based on my previous research group from this same congregation. The first of which was that everyone has a private quiet time with Jesus, where they were seeking to know him better and to evaluate their own thoughts, behaviors, and attitudes. This included the understanding that participants engaged in spiritual practices like prayer, journaling, and reading the scripture for the purpose of application. The final area was that not all adults can read and write well enough to feel comfortable doing some tasks.

The benefit of having children in the GCM group helped to defuse feelings of self-consciousness as the tasks had to be adaptable to all levels. These individuals were partnered with a trusted companions and sometimes children to ensure all voices were heard.

Relational Equity:

Relational equity is a useful tool to create a strong bond between individuals within the group. The more investment a leader has in the lives of people within the congregation the easier it is to find willing participants. As the relationships deepen it facilitates openness and authenticity within the group. This builds a level of trust that opens up opportunities to challenge individuals to engage in risks that they might otherwise avoid. Finally, participants are eager to share their strengths while contributing to the group process.

Intergenerational Mixed Ability and Spiritual Maturity Groups:

Intergenerational groups create an atmosphere where everyone has a strength to share. This is particularly true because the focus in GCM groups is on an individual's insights and journey with Jesus, not their knowledge. Everyone's perspective has the potential of inspiring someone else. The diversity provides the optimal situation for church members to learn and appreciate individuals who are different from themselves. The inclusion of younger ages creates a playful and fun atmosphere. This constructs an environment where adults that maybe feel less academically capable will

participate. Finally, those who would less likely shine, whether young or old are empowered as their insights and journeys are acknowledged and honored.²⁹⁸

General Impressions:

- I am surprised at the successes of the Generations in Community on Mission group. I am almost a foreigner to this congregation. My history with them has been as a visiting missionary up until a year ago. In the last year I have had minimal time to do little more than to attend Sunday services. It appears that I am staying. To move forward with this work, it will be important to become a “citizen” in these societal and spiritual communities.
- It is important to remember that the goal is the acquisition and mastery of new skills of spiritual practices, not the completion of the planned materials. This emphasis requires more continuous monitoring and adjusting of each session to achieve the optimal results.
- The content and spiritual practices explored in each theme would have resulted in greater mastery if they are taught over six to seven sessions, every two weeks.
- I look forward to implementing the missional field trips. Once again this is a slower process, but it is designed to get individuals to be present over producing something.
- I would like to spend time investing in relationships with people who participated in the prototype group. The goal would be to partner with them in starting another GCM group with them taking and developing a particular set of practices.

²⁹⁸ 1 Corinthians 12:24b, NLT.

Supplemental Materials

Lectio Divina Text:

FIGURE 64: HANDOUTS: WE ARE FAMILY & CITIZENS OF HEAVEN**We Are Family & Citizens of Heaven**

"God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good thing he planned for us long ago (Ephesians 2:8-10). So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are members of God's family. Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22).²⁹⁹ When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And my you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:14-21)"³⁰⁰

- Read the first sentence and stop.
- Read the next sentence and stop.
- Continue in this manner to the end of the text.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you?

- Read to the first punctuation mark and stop.
- The next person continues reading to the next punctuation mark and stops.
- Continue in this manner to the end of the text.

²⁹⁹ Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation*. (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 953.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 954.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you? Are they the same or different from the 1st reading?

- Start reading the text, the next person interrupts when they feel they are to begin. This continues until the end of the text.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you? Are they the same or different from the previous readings?

Journal Time:

Your journal is God writing your personal psalms. You are recording your journey with Jesus. Expect Him to speak to you. Ask Him questions. Complain and express whatever feelings you have but expect Him to answer in your heart and confirm through His Word. Be creative.

Draw pictures, write poetry, or songs. Invite the Holy Spirit into your time.

Scripture text:

Select one of the following to focus on each day:

Ephesians 2:8-10 Ephesians 2:19-22 Ephesians 3:14-17 Ephesians 3:18-19
Ephesians 3:20-21

What would title each set of scripture verses? What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about God? Do you see yourself any differently now? Do you see Jesus any differently? What is Jesus asking you to do? Can you find another verse that has a similar message? Is there one verse that is speaking to you personally? If yes, consider memorizing that verse.

Record in your journal.

Memory Verse:

- Which verse is the Holy Spirit encouraging you to focus on?
- Why is this verse important for you?
- Who can help you make this verse a part of how you live your life?
- How can they help you? Be specific.

Prayer:

- Ask Jesus who in your "backyard" (circle of influence) He wants you to pray for regularly.
- Write those people on your Five Finger sheet.
- Pray for the people on your sheet by name according to the prayer in the Five Finger sheet.

- Ask Jesus for a specific local government leader to pray for regularly.
- Ask Jesus for a specific local church leader to pray for regularly.
- Ask Jesus for a specific missionary to pray for regularly.

Record any insights, specific prayers, or answers to prayer in your journal.

FIGURE 65: HANDOUT: GOD’S LOVING DISCIPLINE AND RESTORATION

God’s Loving Discipline & Restoration

“Write this letter to the angel of the church in Laodicea. This is the message from the one who is the Amen-the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s new creation: I know all the things you do, that are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth! You say, I am rich. I have everything I want. I don’t need a thing! And you don’t realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. So, I advise you to buy gold from me-gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. Also buy white garments from me so you will not be shamed by your nakedness, and ointment for your eyes so you will be able to see. I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference. Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and we will share a meal together as friends. Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne. Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches.” Revelation 3:14-22³⁰¹

- Read the first sentence and stop.
- Read the next sentence and stop.
- Continue in this manner to the end of the text.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you?

- Read to the first punctuation mark and stop.
- The next person continues reading to the next punctuation mark and stops.
- Continue in this manner to the end of the text.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you? Are they the same or different from the 1st reading?

- Start reading the text, the next person interrupts when they feel they are to begin. This continues until the end of the text.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you? Are they the same or different from the previous readings?

Journal Time:

³⁰¹ Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation*. (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 1010.

Your journal is you, writing your personal psalms. You are recording your journey with Jesus.

Expect Him to speak to you. Ask Him questions. Complain and express whatever feelings you have but expect Him to answer in your heart and confirm through His Word. Be creative.

Draw pictures, write poetry, or songs. Invite the Holy Spirit into your time.

Scripture text:

Select one of the following to focus on each day:

Revelation 3:14 Revelation 3:15-17 Revelation 3:18-19 Revelation 3:20-21
Revelation 3:22

What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about God? Do you see yourself any differently now? Do you see Jesus any differently? What is Jesus asking you to do? Can you find another verse that has a similar message? Is there one verse that is speaking to you personally? If yes, consider memorizing that verse.

Record in your journal.

Memory Verse:

- Which verse is the Holy Spirit encouraging you to focus on?
- Why is this verse important for you?
- Who can help you make this verse a part of how you live your life?
- How can they help you? Be specific.

Prayer:

- Ask Jesus who in your “backyard” (circle of influence) He wants you to pray for regularly.
- Write those people on your Five Finger sheet.
- Pray for the people on your sheet by name according to the prayer in the Five Finger sheet.
- Ask Jesus for a specific local government leader to pray for regularly.
- Ask Jesus for a specific local church leader to pray for regularly.
- Ask Jesus for a specific missionary to pray for regularly.

Record any insights, specific prayers, or answers to prayer in your journal.

FIGURE 66: HANDOUT: RECOGNIZING THE VOICE OF THE SHEPHERD

Recognizing the Voice of the Shepherd

"Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So, I sacrifice my life for the sheep (John 10: 9-11, 14-15)."³⁰² "The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd. The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded (John 10:3, 16-18)."³⁰³ "My sheep listen to my voice, I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. The Father and I are one (John 10: 27-30)."³⁰⁴

- Read the first sentence and stop.
- Read the next sentence and stop.
- Continue in this manner to the end of the text.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you?

- Read to the first punctuation mark and stop.
- The next person continues reading to the next punctuation mark and stops.
- Continue in this manner to the end of the text.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you? Are they the same or different from the 1st reading?

³⁰² Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation*. (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 871.

³⁰³ Ibid., 870-871.

³⁰⁴ Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation*. (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 871.

- Start reading the text, the next person interrupts when they feel they are to begin. This continues until the end of the text.

Pause: What words or phrases stand out to you? Are they the same or different from the previous readings?

Journal Time:

Your journal is God writing your personal psalms. You are recording your journey with Jesus. Expect Him to speak to you. Ask Him questions. Complain and express whatever feelings you have but expect Him to answer in your heart and confirm through His Word. Be creative.

Draw pictures, write poetry, or songs. Invite the Holy Spirit into your time.

Scripture text:

Select one of the following to focus on each day:

John 10: 9-10

John 10: 11, 14-15

John 10:3, 16

John 10: 17-18

John 10:27-30

What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about God? Do you see yourself any differently now? Do you see Jesus any differently? What is Jesus asking you to do? Can you find another verse that has a similar message? Is there one verse that is speaking to you personally? If yes, consider memorizing that verse.

Record in your journal.

Memory Verse:

- Which verse is the Holy Spirit encouraging you to focus on?
- Why is this verse important for you?
- Who can help you make this verse a part of how you live your life?
- How can they help you? Be specific.

Prayer:

- Ask Jesus who in your "backyard" (circle of influence) He wants you to pray for regularly.
- Write those people on your Five Finger sheet.
- Pray for the people on your sheet by name according to the prayer in the Five Finger sheet.
- Ask Jesus for a specific local government leader to pray for regularly.
- Ask Jesus for a specific local church leader to pray for regularly.
- Ask Jesus for a specific missionary to pray for regularly.

Record any insights, specific prayers, or answers to prayer in your journal.

Developing Missional Purpose:

FIGURE 67: MISSIONAL OBSERVATION FORM

Who's in My Community? What is God Saying?

Directions:

- In groups of 3 or 4, pray and ask Jesus for a location in town where you can go to watch people subtly.
- Fill in the following chart.
- Return to the church.
- Share your findings with your group.
- Be sure to include what action the Spirit shared with you.
- Pray the Five Finger Prayer together for the people you observed.

Describe Who?	What are they doing?	Is there a presenting need?	Prayerfully consider what the Spirit is saying?	How does the Spirit want you to respond?

FIGURE 68: TREASURE MAP: GUIDE TO COMMUNITY PROPHETIC EVANGELISM:

The Treasure Map

1. Each person writes down Words of Knowledge in the spaces for each category.

a. **Location:** (stop sign, bench, digital clock, coffee shop, Costco, Wal-Mart, etc.)

b. **A person's name:**

c. **A person's appearance** (the color, type of their specific articles or clothing, the color of their hair, etc.).

d. **What they might need prayer for** (knee brace, cane, kidneys, tumor, left ankle, marriage, etc.).

e. **The unusual** (lollipop, windmill, lime-green door, dolphins, etc.).

2. Form groups of three or four.

a. Share your lists.

3. Choose a beginning location.

- a. Prayerfully decide.
 - b. Review the other clues in route.
4. **Remain in an attitude of prayer as you look for a person that represents one of the other clues on your map.**
5. **When you find a clue taken from individual lists:**
 - Say something like: "This may seem a little odd, but we're on a treasure hunt and we think you're on our list."
 - Show them the list. (It can be more than one item.) Build rapport. (Make friends-ask questions to get to know them.)
 - Let them know that God has selected them for a blessing.
 - Look for ways to help them and ask to pray for them.
6. **If they say "No" ...**
 - Continue to search for common ground-friendship.
 - Ask the Holy Spirit what He wants to do to bless this person.
 - Give them encouraging words without being religious.
 - Remember Jesus has hand-picked you to meet this person.
 - What is it about you that will connect with this person?
7. **Ask if they are sure that they don't have anything for you to pray for.**
 - If they say "No"-Thank them for their time.
 - Bless them and proceed to the next person.
 - If they say "Yes" (especially for healing).
 - Ask for the presence of God to come. Be specific.
 - Command the ailment to be gone and the health opposite to be seen.
 - Ask the person to test it out: "Do something that you couldn't do before we prayed."
 - Repeat if necessary.
8. **When they are healed, or you have blessed them through prophetic words.**
 - Explain that they have just experienced the kindness of God.
 - He knows you and cares about you, etc.
 - Ask them if they would like to know this God personally through a personal relationship with Jesus.
 - Help them to pray to invite Jesus into their life.
 - Other
9. **Go to the next Divine Appointment on your Treasure Map.**

Adapted from the Appendix A found in The Ultimate Treasure Hunt by Kevin Dedmon³⁰⁵

³⁰⁵ Kevin Dedmon, The Ultimate Treasure Hunt: A Guide to Supernatural Evangelism Through Supernatural Encounters (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Pub., Inc, 2007).

Appendix F—Milestone 6 Project Launch Plan Documentation

Stakeholder Created:

He created these diagrams from what was learned about the Prototype groups. He then formed a small home group using this information. Although this is a bit different from how I would define my project it is representative of the organic nature of this framework.

FIGURE 69: CORE VALUES

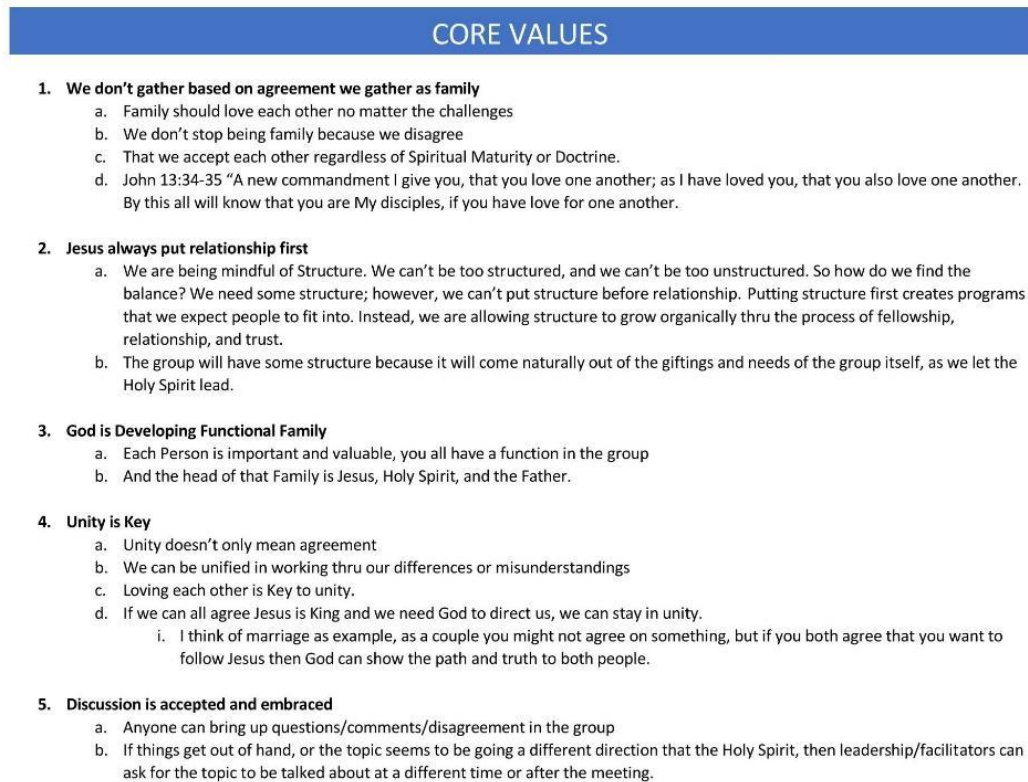


FIGURE 70: FRAMEWORK AND FLOW

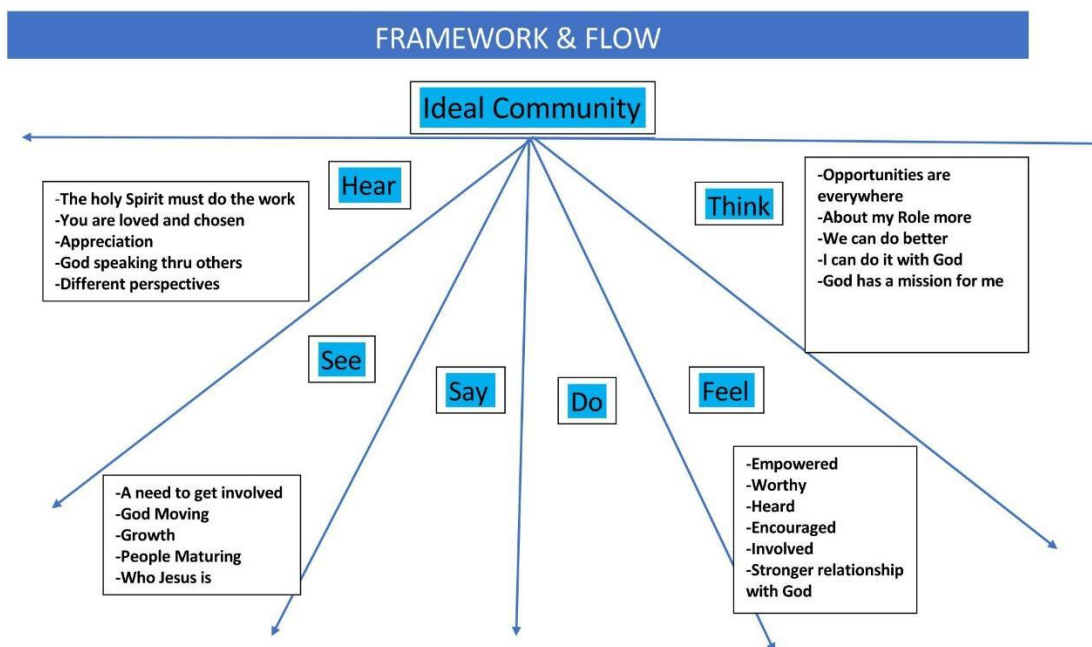
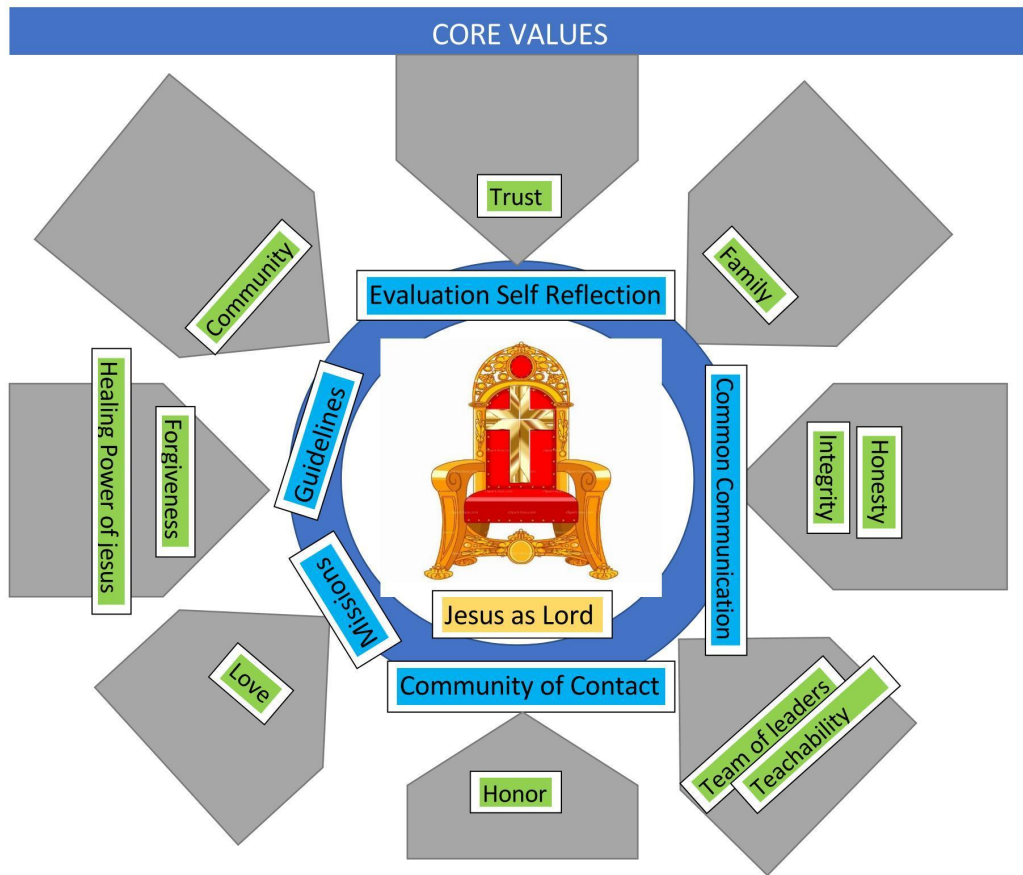


FIGURE 71: DIAGRAM OF CORE VALUES



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