

NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES AND TRAINING LEADERS TO PLANT MISSIONAL,
FAITH-BASED COMMUNITIES IN THE MISSION VALLEY OF NORTHWEST
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ABSTRACT

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Missional communities and training leaders to plant missional, faith-based communities
in the Mission Valley of Northwest Montana

The Mission Valley of northwest Montana is a diverse place of Native and Anglo Cultures. There are numerous churches that exist in the valley; however, very few have found a way to balance the cultural diversities and their mission to the community. The model of mission consists of build bigger and inviting more, but the mission of reaching into the various communities and forgotten neighborhoods of the valley have been forgotten. There seems to be a struggle as to what constitutes the “Missio Dei” and what it means for churches to participate in said “Missio Dei.” To solve this problem, this project discusses the often-forgotten contextual element of Native American culture. Then the project provides a guiding “Missional Ecclesiology” where it challenges the idea of “Kingdom” that often pervades the concepts and understanding people have of the Church. After this the project discusses foundational practices for missional engagement. Those strategies are intentional intimacy, leadership by the Holy Spirit with a focus on shared leadership of the people, seeking to reproduce more missional communities, serving the community, and evangelization. The artifact provided is a curriculum designed to train lay people to display those practices in forming missional communities in their neighborhood. The curriculum focuses on the Biblical principles for incarnational, missional engagement, discerning the context of missional engagement, building relationships within the context of missional engagement, engaging in mission within that context, and the challenge to meet regularly for worship within the context of missional engagement.

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PART I

Chapter 1 - Life in the Mission Valley

The Mission Valley in Montana is a part of the Flathead Indian Reservation; home to the Salish, Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreille Tribes. According to Montana.gov, the official website for the state of Montana, “Of the approximately 7,753 enrolled tribal members, about 5,000 live on or near the reservation.” This statistic does not include other Native American Indians who reside in the valley due to the Salish Kootenai College, a Native American sponsored college. However, the Flathead Indian Reservation (Reservation) is also inhabited by many non-tribal members because the Reservation is considered an “open” reservation: meaning that the United States Government allowed for open homesteading on the reservation. This policy began in 1904 with the Flathead Allotment Act. Tribal members were allotted 80 acres if they were single and 160 acres if they were the head of their household. In 1908 the first round of allotments was completed, and the remaining land was opened to non-native homesteaders. The allotments secured around 240,000 acres of land for tribal members; the tribe was originally granted 1,245,000 acres. These conditions allow for vast, multicultural, and multi-economical perspectives in life and ministry.

The Church of the Nazarene (Church) is located at the heart of the Reservation, in

Pablo, Montana, around the corner from the Tribal Headquarters, offices and council chambers. Pablo is five miles north of Ronan and 10 miles south of Polson, the county seat for Lake County. Due to Pablo's proximity to these other cities, the ministry of the Church includes these cities and their outlying areas. All these areas have a cultural mix of Native and non-native persons.

According to 2016 data made available through the City Data website, as of 2016 Lake County, Montana, has a population of 30,087 people. Of those residing in Lake County 74.3% identify as being Anglo, 26% identify as being solely Native American Indian, and 7% of residents identify with two or more races, leaving 5% of residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino. Clearly, the two largest races in the county are Anglo and Native American Indian. This statistic is also seen in the cities where the Church ministers. Polson has an estimated population of 9,862; of this total 7,506 (76.1%) are Anglo, while 1,334 (13.5%) are Native American Indian. Ronan has an estimated population of 7,257; of these people 3,872 (53.4%) are Anglo, and 1,981 (27.3%) are Native American Indian. Pablo is the most interesting. In Pablo, an estimated 1,256 people reside; 266 (21.2%) are Anglo, and 585 (46.6%) are Native American Indian. The local community where the church building sits is predominantly Native American Indian, while the population of the surrounding communities provides a greater mix of Anglo and Native American Indian. Therefore, the Church must be willing to find creative ways to minister and evangelize within its multicultural surroundings.

To understand the larger context of the Mission Valley it is important to look specifically at Pablo where the traditional campus for the Church of the Nazarene resides.

Pablo, Montana today is not the same “city” that it used to be in 1960 when the Church of the Nazarene was chartered there. Consequently, the Church is not the same today as the church was in 1960. However, there is great potential for the church if it embraces the shifts that have taken place and ministers in, through, and among those shifts.

Numerous conversations with people, individually and with groups, and observations of the almost six years of residing in Pablo have taken place to be able to understand what Pablo was like and what the church was like to understand why and how things are the way they seem to be now.

Fred said, “Pastor, Pablo used to not be like this. This town used to be a family place. People used to take care of their lawns. On the ‘old highway’ in the middle of town there used to be a gas station/service station and a grocery store.” The “old highway” is main street through town. It is crumbling apart and not a smooth ride at all. The church sits at the south end of town on the “old highway.” This street used to be the highway and main thoroughfare north and south between Kalispell and Missoula. Now, the highway is one block to the west, not far away, but the main “drag” has been replaced. There are fuel stations, laundromats, and the grocery store has moved to be right off the “new highway.” Most of “downtown” is bypassed unless you are traveling to a specific place in town or going to visit one of the two bars (or both bars) that are across the street from each other in downtown Pablo.

Pablo is by no means large; its population was 2, 254 people in the 2010 census. It is a “census designated place;” therefore it is not an incorporated town. Pablo is beautifully situated in Mission Valley, Montana, near the base of the Mission Mountains. Although poverty, drugs, alcohol, and a drastically different way of life than what Anglos

expect are prevalent, they are less easy to see on this reservation than on others due to the policy that opened the Reservation to non-Native homesteaders. Also, due to the open policies, The Mission Valley is a multicultural place where ranchers, “city folk” and Native Americans are learning to coexist and thrive together. Pablo, however, is different. In the early 1980’s the Tribal headquarters moved to Pablo from Old Agency, Mt., a small spot on the map 26 miles southwest of Pablo near what is Dixon, Mt. today. In fact, the Tribal council chambers and offices are a block northwest of the church. When the Tribal headquarters moved to Pablo, the Tribal housing authority moved and shortly afterward the Salish Kootenai College, which is funded and overseen by the Tribe, and is a highly valued educational institution among Native Americans in the United States, was opened across the “new highway” from Tribal headquarters.

As has happened in many other cities and towns, when someone “different” moves into the neighborhood fear follows and people tend to flee from what they fear. Gregg said, “I used to live in Pablo. It was beautiful and well cared for. But, when I heard that the Tribe was moving their headquarters here, I told my wife, ‘There goes the neighborhood! We need to move out of town! So, we sold our house and moved to Polson.’” It appears that Gregg was not the only one who felt that way. Many people moved away and now an estimated 72.7% of the Pablo zip code is Native American. Yet, at the same time, many people still drove the few miles from their new location to the church because this was “their church.” As time went on, people grew tired of driving that distance, or their children grew up and left the area, or decided they did not feel like driving to a church in Pablo for worship when there is a “perfectly good one” down the road from them. The people who were committed to the church are still willing to drive

up to a half hour to church, but their children have moved away or moved on.

The move of the Tribal headquarters was not the only shift, unfortunately. On the north end of town used to sit a lumber mill that had been owned and operated by Plum Creek Timber Company. At its height, the mill employed over 100 people. That might not sound like much, but for those who looked for jobs after graduating from high school it was! Due to shifts in forestry regulation and shifts in the lumber industry, the need for the mill waned. Carl, who worked at the mill for 48 years and retired a few years before it closed mentioned, “That’s what happens when you allow women to run the forestry department.” Everyone else has said, “Carl retired, and after that the mill couldn’t keep up without him; and it closed.” For whatever reason, the mill closed in 2008. Today, it is difficult to find a job in Pablo, unless you are Native and can be employed by the Tribe - the largest employer in the valley. There are numerous employment options with the Tribe. The Tribe controls the Seli’s Ksanka Qlispe’ Dam (formerly known as Kerr Dam) which generates power off the Flathead River. The Tribe also manages the National Bison Range at the southern end of the Mission Valley. There are two casinos on the Reservation, the Tribal Law officers (also known as IO’s), as well as many various Tribal offices that offer employment. However, those jobs are offered with Tribal preference to Tribal members first before being offered to non-Tribal members. There are other opportunities for employment through the hospitals in Ronan and Polson, the various school districts throughout the Valley as well as restaurants, feed stores, grocery stores, and other supplemental jobs are available throughout the Valley. If none of those places of employment seem suitable, one can become a rancher or farmer: cattle, potatoes (“spuds,”) hay, and wheat are grown throughout the valley! However, outside of the Tribe

and a few non-Tribal places of employment the options for career-oriented income are very limited.

There has also been a shift in what a family is defined as. Family is no longer defined as a mother, father, and their children. Family could be whoever mom lives with, or wherever dad is. Family includes the cousins (whether or not you are blood related) and the grandparents who are raising the children. It is “normal” for children to spend many evenings a week with their mother in one house, and later in the week the same children “live” with grandparents in another house. There are numerous families who, for many reasons, move to various communities throughout the valley multiple times during a school year. Often it seems it is because the mom has moved in with a family member or a different male, and the children move with their mother. As seems to be the case in other impoverished areas, there is a lack of a father figure in many homes as well. All of these are factors in the redefinition of family. Also, the Native American culture does not define a nuclear family per se, but places emphasis upon the community and what an Anglo person would refer to as an extended family in the education and passing on of values to the younger generation. For this reason, cousins, aunts, uncles, and elders are often held in high esteem; sometimes a higher value is placed upon these family members than is placed upon more immediate family members. Due to the emphasis on community in a Native American context, familial terms, like cousin, are used to refer to people who are not actually related by blood, but for the Native Americans in the Mission Valley those persons are viewed as family. Family could also be the church where children, parents, and all others find a place of stability and certainty amidst a world or situation that is chaotic.

The church board of the Pablo Church of the Nazarene had many meetings where the board and its members were surveyed about life and ministry in Pablo and the Valley. Many of the stated shifts were discussed, and, at one point, the question was asked if the church ever changed how it and its members approached life and ministry with these shifts in their community. Sadly, the board members all answered, “No.” This lack of shifting with the changing context of the valley has presented itself not only in the Church of the Nazarene but in many other churches scattered throughout the valley. Many churches do not engage the full population and context of the valley. Those churches are doing well at engaging Anglo people who reside in the valley, but engagement of Native Americans and people outside of the mainstream of life, and people who live outside the incorporated cities and towns are seemingly left out of the ministry of the churches. This is not to say that these people are not invited to attend and participate in the worship and ministry of the churches, but it is to say that the churches are not shaping their ministry and focus upon the outsiders. The analogy of casting a large net and hoping to grab a few fish seems to be a fitting analogy for ministry in the Valley. Many churches aim at building bigger, growing larger, and spending money and resources to target anyone and everyone who will attend. Many Churches focus on spending money to reach anyone, instead of focusing missionally on their neighborhoods, or specific neighborhoods throughout the valley in areas where normal, consistent attendance is impractical and possibly impossible. Many of these people or areas can easily become “project” areas for the established churches, but there is no deep, consistent, missional engagement of those areas.

This is not to say that all churches are ignoring these areas, but it is to highlight

that it often seems easier to grease the wheels of ministry in the way it has always been done. The Pablo Church of the Nazarene and the members of the board who were questioned about how the church adapted to the shifts is an example of that. There is a fear of missional engagement in the neighborhoods and communities throughout the valley. Amidst the shifts and multiple cultural and economic elements, problems with an understanding of who the Church is supposed to be, who the church is for, and how the church is to engage its context begin to surface. These problems present themselves in the ways detailed above, but the root problem is that the Church in the Mission Valley needs to understand the Church's call and the Church needs to be able to have tools to equip volunteers, lay people, to assist in fulfilling that call. Ultimately, the Mission Valley is a place where people are learning to coexist with different ideas, traditions, cultures, pains, and dreams. Yet, the church is placed in the middle of this to learn to give hope to the hopeless, peace to those who have none, and to show God's love. It is not an easy task, but it is a blessed task for those who endeavor to be faithful.

Before a foundation and missional ecclesiology is detailed, a deeper recognition of the Native American context should be explored. Due to the percentage of Native Americans who reside in the valley, a deeper description of past mistakes in ministry, encouragement from proper ministry from the past, as well as an understanding of the Church's role of contextualization of ministry in its specific context should be explored.

Chapter 2 – Understanding the Native American Context

In ministering in the Mission Valley and specifically the communities of Ronan, Pablo, and Polson, there should be an element of multicultural ministry: ministry to Native American Indians and non-Native American Indians, because that is a snapshot of what the community is like. This chapter seeks to provide a brief understanding of Native American history; how ministry had been accomplished, for the good and the bad, in the past; and a contextualized option for the future ministry of the Church of the Nazarene or any other church in the Mission Valley of northwest Montana.

Ministry among Native Americans has not always been done in a way that honored the culture, traditions, and history of the people to whom ministries sought to share the Gospel with. For far too long missionaries, pastors and other well intended ministers of the Good News shared Jesus Christ in such a way that made the Native American Indians feel as though the message of Jesus Christ was a message about a “white man” for “white men,” and to convert and follow Jesus meant that one had to become a “white man.” There are many reasons for this confusion; history helps those in ministry understand this. Ministers must learn from the past to repent of the prideful ways of sharing the Gospel. Then those in ministry will be able to map a better way forward in communities like throughout the Mission Valley.

As Wesleyan, the Church of the Nazarene, believes in the power of God active in

all cultures through Prevenient Grace, the grace that “goes before” salvation. Due to Prevenient Grace, God was active in the North American Continent with the continent’s first residents, or Host People, in amazing, Creator-glorifying ways. Richard Twiss shares his thoughts on this issue. Twiss writes, “God was preparing people groups for the coming of the Messiah long before the first missionaries entered their lands.” We are reminded that the Bible is clear about Prevenient Grace. The Apostle Paul wrote, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse” (Rom. 1:20, [NIV]). Regarding this verse and the Native American Indian, Twiss states, “The witness of God—the natural revelation of creation—was so strong on this continent that no tribal person could ever say as an excuse, ‘We never knew of You.’” The Creator worked through the culture of the people bearing witness to who the Creator is and found ways to encourage the First Nations People to truly worship the Creator.

The Creator, God, appeared in visions and dreams, and our Host People were eagerly waiting and willing for people who had more knowledge of The Creator to teach them. The story of Circling Raven is an example; a shaman who tried to help his people during the smallpox epidemic in 1782. According to tradition, his practices would not work, and many people suffered and died, including his own son. This caused Circling Raven to have a crisis of faith. He was instructed by his brother to go to the top of Mount Spokane for four days to pray and fast. Richard Twiss shares,

At the conclusion of his fast, according to Spokane tradition, Circling Raven received a vision of men of white skin wearing strange clothes and bearing in their

hands leaves bound together. He was told to counsel his people to prepare for these *chipixa*, “white-skinned ones,” and to pay attention to the teaching that came from the leaves bound together.

This shaman’s vision prepared the way for missionaries to come to what is known today as Spokane, Washington. However, this shaman was not the only one with a vision. Twiss writes, “...A Kalispell shaman and chief had delivered a similar message among the eastern Salish...The great cultural hero Shining Shirt prophesied that white people would come from the East one day.” His vision was not, simply, that white people would come; it was a vision about how the white people would teach them more about the “Good One” and “Evil One.” Twiss continues,

After Shining Shirt was grown and in charge of his people, a Power made a great revelation known to him. The Power said that there were a Good One and an Evil One of which the Indian knew but little so far. Yet the time would come when men with fair skins dressed in long black skirts would come and teach them the truth. *These Indians had never heard of a white man at that early date.*

The way in which God worked and foretold of who would come is beautiful. Prior to people hearing about white men, the Creator foretold their presence and coming to these areas. The Creator also allowed people who were searching the knowledge that those who would come would bring the truth about Jesus Christ. The First Nations People, at least in the western half of the continent, were prepared for the truth to be told to them by the white missionaries. However, those visions and the people’s preparedness did not mean that they were exempt from harsh treatment when the white missionaries did come.

The white missionaries did not know what to do with the differences in culture and understanding of how God worked when they encountered the Native American

Indians. They, especially, did not know what to do with those who were already in leadership in the tribes and were respected. Therefore, the missionaries often would not allow the tribes' religious leaders to remain in leadership, and they were removed or shunned from teaching and leading. Chief Spokane Garry is an example of how this took place.

In 1825 Spokane Garry and Kootenai Pelly were sent with George Simpson, governor of the northern department of the Hudson's Bay Company, to the Mission School at Red River, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. The visions of shamans, like Circling Raven and Shining Shirt, increased the interest of the people of the Middle Spokanes to "Know what the White people knew of the 'Master of Life.'" Simpson explained to the elders of the tribe that the boys would "Learn how to serve God," and the tribal leaders agreed to the idea. They chose Spokane Garry and Kootenai Pelly to go. They were at the school for four years and returned to their people in 1829 where they "Made a tremendous impression on their own and neighboring tribes as they preached the Word of God. Their acceptance was phenomenal." Some even attribute a revival among the tribes of that area to the preaching of Garry and Pelly. Their teaching and preaching spread to neighboring tribes, causing true conversions. Washington Irving who camped with the Nez Perce one winter wrote, "Simply to call these people religious would convey but a faint idea of the deep hue of piety and devotion which pervades their whole conduct. Their honesty is immaculate and their purity of purpose...are most remarkable. They are more like a nation of saints than a horde of savages." Other missionaries, preachers, and even Jesuit Priests took notice at the ministry of Garry and Pelly. During this great revival and the

growth of the message of Jesus Christ through Garry and Pelly, other missionaries had a difficult time building upon the foundation laid by these two Native American ministers.

The first missionaries came to the area between 1835 and 1850 to teach Christianity. In 1838 Elkanah Walker and Cushing Eels came to the Spokane tribe and tried to establish the first Protestant mission. However, the mission closed merely ten years later. Twiss writes, “The Reverends Walker and Eels failed to build on the foundations that Garry had established. Having few converts, the mission closed in 1848.” Not long after the missionaries came, settlers followed into the areas as well. This created turmoil over the issues of land and what was considered common, morally acceptable practices. Spokane Garry continued to speak for peace and justice, often inviting other ministers to come and preach to turn the tribe back to the way of Christ. At one point, Garry requested help from the Episcopal Church and, eventually, seven years later Rev. J. Compton Burnett arrived.

Burnett was not an answer to Garry’s prayers. Shortly after arriving, in 1884, Burnett purchased land and had a group of men prepare the land for crops. The land that was purchased had been utilized for years by the Spokane tribe. Many of the tribe, as well as Colonel Watkins from the Indian Service, stopped Burnett and his men from working the land, guaranteeing the anger from Rev. Burnett and his threats to follow. After that incident, Garry would not ask for help from the Episcopal Church again.

Garry continued to promote peace, faith in God, a desire for his people to learn and write, and even a desire for a secure reservation for his people. Eventually, through

much heartache, the Spokane Indians left their land and agreed to move to the Colville, Coeur d'Alene, and Jacko Reservations. Spokane Garry died on January 14, 1892 with no land, no money, but clinging to a full hope in God! In Spokane, in Riverfront Park, there is a plaque dedicated to Garry's honor. It reads:

Torn between two cultures as interpreter, peace maker, teacher, and preacher, he was often condemned. Yet his influence cleared the path for the missionaries and eased the way for the settlement of Spokane. He died a forgotten figure in 1892.

Many would expect a vibrant faith and Christian witness among the areas where Spokane Garry's influence had been. Yet today the presence of the ministry of Garry and Pelly, and their likes, seems to be a memory of the distant past. According to Richard Twiss, "We can identify less than two dozen Native men who regularly attend a Protestant church" on the reservations where Garry and Pelly once initiated revival. Worse yet, "On the Coeur d'Alene Reservation, 45 miles southeast of Spokane, there are none." As stated earlier, much ministry could have taken place with greater results if those who came built on the foundation of what was laid by the likes of Garry and Pelly. One could easily agree with Twiss, who laments,

It is hard to imagine what things might be like among the Native people here in the Northwest if the early missionaries, who discovered upon their arrival an already vibrant spiritual awakening, had concluded that God sent them here to come under and support the native pastors and workers already in place. Instead, what they essentially said was, "You've done a good job, fellas, but we'll take over now." They set themselves up as the true guardians of the faith.

Not only did the missionaries in the past shun the leadership of the Native American ministers, but the missionaries also sought to change the culture and traditions

of the Native American Indians they ministered to.

The largest showing of resistance to Native American Indian culture and lifestyle was the practice of forced assimilation. In these practices, language, culture, and history were completely disregarded for the sake of Western civilization and the spread of Christianity. These ideas, practices, and government policies of assimilation began as early as 1710, and the churches were included in the policies.

Many people, Christians included, agreed with the ideas of those like Cotton Mather. David A. Rausch and Blair Schlepp, speaking of Mather, state that in 1710 Mather believed, “The best thing we can do for our Indians is to Anglicize them.” Mather even went so far as to say that their language was against Christianity. Rausch and Schlepp highlight, “The English language was more often than not viewed as a tool of acculturation and assimilation in mission schools, and the attempt was made to *replace* Native American languages with English (not to preserve bilingualism and heritage).” In residential schools, people were beat and “disciplined” harshly if they spoke their native language.

As time went on, the United States government began to utilize churches to foster assimilation of Native American Indians. Rausch and Schlepp note that “In 1819 Congress passed a bill that established a ‘civilization fund’ of 10,000 dollars a year that missionary organizations and evangelists could dip into to link assimilation efforts with conversion efforts.” President Grant, in 1869, “began turning over the full responsibility for the administration of the Indian agencies to American churches and missionary

bodies” because President Grant felt the churches and missionary organizations could operate with a greater integrity than the current Indian agencies. In just a short time, over 75 different Indian agencies were turned over to the ministries of numerous denominations. This gave the churches dual responsibility. Craig Stephens Smith states,

The missionaries assigned to each area were there not only to evangelize, but they also filled the office of government agent, overseeing education, and other such activities on the reservations. Their authority was backed by government troops and all things Native were forbidden. Culture, language and worldview was dismissed piece by piece and forced assimilation ensued.

One of the first things people did when they began assimilating Native Americans into the Westernized world, other than forbid them to speak their language, was to cut their hair. The quickest way to strip someone of their traditions, worldviews, culture, and ideas is to drastically change their appearance to look like someone, or something, else. Richard Twiss writes, “As much as anything, these haircuts symbolized an attempt to civilize Native American young people.” This practice continued into the early 1900s, stripping young children of their cultural identity. Twiss is correct in his harsh rebuke stating that, “This approach to ministry could legitimately be viewed as a kind of cultural genocide.” Yet, it was not just the hair or language that was attacked by the U.S. Government and the church; it was the entire Native American culture.

The idea that Western culture was superior was prevalent among the church and United State Government. The church believed it needed not only to evangelize the Natives, but to “westernize” them. Again, the church found assistance from government policy, or at least the church agreed with it, in this regard. In 1902 the Bureau of Indian

Affairs (BIA) Commissioner declared that certain Indian customs were not appropriate and “should be modified.” Dances were an aspect of these customs that were deemed unnecessary. The church found power in this decree and “it encouraged missionaries to then forbid the use of Native cultural expressions for any purpose, but especially for churchly use.” Many researchers and historians agree that “The missionaries equated Christianity with Western culture and its apparent superiority over other cultural forms and expressions... Clearly, they believed the West was civilized and the rest of the world primitive.” The church engaged in its mission of transformation, but it did it with an aura of arrogance; the church didn’t usually consider what they taught along with the Gospel message. The church seemed to deem assimilation necessary. Rausch and Schlepp write,

But more often than not, Christians were immersed in the civil religion of their century, a civil religion that clouded the best that the Christian message has to offer. Many missionaries agreed with the efforts of the federal government to “civilize” and “assimilate” Native Americans into the mainstream of American citizenship and culture.

A quick look at the past, understanding the eagerness of the Native American Indians to receive the message of Jesus Christ, and learning about the times that the Christian Church should regret in its ministry to Natives, should lead ministers, churches, and missionaries to a different approach in their efforts today to reach Natives with the message of Jesus Christ. A different approach has not always happened, but now many are more eager than ever before to try.

The way forward in ministry among Native American Indians is not assimilation,

as has been done in the past, but a way that includes their traditions, languages, cultures, ideas, and history, a way of contextualized ministry. Contextualization is not equal to syncretism. When discussing contextualization, or contextualized ministry, many people begin to fear a movement towards syncretism. It would be beneficial at this juncture to explain the difference between the two ideas.

Syncretism, in brief, is a mixing of two completely different ideas and customs and declaring that the two are the same. Dean Flemming explains it as, “The mixing of incompatible religious ideas and practices.” This is devastating to a person’s true faith, and it is a shift away from teaching the Good News as transformative and holy. Richard Twiss defines the idea of syncretism clearly stating, “Counteractive syncretism conveys the idea of a kind of mixing of core religious beliefs that ultimately diminish, fully resist, or finally stop—*counteract*—one’s personal faith journey as a follower of Jesus Christ.” Syncretism, therefore, is the act of participating in, or teaching something that is completely opposed to Scripture and Christianity.

Although in theory syncretism is easy to explain, it is not always easy to observe in practice. Syncretism is not always simply teaching something that is opposed to Christianity; it also can be the elevating of something to the level of Christ. Flemming, in discussing the issues with the church in Colossae, highlights their issue with syncretistic practices. Flemming states,

The Colossian syncretism assumed that trusting Christ alone was not enough to deal with the vise-grip that the cosmic powers held on people. The gospel of Christ needed to be supplemented with additional ‘wisdom’ (Co. 2:23), with rituals and ascetic practices and with mystical experiences in order to help people survive in a world dominated by forces beyond their control.

In Colossians, syncretism was, in effect, replacing the power of Christ to liberate with another power. Although Christ was being taught, Christ was being taught in such a way that limited His power, and conversely, gave to another the power that was due to Christ alone. In Colossians, syncretism could be seen as the need for Christ and another teaching or power. Therefore, incompatible ideas were being taught which diminished the power of Christ while elevating the power of something else.

In our world today there are rampant examples of syncretism; yet we do not always have the eyes to see them. Richard Twiss points out that having the American flag, along with the Christian flag, in our worship services is syncretism as it highlights a theology of the nation which does not match well with the theology of Jesus Christ. To this idea, Twiss adds, “The result is a unique Americanized version of Christianity that directs attention away from identity in Christ and his kingdom.” There are many other ways in which syncretism effects our theology. Dean Flemming refers to a Barna survey and highlights, “According to one survey in the United States, one in ten ‘born-again Christians’—people who claimed a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as their savior—believe in reincarnation after death.” Other examples could be seen in hoarding, materialism, the idea of having to “keep up with the Jones’s,” or any other teaching or philosophy that adds to or takes away from the complete teaching of Jesus Christ. Flemming is correct in stating, “In practice, the lines between syncretism and cultural relevance are not always easy to draw.” However, when one replaces the teaching of Christ with another teaching, or when one elevates another teaching to the same level of

authority and power as the teaching of Christ then one has committed an error of syncretism. Contrary to syncretism, contextualization is quite different in that it yields complete authority to Christ, not to culture.

Contextualization is using ideas, practices, stories, traditions, history, and the like, to make clearer and more personal the teaching of Jesus Christ. If syncretism is applying culture and ideas in a negative way, elevating them to the level of Christ, then contextualization is applying those same elements in a positive way, a way that points solely to Christ alone. Twiss declares,

Contextualization is a relational process of theological and cultural reflection within a community—seeking to incorporate traditional symbols, music, dance, ceremony and ritual to make faith in Jesus a truly local expression... Critical thinking and retraditionalization are key to the good contextualization efforts arising among Indigenous communities.

For true contextualization to take place people must recognize God's Prevenient Grace that is evident in all cultures. It has been already stated, and seen in the stories above, how God was active in the visions and dreams of the Host People of the North American Continent through God's Prevenient Grace. Yet a reminder is necessary to be able to understand that God's active presence in history, traditions, cultures, and other expressions goes beyond dreams and visions. Where there is good in culture, there God is already at work. Twiss, in his discussions on contextualization, reminds his readers, "We must genuinely appreciate all cultures as being capable of reflecting biblical faith." Twiss' statement must not be overlooked or undervalued. To contextualize the gospel, in order to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ into a culture, we must first "*genuinely*

appreciate” that culture. If one does not love the culture, the history, the traditions of a people, then one will not be able to contextualize the Gospel into that culture.

Contextualization is the pattern that God set in history. A brief understanding of Scripture reveals that it has always been God who entered the story, even when it was messy. God entered the story searching for the lost after sin created a messy relationship. The first thing God asks is, “Where are you?” (Gen. 3:9 [NIV]). God did not stand aloof, but entered the situation, revealing early on how God would deal with the problem of sin—by entering in. God entered the cries of a people in bondage to Egyptian slavery by calling Moses, the man who fled after killing an Egyptian 40 years earlier, to return to Egypt. Moses was instructed to go back into the world he came from and lead the Hebrew people away from slavery. However, to lead them to the new place Moses first had to enter where the people were.

The pinnacle of God entering the culture of a people was when God chose to become a human, born into a Hebrew culture that was dominated by the Roman world. Scripture reminds us that The Creator “became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14 [NIV]). The Creator came to our world and entered it, with its customs, history, traditions, expectations, and hopes. Eugene Peterson summarizes the verse, “The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood” (John 1:14 [The Message]). God entered in and chose to use that culture to tell a greater story.

The Story did not stop after God moved in. After Jesus, God the Son, was crucified and resurrected, Jesus gave his followers instructions to follow his example of

entering in. We are told to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15 [NIV]), or as Eugene Peterson states it, “Go into the world. Go everywhere and announce the Message of God’s good news to one and all” (Mark 16:15 [The Message]). The command is to go, not simply to the world, but to go *into* the world, and there to proclaim the Good News! Like God, Like Jesus Christ, like the Apostles, believers are sent into the world, a world full of cultures, traditions, histories, and ways of expressing life and stories. These expressions are the canvas on which to paint the story of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Not all experiences of early missionary encounters with Native American Indians were negative. As was stated above, Chief Spokane Garry had a positive experience when he learned the ways of following Christ, and Spokane Garry shared that experience with others. Chief Garry was not the only positive influence in the past for Native American ministry. There were others like Rev. Samuel Austin Worcester and Rev. Elihu Butler.

Rev. Worcester and Rev. Butler lived with the Cherokee people in Georgia. They learned their language and helped them publish newspapers. According to Rausch and Schlepp, “Worcester believed that the use of Native American language was crucial in understanding their culture and teaching the Christian message to them.” Worcester translated the Bible and other gospel materials into the Cherokee language. In 1829 the state of Georgia began to confiscate Native American lands because of the presence of gold. Both Rev. Worcester and Rev. Butler were outspoken and opposed the land seizure and were both arrested and convicted of a misdemeanor. They served four years for their offense, doing labor on a chain gang the entire time. Upon their release, Rev. Worcester

and Rev. Butler joined the Cherokee people “in their forced evacuation to Oklahoma.” Worcester did survive the journey, lived the rest of his life with the Cherokee people, and continued to minister and help the people. Rausch and Schlepp state, “He printed the Bible and an almanac in the Cherokee language, established the Park Hill Mission for the Cherokee, and organized numerous study groups, social services, and clubs for Cherokee of all ages.” Both Rev. Worcester and Rev. Elihu ministered to the Native people by assimilating into their lives and teaching the Gospel among their culture and traditions, and even using their language. They brought Christ into the world of the Cherokee people.

The example of Rev. Samuel Austin Worcester and Rev. Elihu Butler act as a reminder that there is indeed a great way to minister to people within their own context. True to the nature of following Christ, the Gospel was better received when, according to Rausch and Schlepp, it was “a gospel that was backed up by a visible Christian Life.” Although the truth of that statement seems apparent, churches must wrestle with another apparent truth: often churches still would rather assimilate Natives than to minister among them.

More recent statistics and polls show that the church has not moved too far from where it was during the earlier “pioneer” days of ministry to Natives. Rausch and Schlepp declare, “As late as 1958, over one-third of the White Protestant workers among Native Americans advocated complete assimilation.” As difficult as that is to hear, even in our more recent era, the truth gets even heavier. According to those same authors, “Among Roman Catholic missionaries, the number of strong advocates for assimilation

approaches 45 percent. Only about 10 percent of both Roman Catholic and Protestant White workers held Native American culture in high esteem and wanted it preserved.” It seems as though today the errors of past generations are being repeated. However, when looking at the good of the past, along with the idea of contextualization, a trajectory towards the future becomes clear.

Evangelism that will work in the future is evangelism that includes and involves Native American Indians in the leadership and ministry. Involving Native Americans in leadership not only involves the person, but it involves the person’s culture, traditions, history, language, ceremonies, and the like. Contextualization of the Gospel to Native American Indians would include smudging, powwows, the Native drum, dancing, Native regalia, and even Native stories as a pallet of colors to paint the Gospel on the canvas of the hearts of Native American Indians. In other words, the Gospel must be assimilated into the life of the people the Gospel seeks to reach. This is being explored and done by people like Richard Twiss (prior to his death) and the music of Janathan Maracle who applies Native styles to contemporary songs. This does not mean the message of the Gospel is changed, but that customs and traditions are used in a sanctified way, pointing towards Christ, to proclaim the Good News.

Native leadership is required and necessary to know what is redeemable in culture and what should be avoided. The wisdom and understanding of Elders and those who know Tribal culture is of paramount importance. Those who know the culture are those who know best how to apply the cultural traditions and customs to the message of the Gospel. However, one cannot only submit to the Elders for their wisdom. For too long the

leadership in the church has been dominated by Anglo ministries who come to “help” the “poor Natives.” Natives, therefore, have been the recipients of ministry. God has much more in store for the Native church that goes beyond cultural advice. God desires to use Natives in all aspects of ministry.

In every culture, people are saved not simply so that they “go to heaven when they die.” People come to a saving, transforming work in Christ so that they are useful in the Kingdom of God here and now. Too often people have been allowed to skirt their responsibility in the Kingdom to fulfill Christ’s command to go to our world. Natives also have been ministered to, but they have not had the expectation to be ministers. Craig Stephen Smith boldly declares, “We must move quickly from the receiving end of ministry to the participating end, and we must tangibly reach out and be a blessing to even those who have done us wrong in the past, and make His last command our first concern.” Smith believes that when Natives accept the challenge to a role of ministry beyond receiving help the entire world will be blessed. Smith writes,

When we go to the Gentiles (i.e. Native Americans), we reach them so that they too will become involved and aid in the process of taking the gospel to the ends of the earth. This must be the motivating factor in why we do missionary work among and tribe worldwide, so that they will move from beyond the recipient of missions to that of the participator. That holds true for the missionary working among the professionals of some European country to those working among the Stone Age tribes of Irian Jaya. Oh, and just a reminder, the cultures that we look at as the most backward, and unlearned are the ones that God wants to use to do some amazing things worldwide through!

According to Smith, the task of those who minister to Natives is not simply to help them come to saving faith in Christ; there must also be a challenge and a call to send

Natives out in ministry. The purpose of this is to evangelize the rest of the world. Smith agrees, “From my observations, not only can we do it, but I believe that world evangelization would be accelerated, when Native American missionaries go to the world. This principle, to me, has been the key mission link to the growth and establishment of a strong Native church.” The future of the Native church is Natives ministering in and through the church to reach the entire world. Those who work with any undervalued people group would agree with Smith when he writes, “I live for the day when we will be seeing missionaries sent out from our Indian churches to be a blessing and reach the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. When that happens, world evangelization will be enhanced, expanded, and enlarged.” The world needs the ministry taught through the eyes, culture and traditions of Native Americans.

In conclusion, in the Mission Valley there is a vast group of people who identify as Native American Indian. For many reasons, the church has not been able to connect well with this demographic. It could be that because of times of forced assimilation by other ministries and other churches, the Native American Indians view church as a “white man’s” idea. It could be that ministries fail to fully contextualize the gospel to a Native audience. The future of the Native church in the world, and especially in the Mission Valley, is a future that includes Native cultural elements, and a future that encourages Native believers not to simply receive the Gospel message, but to be sent out into the world sharing the Gospel message. There is a future in Native American Ministry for Christianity to redeem its past with contextualization efforts and Native leadership that are both done for the glory of God.

Chapter 3 – A Guiding Missional Ecclesiology

Up until this point, a foundation and description of the context of the Mission Valley of northwest Montana has been laid. Now, it is important to lay a theological foundation that describes the purpose of the church – ecclesiology. To be missional, the church must understand what its mission and purpose is. The mission and purpose of the Church is to be the Missional, Elect Kingdom/Kindom of God. With that description in mind, it is necessary to dissect the description to better define the terms “Kingdom/Kindom of God,” “elect,” and “Missional.” In this chapter a discussion will be laid out on what is the “Kingdom of God”, then redefine for a Wesleyan audience what is meant by “elect”, followed by a definition of the term “missional.” This chapter seeks to define these terms to lay the foundation for a path forward in the Mission Valley.

Defining “Kingdom/Kindom”

To begin with an understanding of the Church as the Kingdom of God could be problematic in the Mission Valley. Due to the varying cultures of the context, the term “kingdom” must be clearly defined. Many Native Americans have a negative view of the word “kingdom” due to colonization that happened in the past. When other kingdoms “discovered” the North American continent there were many tribes and nations living on these lands. However, the colonizers claimed the land for their kingdom across the sea and they claimed the land for the “Kingdom of God.” Since the pain of colonization is

still present on the Reservation, using the term “Kingdom of God” to describe the Church could have a negative result.

On the other hand, the non-Native inhabitants of the Reservation do not always understand the pain caused by using the term “Kingdom of God.” For many non-Natives, the term does not have a negative consequence, but that does not mean that the term is benign in any way. Quite often, the term “kingdom” can carry destructive overtones with its use. For example, many who use the term may think of the domination and conquest that kings, emperors, or other kingdom and national leaders have carried out in history and are carrying out in the present. For these people, defining the Church as the “Kingdom of God” may insight passions of conquest for the “sake of God” and, fearfully, may lead the Church back into the ideas that caused churches to be agents in colonization, or more specifically, agents of the United States Government to “Christianize” Native American peoples. Therefore, although many non-Natives may not feel a negative response when the phrase “Kingdom of God” is used to describe the Church, that very phrase could cause a negative response to Natives American people and, at the very least, it could continue to fracture the Church that has many different understandings and responses to the term “kingdom.”

Although the Church is defined as “The Elect Kingdom of God,” a new *understanding* of “kingdom” must take place. The term “kingdom” must be understood as “community.” This is not to say that the term “kingdom” should be replaced with the term “community.” It is to highlight that this kingdom does not operate like any other kingdom that has been seen or will be seen on the face of the earth until Christ returns.

The Kingdom of God, although it is a kingdom, operates like a large global community that interacts with other, smaller, communities, in a non-domineering way all the while pointing to the larger, worldwide, and cosmic Kingdom.

There are a couple of ideas to borrow to make this understanding clearer. The first idea is from the book *A Native American Theology*. The authors of this book, unfortunately, do not discuss ecclesiology in the book. A reason for that is because for Native Americans all of life is interconnected. All of life is about maintaining proper relationship with the community and the world. The Native American way of life and “spirituality” is integrative. Everything is circular and one aspect of life addresses and touches another aspect of life. An understanding of the Native American definition of “good” helps to inform an ecclesiology that is community oriented. The authors of *A Native American Theology* declare, “For the individual, good is long life, good health, and happiness. It is achieved by remaining in proper relationship to all people, all beings in the physical world, and the spirits.” For the Native American, living a “good life” is of utmost importance. What is valuable is the Native definition of a good life: a proper relationship with all. The idea of community reflects the value of a “good life” for Native American contexts. The interconnectedness of relationships and life is also reflected in some of the ideas of Benjamin Valentin and his book *Mapping Public Theology*. The brief discussion towards the end of the book about the “kingdom of God” provides a theology of community and is a very helpful tool and approach to the idea of becoming community with others in order that God’s order could be known. Valentin’s discussion is dependent upon the ideas of Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz in *Mujerista Theology*. Valentin

highlights Isasi-Diaz' discussion of community and kinship. Valentin writes,

Besides doing away with the sexist, elitist, and hierarchical connotations conjured up by the term 'kingdom,' her (Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz) theological reconstruction of the Judeo-Christian concept of the kingdom of God along the lines of 'kinship' helps us both to envision God as the source of wide-embracing connectivity and to ascribe importance to the common humanity that ultimately links us all.

Valentin continues, and directly quotes Isasi-Diaz, stating, "When the fullness of God becomes a day-to-day reality in the world at large, we will all be sisters and brothers – kin to each other; we will indeed be the family of God." The understanding of the Kingdom of God as *community* or kin is a better representation of what God intends the Kingdom to be like and it is an idea that is easier understood, and easier to be a part of, for Native American contexts.

Although a better understanding of the term "Kingdom of God" is necessary, the term kingdom is not completely shunned in describing the Church. Using this term directs our attention away from nationalism and it directs our focus from being consumed completely by citizenship in our earthly countries, nations, and kingdoms. In other words, the term "Kingdom of God," directs followers of Christ everywhere to think about their role in God's Kingdom and not solely about their nation and country. The Apostle Paul assists in this thought. Paul declares, "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20 [NIV 1984]). Paul, in writing to the church in Philippi, reminds the Church everywhere that its allegiance is primarily to God and God's Kingdom. The term "community" rarely carries the idea of a large scale, global community that the term "kingdom" can provide. Simply stated, communities are small; kingdoms are large. Therefore, although the term "Kingdom of

God” can have negative implications, that term is still used because there is no better way to describe the all-encompassing perspective of the Church and its role in God’s plan for *all* of creation.

The Kingdom of God is a way of highlighting that God has a plan for all creation, a plan of restoration that gives hope and promise to all. Michael Goheen highlights that the Kingdom of God is a part of the grand story of Scripture. Everything in Scripture is an aspect of telling the story of God’s plan for the world. Goheen summarizes, “The kingdom of God can only be understood in terms of the content of that story: creation, sin, election, redemption present in the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, and consummation.” Jesus Christ inaugurates the New Way of Life that God has planned for all of creation. Jesus brings the Kingdom with him, but Jesus also demonstrates how to live as a part of that Kingdom in a new, radical way. Christopher Wright states, “The incarnation of God in Christ brings two new factors into our theology of mission: the inaugurated presence of the kingdom of God and the incarnational model and principle itself.” Michael Goheen clarifies that, “The kingdom of God breaking into the world in Jesus is about the goal of cosmic history. That goal is about the renewal of creation, which stands at the beginning of universal history.” This is what Jesus proclaimed when he began to preach. Jesus’ message was simply stated but it had profound, cosmic implications. Jesus’ message is, “The time has come, the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news” (Mark 1:14 [NIV]). Jesus proclaims that God is doing something new in him and Jesus invites the world to participate in that newness. Craig Van Gelder, and Dwight Zscheile summarize this idea stating, “The kingdom, or reign, of

God lies at the heart of Jesus's teaching and work, for it points to a different order for human life and community." Jesus brings the Kingdom of God as a part of God's unfolding story for the world.

The role of the Church is to participate in that Kingdom - to participate in the unfolding plan of God in the world. Individuals are invited into the Kingdom by Jesus' message and given aid by the Holy Spirit to participate in the Kingdom. This is often done, not through programs, but through the ordinary lives of the Church and the individuals who make up the Church. Van Gelder and Zscheile state, "God joins us in Jesus to participate with us in ordinary life and to announce God's kingdom or reign." Therefore, the Church in the power of the Spirit is an agent God uses to bring the Kingdom. The Church does not bring the Kingdom, she is merely the instrument God uses by God's Holy Spirit. Van Gelder and Zscheile state, "This is what it means to be sent into the world as the followers of Jesus who are called to participate in the mission of God as a sign, instrument, and foretaste of the kingdom." The Church is the instrument chosen by God, elected by God, to carry out God's mission of bringing the Kingdom of God to earth.

Defining "Elect"

At this point, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by the term "elect." Election has often been considered God's special favor on a person, or a particular group. That is a misunderstanding of the term election. More precisely election should be considered a special responsibility from God for a particular person or group. Michael Goheen

summarizes this idea, writing, “Too often election is understood strictly in terms of its benefits and the blessing of God’s salvation. Election, in this misunderstanding, is only for privilege and not for responsibility; election is so that the people of God might enjoy salvation, not be a means of salvation for the world. Election is about being a reconciled community but not a reconciling community.” This idea is very clear from the call of Abraham. God chose Abraham and made known God’s plan to bless the entire world *through* Abraham (Genesis 12:2-3). The entire reason God chose Abraham was so that God could bless the world. Christopher Wright makes this idea clear when stating, “...The first time we really see God choosing and calling someone – i.e., putting election into action – it is precisely not so that Abraham and his family alone get saved, but rather that by being blessed Abraham should become the agent of blessing to others.” This idea of election models the reason for God to elect or appoint any person or group; including Israel and the Church.

The Church is elected by God for the responsibility of bearing witness to God in our world; the Church is blessed to bless the world. Goheen summarizes, “Thus, to be elect in Christ means to be incorporated into his mission to the world and to bear God’s reconciling purpose for his whole world.” The purpose for election is so that the world will be blessed. Lesslie Newbigin declares, “The chosen people are chosen for the sake of the world. The mission of the Church is the clue to the meaning and the end of world history. But the Church does not exist for itself, it exists for the sake of fulfilling God’s purpose for the world.” Therefore, the Church exists, not for herself; she exists to bless the world and point the world to God’s unfolding plan. She exists to be the community

that displays God's Kingdom has come! Christopher Wright declares, "We have been chosen in order to be witnessing servants of the living God." For this reason, Lesslie Newbigin is correct to state, "We do not need to waste our time being anxious about whether God's Kingdom will come; what we have to be concerned about is whether or not we are being faithful witnesses to it now, whether when the Lord comes we will be found awake and alert." The Church's role is to witness faithfully to God's Kingdom as God's chosen people who invite others into the Kingdom.

The role of the Church is to be the elect Kingdom of God pointing to God's plan of renewal for creation that broke through with Jesus Christ. The Church is also an agent to model that election to bless the world with the benefits of the Kingdom of God. The Church is blessed to be a blessing. As the elect Kingdom of God, the Church is missional as she partners with God to fulfill God's mission.

Defining "Missional"

The term missional, in recent years, seems to have become a term that has been emptied of its real meaning. For most, the term missional means that the church or gathering has a component of mission. The argument seems to be that since the church is concerned about global missions, or local missions, and the church has a committed group of people who educate about missionaries and who try to fulfill the words of Jesus to "...Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you..." (Matthew 28:19-20a [NIV 2011]) that the church is, therefore,

missional. Milfred Minatrea declares,

Many leaders who hear ‘missional church’ respond that theirs is a very mission-minded church, assuming the term to be synonymous... Such churches view their role as sending and supporting those who have been ‘called’ to mission service. ‘Mission’ is therefore representative; church members pray and give so that others may go and serve. Just as churches have other programs, such as Christian Education and choral music, they also have a missions program. The word *missions* is but one expression of the church.

The above understanding is not a definition of what it means to be missional, but a definition of what it means to be considerate of missions and mission work.

Since the above misunderstanding of what it means to be missional is so pervasive, it is important to clearly define the term so that the rest of the project will be clear. At its root, the term missional is designed to describe a God who is on mission, the *Missio Dei*, and the Church participates in that mission in everything they do. Craig Van Gelder and Dwight G. Zscheile, in their book *Participating in God’s Mission*, help to define the term missional. In that volume they stress, repeatedly, that mission cannot be separated from the life of the church as though it were an auxiliary aspect of what it means to be the church; mission is the purpose of the church. They write, “The identity of the church lies within the triune God’s mission. Its very nature is inherently missionary.” The church *is* mission because it is rooted and called by God who also *is* mission. This is what it means to be missional: to participate in God’s ongoing mission in our world. It is to understand that the mission is ultimately God’s doing; the Church is simply God’s agent that God uses to fulfill God’s mission.

The Church is the instrument chosen by God, elected by God, to carry out God’s

mission of bringing the Kingdom of God to earth. To be missional is to understand that the Church's purpose is to fulfill God's purpose and God's mission. Lesslie Newbigin states, "The Church does not exist for itself, it exists for the sake of fulfilling God's purpose for the world." A missional church is one that understands its role in the larger unfolding story of God's plan. Milfred Minatrea, in the book *Shaped by God's Heart: The Passion and Practices of Missional Churches*, declares, "People in the missional church do pray and give so that others may go and serve; yet for them *missions* is more centered in 'being and doing' than 'sending and supporting.'" Mission is what the church *is*, not what the church *does*.

Jamye Miller, the pastor of a church in Grapevine, Texas, according to Milfred Minatrea, defines missional churches as, "Life-giving, image bearing, reproducing, multiplying, Christ-manifesting churches that glorify Him." Simply stated, according to Minatrea, "A missional church is a reproducing community of authentic disciples, being equipped as missionaries sent by God, to live and proclaim His Kingdom in their world." The missional church centers everything that is done around fulfilling their role in God's mission. Mission is who the church *is*, not what the church *does*.

Being missional is fulfilling the Church's role in God's unfolding drama and plan. It is not about what we do, it is about who we become as God uses us to reach our world. Chris Sonsken declares, "God has a brilliant strategy to reach your city, and you are it." Sonsken later declares, "The knowledge of this strategy comes with a sense of big spiritual responsibility. But what is even more sobering is that God does not have a plan B. The Church is God's Plan. The Church are the ambassadors of God's message of

grace. The Church are the ones called to deliver the hope of the gospel.” This idea is stated again by Henry Knight III when Knight writes, “Today God continues to work in the world, sharing the love of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. God intends for Christian congregations and communities to be a part of this mission of God.” Missional churches and missional Christians take seriously their role in God’s plan; there is no plan B.

Being missional is not about a list of programs or services that the church offers the world. It is not simply about praying about missionaries and sending those called to be missionaries to the mission field. Being missional is recognizing that our entire world, including our local communities, is a mission field. Being missional is recognizing that God has a plan, and is continually working that plan, to reach the world with the message of the Good News of the Kingdom that arrived in Jesus Christ. Being missional is participating in God’s mission as the elect Kingdom of God to bring God’s goodness to bear its fruit in our world.

Chapter 4 - Models of Organic, Missional, and Strategic Renewal

The Groundwork for Organic Ministry

Now that a basic understanding has been laid for what it means to be the Missional Church, it is appropriate to turn to the understanding of organic ministry and how these ministries can be missional in their approach. First, a definition of organic ministry must be provided. Then, major practices of organic churches will be noted. Finally, those practices will be tied back to the definition of what it means to be missional.

If one were to pick up Merriam Webster's Dictionary and look up the definition of the word "organic," the first definition one would read states, "of, relating to, yielding, or involving the use of food produced with the use of feed or fertilizer of plant or animal origin without employment of chemically formulated fertilizers, growth stimulants, antibiotics, or pesticides." Although relating to food production, this definition provides a brief understanding of what it means for a church to be organic. A closer look at the provided definition shows that the term relates to a process where no foreign material has been added into the mix. Everything that is used for the growth of the food crop is a natural element that assists the food crop in its own growth. This understanding is helpful to define what it means for a church to be organic: no foreign material is added to the mix of the life and ministry of the church; a church is *naturally*

fulfilling what is required for that church or gathering to be what God has called it to be.

Frank Viola and Neil Cole both offer helpful understandings and practices for organic ministries. Their input is extremely valuable in the understanding of what it means to be organic, even if, however, they do not fully agree with one another. Frank Viola defines the organic church as, “A living, vibrant, face-to-face community that has no other pursuit but Jesus Christ Himself.” Looking at Viola’s definition, one can see that nothing has been added to the necessary functions of the church. Viola defines the organic church as a church that is focused on Jesus Christ, and later states, “Members specialize in nothing-except Christ.” Viola is intentional about making certain his definition of organic is understood. Often, in Viola’s experience, people assume every intimate gathering of Christ followers outside the “normal” confines of a church building constitute organic ministry. Viola is adamant that a small, simple gathering does not always constitute an organic church. For example, there are certain house churches that are just like the institutional church that is not considered to be organic; they are just smaller. Viola writes, “*The Institutional Home Church*. This is simply a traditional church that meets in a house. A pastor leads it, a church service is followed religiously, a worship leader is in place, etc. The only difference is that the membership is smaller and the gathering place is a home instead of a building.” This difference is noted because, for Viola, an organic church is one that naturally develops without having the marks of the institutional church - marks such as an ordained clergy who is the designated leader and other designated leaders. For Viola, a church is only organic

if everyone is released to lead, while at the same time only Christ, through the Holy Spirit, leads.

Neil Cole also highlights the role of natural growth and development in the churches he planted. Cole writes,

These new churches we saw starting were different from others we had been part of. They were the result of planting the seed of the Gospel in good soil and watching the church emerge more naturally, *organically*. These organic churches sprang up wherever the seed was planted: in coffeehouses, campuses, businesses, and homes. We believe that church should happen wherever life happens. You shouldn't have to leave life to go to church.

These organic gatherings grow naturally, spontaneously, and miraculously wherever people live, work, or participate in leisure activities. Like Viola, Neil Cole separates the movement he experienced from the movement of the house churches that many seem familiar with. Cole states of these organic gatherings, “I never set out to start ‘house churches’ and am always a little surprised when I am considered an authority on such. We do not call them house churches. Instead, we call them ‘organic churches,’ to emphasize the healthy life and the natural means of reproducing that we longed to see.” Notice the emphasis on the terms natural, health, and reproduction. All organic things will naturally grow and reproduce because it is in their DNA to do so. This is what Cole highlights to understand what is meant to be an organic church. Cole also highlights the necessity of the organic church to grow wherever it is planted, not only in houses. Cole states, “Christ's church is not contained by any building, whether it has a steeple on the roof or a chimney.” An organic church, like Christ, will be found anywhere, be it a coffee shop, a parking lot, or a bar.

Many organic churches have similar activities or traits they practice which encourage their organic growth and multiplication. Organic churches tend to be small, have limited leadership, they regenerate new gatherings rapidly and are evangelistic. In these activities, they are indeed missional.

Organic churches are small. This is not stated to be prescriptive; it is rather descriptive. Neil Cole, of the smallness of organic churches writes,

We do not mandate that churches remain small and meet in homes; that would miss the point. We seek that churches be healthy and reproduce. The reason our churches tend to stay small is the dynamic life-changing property of a ‘band of brothers and sisters’ who are actively on mission together. There is an innate quality to our expression of church that causes them to want to remain small, intimate, and involved on mission.

For the gathering to be organic, it is very intimate. This intimacy and low attendance at these gatherings allow for a close-knit bond among attenders. It also allows for easier, natural shifts and changes in the organization and flow of gatherings.

These intimate, close-knit bonds also allow for leadership to be more easily shared and ultimately allow Christ to remain the leader of the gathering through the power of the Holy Spirit. Frank Viola repeatedly reminds those seeking organic fellowship about the importance of shared leadership. Viola declares, “Burn this into the circuitry of your brain: Everyone in the group should be on equal footing. There should not be a local member of the group who is designated as the leader or facilitator.” There will be times when individuals will lead, but there will not be one designated, supreme authority, other than Christ and the Holy Spirit. Viola clarifies, “You will be taking responsibility for your meetings and for the affairs of the church...

For this reason, it's important that there is no one acting in the capacity of a clergyman in your group. Leadership will come from the Holy Spirit through the body." For Viola, leadership will be mutually shared, but the supreme authority, is Jesus Christ.

Neil Cole, on the other hand, does not negate all human leadership, but does scale it down. Cole writes, "leadership is stronger with two or three." In writing about Paul's command that "Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said" (1 Corinthians 15:29 [NIV 2011]) Cole declares, "Paul suggests that only two or three prophetic voices should provide leadership to a spiritual community at any one time. The others are to pass judgment on the messages. There is wisdom in a plurality of leaders. But too many leaders can also be a problem." Cole would agree with Viola that it is God, through the Holy Spirit who distributes authority to people. Cole writes, "There is a vast difference between delegated authority and distributed authority." Cole explains that delegated authority depends upon one's position and relationship to the one who delegates authority. Cole also states that delegated authority comes through a chain or hierarchical structure. In the organic gatherings, authority is delegated to an individual directly from God and from no one else. Cole explains,

In a flat structure, one that does not employ a hierarchical leadership model, authority is still delegated, but not from layers above, only from the King Himself. Authority is distributed to each person to accomplish all God has for the person, without needing layers of intermediaries to pass that authority down. One's cover is found in his or her position in Christ, not in human positions above the chain of command.

Although Frank Viola and Neil Cole appear to disagree on certain aspects of leadership, they both would agree that human leadership is limited in scope and those

who are leaders have been set apart as leaders by the Holy Spirit, not humans.

Another key element of organic churches is that they regenerate or reproduce naturally; it is in their DNA. Neil Cole states that the understanding of church reproduction should be joyous and pleasurable, but usually the discussion is centered around division. Cole declares, “The way church multiplication has been taught scares people. It is often taught that when a group gets past fifteen in size, it is essential that it divide into two groups.” For Cole, this ideology is more akin to the idea of divorce and separation than the natural reproduction that occurs with true intimacy. If reproduction occurs naturally, the church’s outlook would be different. Cole explains, “Reproduction is the product of intimacy, and we are created to enjoy intimacy. Even among churches, reproduction is the product of intimacy-with Christ, His mission, His spiritual family, and the lost world.” If these close-knit, intimate communities are led by Christ and seeking God’s glory in Christ, they would find joy in reproducing themselves, naturally, into new areas of their city and context to draw more people into the Kingdom of God.

Neil Cole and Frank Viola would agree with the reproduction, or multiplication of organic communities, but they disagree with the speed at which this is accomplished. In Cole’s book, *Organic Church* numerous stories are highlighted about the rapid reproduction of organic gatherings across cities and around the world. Frank Viola is more reserved in his method of multiplication. A large portion of this is because Viola is very specific in his understanding of organic churches, and follows a stricter pattern than Cole does. Although Viola argues for slow multiplication, it is still seen as a marker for true organic ministry. In discussing how Paul, in the New Testament, led organic

churches, Viola declares, “Paul had built into the foundation of the church God’s heart for the world. As a result, the churches eventually multiplied organically and in season.”

Viola is not opposed to reproduction or multiplication, but for him it is a slower process that unfolds. Viola later states, “A church that touches the heart of Jesus will seek fresh ways to expose Him to the lost and make Him as attractive as He is in reality.” Although different organic ministries multiply at different rates, the DNA of the organic church is that it will seek the lost and reproduce in due time.

A discussion on multiplication leads naturally into a discussion of evangelism. There cannot be multiplication without evangelism. Like multiplication or reproduction different ideas abound about when is the time to evangelize. Frank Viola declares, “If you study the book of Acts carefully, you’ll discover that the early church had seasons of outreach. It also had seasons of inreach.” However, this does not negate the necessity of evangelism. Viola feels that, like multiplication, the foundation must be laid before people are sent out to evangelize. Viola states, “The time will come when the group will enter into a season of outreach (see chapter 20). However, in this season of beginnings, it is important that a strong foundation first be laid. This is essential for the long-term survival of your church. It will also create a solid and stable refuge for the lost to inhabit.” Viola feels that for the long-term stability of the organic community evangelism efforts should wait until the proper season. Viola explains, “I learned is that if you’re crawling as a newborn church, that’s not the time to begin evangelizing. A bundle of new converts with all of their personal problems intact will add three thousand pounds of weight to a newly born organic church.” Notice Viola does not negate the call to evangelize but does

negate the necessity of rapid evangelization. There will come a season of evangelization, but the proper foundation should be laid before those efforts begin. However, a part of the natural cycle of an organic church is that there will be a season of evangelism and growth.

Neil Cole echoes the idea of evangelism, but like reproduction, Cole moves to that season rapidly. Cole feels that the best evangelist is someone who has been dramatically transformed by Jesus Christ and declares to their network of friends what Jesus Christ has done. Where Frank Viola declares, “It’s a mistake to send babies out into the world right after they are born into a family,” Neil Cole argues,

When we allow, or even demand, that new converts wait and receive instruction and training before they can become workers, we are effectively granting them permission to be passive, inactive, selfish, and stagnant. This is exactly where many of our churches are. We have taught people to be consumers rather than workers. We have separated the workers from the harvest.

Evangelism, for Cole, is aided by the Holy Spirit who sends transformed people back into the harvest field that they once were lost in, but now as laborers. Cole explains, “The workers for the harvest must come from the harvest.” Cole is emphatic that “Each new convert is a new worker. We sin when we expect the convert to wait a while, any time at all, to become a worker. Each new convert is a worker-immediately.” For Cole’s experience, the newly converted have the aiding of the Holy Spirit even if they do not have the maturity provided through experience. Cole feels they will receive that maturity as they receive experience. This rapid evangelization, for Cole, leads to rapid reproduction.

It appears that in Cole’s experience, evangelism becomes a way for the organic church to multiply, but this is a different goal than what Frank Viola feels is necessary.

Frank Viola argues, “Those who push for rapid multiplication seem more interested in using the church as a technique for evangelism rather than as the corporate expression of Jesus Christ that stands for God’s ageless purpose.” Both Cole and Viola agree on evangelism, but their season for it is different based upon their purpose for their organic gatherings. The purpose for Neil Cole’s gatherings is to reach new people who can be transformed by a relationship with Christ. Frank Viola sees the goal of the organic church to create a new type of community that will, in season, reach people who long for this community; neither one is incorrect, but they have different goals and purposes for their organic communities.

Although different authors and leaders in the organic church movement have different understandings and goals for their gatherings, four ideas seem to be present. They all are descriptively small, have limited leadership, they eventually multiply and reproduce, and they see the need to evangelize. Some gatherings go through these markers more quickly than others, but the organic church naturally will do these things in due season. In this regard, these gatherings are indeed missional.

Remember, mission is not something churches *do* but who churches *are*. Frank Viola declares of his expression of the organic church,

The big picture is God’s eternal purpose in Christ—the *Missio Dei*. Christ is the center of that purpose. Thus, He is the focus of our meetings. He is the subject of our conversations, our concentration, our sharing, our songs, and our fellowship. Christ alone. When something other than Christ takes center stage in the life of a church, it has contracted spiritual myopia. The church gets derailed from its proper center. It doesn’t exist for God’s ageless purpose, but for something lower.

Neil Cole also recognizes the need to be missional. Cole explains that when he

originally set out to plant a new church it was going to be its own coffee shop.

However, the Holy Spirit convinced Cole that he needed to go to the coffee shops that already existed, and already had people who frequented them, and plant organic communities there. Cole states,

That was a turning point for us. Our original strategy required us to "convert" people from the coffeehouses they already loved to our coffeehouse so that we could then convert some to Jesus. The Lord of the harvest, once again, had a better idea. This simple transitional lesson meant the difference between becoming just another attraction-oriented "y'all come to us" form of church to actually becoming a missional and incarnational church that goes to the lost.

Christ and His mission are the focus of the organic church. Everything else flows, naturally, from that focus.

Church Renewal Strategies

Another focus in the church is church renewal. Some pastors chose to plant new churches to create a missional atmosphere, but other pastors and leaders seek to stay in the current congregations and renew them to be missional. Although there are different techniques or strategies to revitalize a local church, the least common denominator is a church that is willing to look beyond itself, see their context and community, and be incarnational and missional within that community.

In laying out the foundations for church renewal and revitalization Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson declare, "The wrong question is whether your church is 'traditional' or contemporary' and which is better. The real issue is whether your church is biblically faithful, acting as the presence of Christ in the community at large, able to relate Christ to people in culture, and is on mission. In short, is your church 'missional'?" For Stetzer and

Dodson, church revitalization stems from a church's efforts to become incarnate and missional in its context. They state, "Churches are rediscovering the need to focus on the mission of God and be missionaries in their communities." They explain, "Comeback leaders often described that developing a renewed belief in Jesus Christ and the mission of the church as vital to making a comeback, and they led their churches to live out a missional focus." Everything else in their book to help churches revitalize, whether its small groups or updated facilities, stems from a church being actively involved in its context.

With the clarification that revitalization stems from a church becoming missional, there seems to be two key elements of missional revitalization for local congregations which go hand in hand: service – both in the church and to the community, and evangelism.

If the goal of a church is to become missional and bring the good news of the Kingdom of God to bear witness in the church's culture, then the church must be aware of, and actively engaged within, that culture. Likewise, for people to be missional and learn to bear Christ into their world, then they must be willing to serve both their church and their world. Kent R. Hunter declares, "Serving is a privilege for you to experience the fulfillment of God working through you." For a believer to understand their full potential in Christ, the believer must be willing to serve the church and the world. Quite often a Christian can practice serving the world while serving in the church. There is no better place to learn one's gifts, talents, and abilities and practice them than in the church. Once those giftings are practiced, that Christian can use them to serve the world and make a

difference in their community, glorifying God in the process.

In practicing service in the church, and then perfecting that practice in the world, Christians begin to make a difference in their communities. In the book, *The Externally Focused Church*, Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson remind followers of Christ about ministering to people while meeting their needs. They state, “Ministry is simply ‘meeting another’s need with the resources God has given you.’” This is true for an entire church, but it is also true for individuals who make up the church. In the body of Christ, individuals have been given resources that are entrusted to them by God to be used to make a difference in the world.

When a local church begins to love their community enough to serve their community the world takes notice. Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson declare, “People know that a serving church is a different kind of church.” When the world sees the church serving and loving, practicing being incarnate in the community, the neighborhood will notice. For a church to truly love its community the church must be active in serving that community. Love without action is useless! Stetzer and Dodson explain, “As you begin to love your community, you’ll likely discover some community needs that aren’t being met. By starting a particular ministry you’ll not only help your community, but you’ll build relationship with unreached people who have those particular needs.” To truly love a community, to truly be missional in a community, requires service to that community. Anything other than service is short of love and makes the church a gathering of people who have withdrawn from the neighborhood for a short while to be encouraged, but who do not make a difference in their world. A church that does not serve does not make a

difference. This church must answer “No” to the question that Andy Stanley poses, “Are we making a measurable difference in our local communities or simply conducting services?”

The truth is God desires for churches to make a measurable difference in their community. God has designed the church in such a way to provide that difference and transform the community into a more holy place than it would be without the church. Rusaw and Swanson remind the church that, “The church has a place in creating healthy, transformed communities. Churches do not have the luxury of withdrawing from the community. Whether they feel wanted or not, churches must realize that the community cannot be healthy, and all that God wants it to be, without their active engagement and involvement in its life – that’s the way God designed it.” God wants to use the church to transform the community it is a part of to transform the world. It is generally agreed that the ultimate transformation takes place when an individual is transformed through a relationship with Jesus Christ. Yet, the opportunity for evangelism, often, comes along with an opportunity for service. Howard Snyder reminds the church, “Evangelism is both the preaching of the good news and the demonstration of the good news.” A church that serves its world is a church that evangelizes and makes an impact on its world. A church that does not serve the world, has no influence. Rusaw and Swanson are pointed, yet correct, when they state, “Take away service, and you take away the church’s power, influence, and evangelistic effectiveness.” For evangelism to be effective, there must be service. When there is service, there is evangelism.

This leads into the second major, missional strategy for revitalization; evangelism.

Stetzer and Dodson write, “Those churches that have the desire to be revitalized will want to engage in intentional outreach efforts, become active agents of community service, and pray for the Spirit of God to draw people to Jesus.” Here these two authors link, again, the importance of service with evangelism. However, at the same time they highlight the need for evangelism to be *intentional*.

It is true that relationships with the unchurched are important. One cannot evangelize effectively if one does not know who to share the good news with. It is important to recognize that God places followers of Christ in certain relationships to be useful in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with those people. Kent R. Hunter challenges the church to share the gospel with the people we know best. Hunter states, “Christians share the gospel more effectively with those who speak their language, have similar lifestyles, work similar jobs, and like the same music. This is an extension of the incarnation.” The personal, one-on-one, relational aspect of evangelism cannot be overlooked. Thom S. Rainer provides insight into personal evangelism and declares, “The formerly unchurched in our study left little doubt as to the importance of personal evangelism in reaching the unchurched. Over one half indicated that someone from the church they joined shared Christ with them.” Personal evangelism is an important aspect for individuals in a missional church.

Personal evangelism is important, but it must also be combined with intentionality from the church. In speaking about comeback churches, Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson state, “According to our study, most of them develop and implement a more strategic and intentional process for evangelism.” Most of the churches that were revived did so

because of intentional, evangelistic efforts on the part of the entire church. Stetzer and Dodson summarize, “Comeback churches think and live evangelism.” This effort does not push the evangelistic efforts onto the overloaded responsibilities of the staff, but it encourages the entire church to be involved in personal evangelism and to assisting with the church’s corporate efforts to evangelize. Kent R. Hunter highlights that in intentional evangelistic efforts the church encourages all the people to evangelize where God has placed them. Hunter writes, “In Kingdom drift, we have isolated outreach as the work of staff and the organization. In the same stroke, we have insulated the mission from a people-group-sensitive approach.” When a church is intentional about evangelism, all people groups that missional followers of Christ associate with can have the opportunity to hear the good news.

Also, when a church is intentional about evangelism, the responsibility to evangelize the community is a shared responsibility. Thom S. Rainer highlights the importance of the entire church’s evangelistic effort in an insight he received. Rainer writes, “The majority of the formerly unchurched who were personally evangelized also told us that someone made an effort to see them within a month of their visit to the church. While the building of relationships with the unchurched is critical, we heard repeatedly that an evangelistic visit, even by a stranger from the church, had an eternal impact.” Not only was someone personally evangelized and invited to the church, but another person from the church also made an effort to visit the formerly unchurched. Many people were involved in the evangelism and witnessing efforts.

For a church to be missional, there must be an element of evangelism; both

personal and corporate. Missional churches do not forget their God designed mandate to be sent out into the world as bearers of the good news of Jesus Christ. Missional churches evangelize through serving others, serving the world, and directly sharing the good news with those they encounter. Members and attendees of missional churches also participate in the church's corporate, intentional evangelistic efforts. Churches that participate in these efforts are churches that are revived as they put God's mission above everything else.

Missional Strategies for Faith-Based Communities

After looking at both organic ministries and renewal strategies and having identified some of the practices of each group, a decision can be made as to what practices that faith-based communities, seeking to be missional, should participate in. Based upon the research, those practices are as follows: intentional intimacy, leadership by the Holy Spirit with a focus on shared leadership of the people, seeking to reproduce, serving the community, and evangelism.

The elaboration of these traits is seen in the discussion above. However, a couple of points of clarity are needed. When this chapter discusses intentional intimacy, it is not to prescribe that these missional, faith-based communities should be small. In the church renewal strategies (where intimacy was discussed) the emphasis is on small groups where people can be knit together closely. Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson explain, "An effective system of small groups can be the Velcro that holds the revitalization process together... Having smaller groups of people meeting together allows new people to connect in an

environment where they can be appreciated and encouraged in a meaningful way.” In missional, faith-based communities intimacy can be created in the regular gathering or by emphasizing small groups, or both.

Leadership by the Holy Spirit, where leadership is shared among the people, seemed very necessary for the organic ministries. In many large churches there seems to be a grandiose system developed for leadership. However, if the goal is to equip people to be a part of God’s mission, those who are in leadership must be willing to equip others for leadership and their task in the mission. Kent R. Hunter highlights how he discipled people into leadership. Hunter explains, “As a Christ-follower, I follow the four steps of discipling.: (1) I do / you watch; (2) I do / you help; (3) you do / I help; and (4) you do / I watch.” For Hunter, the role of leadership is to share that leadership task with others and develop them into the next leaders. Hunter states the idea best by saying, “The real fruit of an apple tree is not apples, but another apple tree. Volunteers add to church programs. Disciples multiply the movement.” For a gathering to be missional it must encourage all in becoming disciples in order that they can become the leaders.

Seeking to reproduce and multiply can sound like a daunting task for any gathering. This chapter seeks to clarify that the goal should not be to regenerate or multiply, but like Frank Viola cautions, the goal is to seek Christ. As the gatherings seek Christ, Christ would lead them to multiply. Multiplication and reproduction should be the by-product of seeking lost souls as a part of God’s mission. Therefore, reproduction begins with serving the community and evangelism; it is the natural, organic outflow from those efforts. God calls the community to be faithful, but God will provide the fruit

in due season.

Serving the community is necessary to be missional. Serving the community is how the mission of God is made incarnate in the neighborhood that the gathering is a part of. The Message paraphrase of John 1:14 reminds the church that “The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood” (John 1:14 [The Message]). If the gatherings are not moving into the neighborhood to serve, how are they being missional; how are they following the example of Jesus Christ? Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson again explain, “Missional churches are deeply entrenched in their communities.” Once the gathering serves the community, the gathering incarnates God’s goodness to bless the community. There is no doubt that the community will notice that this gathering is different.

Serving provides a natural, organic way to evangelize the lost. Through serving the community the faith-based gathering can engage the lost. Serving allows the people of the gathering the opportunity to publicly live out their faith, and then provides them the opportunity to share their hope. Scripture encourages the followers of Christ to “Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks why you’re living the way you are, and always with the utmost courtesy” (1 Peter 3:15 [The Message]). Through serving the community, Christ followers will be provided with the opportunity to engage with the neighborhood, and then they will have the opportunity to share why they are doing what they are doing. Evangelism is not about a formula; it is about being a witness to what God has done for an individual personally.

However, there must also be an emphasis on evangelizing our friends and neighbors, our circle of influence we are already a part of. Neil Cole is determined that people who are transformed by Jesus Christ must be encouraged to share and witness to that transformation with their friends and family. That circle of influence will see the transformation lived out in front of them. Ultimately, people must be willing to share the good news with those in their lives. Cole is correct in saying, “If you do not plant the seed, you will never have a harvest - never.” If the church wants to see the world transformed with the message of the gospel, it must be willing to sow those seeds.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to create a better understanding of multiple foci in churches. The first area of focus is an understanding of organic ministries and some practices of organic ministry. After that, an understanding of church revitalization has been provided with a closer look at missional practices in the church revitalization movement. Finally, a brief look at general, missional strategies are discussed for missional, faith-based communities to practice. Those strategies are intentional intimacy, leadership by the Holy Spirit with a focus on shared leadership of the people, seeking to reproduce, serving the community, and evangelism.

Chapter 5 – Thesis

Missional, faith-based communities provide the solution to the problems of missional engagement for the ministry of the Church of the Nazarene in the Mission Valley. The training of leaders to shepherd missional, faith-based communities allows for ministries to be established in areas of the valley that are aimed at reaching that very specific community, whether Anglo, Native American, or a mix of multicultural persons, in an organic, missional way. One aspect of this specific target that must not be overlooked is the Native American Indian population. Native American Indians live in many of the valley's communities, and they seem to have been forgotten by the church. However, the feelings of being forgotten spread to all areas of the valley and into all ethnicities that call the valley "home." This idea of being forgotten is seen in the location of the churches that minister in the valley. The churches are tied to the city centers and town centers, thus, calling members and attendees away from their neighborhoods where they live, ranch, and build communities, into the towns or cities for worship and ministry. Instead of providing the opportunity to engage missionally and worship corporately in specific neighborhoods and communities, many of the churches have built larger facilities and invite worshipers away from their neighborhood for worship and missional engagement. In short, the areas on the outskirts of the cities and towns, the "farm fields," the Tribal housing developments, the mobile home communities, and other neighborhoods and subdivisions have been forgotten. Those who live in these places are

invited into the towns and cities to attend “White Man’s Churches.” For these reasons, neighborhood specific, missional faith-based communities are essential for full missional engagement to occur in the valley.

This solution is not a solution that desires the planting of more large churches. The most recent reports from the 2010 census detail 48 Christian churches in Lake County, Montana. Most of these churches are located in the cities where there is a larger, sustainable population like Polson and Ronan. The valley does not need more churches who call people away from their neighborhoods and communities. The valley needs ministry “outposts” scattered through all, or many, different neighborhoods. The planting of churches in the ways of Nelson Searcy and Aubrey Malphurs consume immense amounts of resources, both financial and personnel. Most churches in the valley cannot afford to utilize their financial resources and personnel resources in ways that create another church-as-a-business in a specific neighborhood. That model is no longer sustainable in the Mission Valley. However, if a church in the valley, for example the Pablo Church of the Nazarene, is willing to reach into a neighborhood and utilize shared community space, a living room, or a barn, the financial burden is decreased for the “traditional” church campus. The missional, faith-based community becomes an extension of the Pablo Church of the Nazarene, thus adding to the resources it currently has. The plan entails that the people who live within that specific neighborhood and community would be trained by the pastor of the local church, through the provided curriculum, to shepherd alongside the pastor in that missional community.

This solution is not a solution unless someone is willing to train lay people to

shepherd these missional, faith-based communities. The communities are to engage in missional practices and worship, but someone, or preferably a small group of around five to twelve people, must be willing to lead the missional engagement and worship practices of the faith-based community. There is no feasible way that one pastor can do it all, especially since the training pastor will already be leading the “traditional” campus. The pastor must be able to train people to lead and shepherd the new missional, faith-based communities. The pastor needs to be equipped to guide the young leaders through the discussions of where to locate the missional community, how to be missional in that community, and how to meet regularly for worship within that community. Admittedly, the pastor will be encouraged to lead by example for a short while. The expectation is not that the pastor and the leaders would attend the training sessions where the curriculum is taught, and the pastor then sends the new leaders into the community without the pastor’s continued guidance. The pastor, as the leader of leaders, must model to the leaders what was taught in the curriculum. Therefore, for a brief amount of time the pastor must be involved but with the understanding and expectation that the pastor will eventually hand the mantle of leadership to the those who have been trained to lead that specific community. Once this is accomplished, the pastor can focus on other missional, faith-based communities in other neighborhoods. However, once the pastor hands the leadership over to the lay leaders, the pastor and leaders must recognize that the new missional community is an extension of the “traditional” church and therefore communication must remain constant among the pastor and the leaders of the missional communities.

The proposed model for training leaders to shepherd missional, faith-based communities, is a model that does not consume immense resources from the local church. It is a model which is intended to steward resources, including the resource of leadership, while adding to the pool of resources available for the entire local church. Furthermore, it allows each missional community to model its worship and missional engagement in a contextualized and specific way for that community. The leaders and the missional community are equipped to decide what worship is like and what it means to be missional in that community. This eliminates the need for program specific ministry to begin a missional community, and ultimately, eliminates the idea that the missional community must look, act, and feel a certain way.

For these reasons, this project proposes a curriculum designed to train lay leaders to begin missional, faith-based communities in their neighborhoods and communities throughout the Mission Valley of Northwest Montana. These missional, faith-based communities will incarnate what it means to be the “Missional, Elect Kingdom of God” in very specific communities and very specific ways throughout the Mission Valley. The leaders will be instructed as to where to locate the missional community, what it means to be missional – based upon the provided strategies of missional engagement, and what it means to worship within their missional context – including what it means to contextualize worship for their context. The provided curriculum is intended to be a continual resource for the missional leaders. Although it will be utilized during the training of leaders, the intention is also that it can be referred to frequently as the missional community grows and engages its neighborhood. The artifact is not a handbook

of what to do, but a manual for how to think missionally in a given context.

PART II

Chapter 6 - Discussion of Artifact

In training leaders to plant missional, faith-based communities, it is necessary to provide a simple answer to the question, “What must be done in order to plant a missional, faith-based community?” This chapter seeks to answer that question in as simple a manner as possible while encouraging those who seek to plant a missional community to be faithful to their context – their neighborhood. This chapter has been adapted into curriculum, and that curriculum is provided in the appendix of the dissertation. What will unfold in the following pages is a discussion of four biblical principles and foundations for incarnational engagement: how to decide the context of ministry, knowing and experiencing the context, what is entailed in being missional in that context, and the challenge to meet regularly for worship within that context.

Biblical Principles for Incarnational Engagement

There are four basic, biblical principles that guide missional, incarnational engagement. Those four principles are the inherent worth of every human being; God through prevenient grace is active everywhere and God’s presence goes before those who engage missionally in their communities; God provides all that is good; and, lastly, God is an incarnational God and God invites God’s followers to be incarnational as well. These four basic principles lay the foundation for the ideas of missional, incarnational

engagement of communities that the leaders are trained to think about. Although alluded to in the previous pages, a brief look at these principles is necessary before continuing onto the rest of the leadership training.

It is imperative that those who engage missionally recognize the inherent worth of everyone and the inherent worth of their community. Too often, people, who are worthy to God, are overlooked because people deem them unworthy. However, missional leaders must recognize the worth of the people that they encounter daily in their neighborhoods and grocery stores. God recognizes the worth of all people, and those who declare themselves to be followers of God should also recognize the value in themselves and in others. It is on the first pages of Scripture that all humans are declared valuable and integral to the unfolding of God's mission. After creating the heavens and the earth and the birds and fish and plants and trees God pauses and ponders the creation of the next beautiful thing: humans. Scripture declares, "Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:26-26 [NLT]).

From the very beginning of their creation, humans were declared worthy by God. Humans have been created in such a way that they can mirror and reflect God. Indeed, sin has marred that ability, but within the creation of humans there is the innate worth because each human has been given the opportunity to reflect the Creator's goodness into the world. This idea of human worth and value is reflected by the Psalmist in Psalm 8.

The poet declares that amidst all the beauty of creation, humanity has the attention of God. The poet writes, “When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you set in place—what are people that you should think about them, mere mortals that you should care for them?” (Psalm 8:3-4 [NLT]). The Psalmist is baffled at his worth as well as the worth of all humanity in comparison to all of God’s great work. Yet, the poet is convinced that he, as well as other humans, is valuable in God’s sight. In Psalm 139, the poet again declares the worth of humans by stating that humans are known by God, the Creator, while they were being formed in their mother’s wombs. All humanity is indeed valuable to God, and all humanity has worth. This is clearly seen in the mission of Jesus Christ. The Gospel according to John declares that Jesus finds all people to be valuable. In John we are told, “For God loved the *world* so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that *everyone* who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16 [NLT] *italics added for emphasis*). God places on all humanity and sent Jesus Christ for everyone. Everyone the missional leaders will encounter is valued by God.

Missional leaders must be willing to view the inherent worth of the people they encounter. Everyone is valuable to God; therefore, everyone should be valuable to God’s imitators. Many people in the world do not understand their inherent value. Therefore, it should be a part of the ministry of missional leaders to show people their value. Father Gregory Boyle writes, “There is a vastness in knowing you’re a son/daughter worth having. We see our plentitude in God’s own expansive view of us, and we marinate in this.” Too often people do not see God’s view of them, but only the world’s view or their

own negative view of themselves. It is one thing to know that people are inherently worthy, but quite another thing to declare to people that they are worthy, and that God has an “expansive view” of them. This outlook changes people. Father Boyle, in writing of a ministry that transforms people’s view of their worth declares, “Homies stare not the mirror and pronounce ‘EMPTY.’ Our collective task is to suggest instead ‘ENOUGH’ – enough gifts, enough talent, enough goodness. When we have enough, there’s plenty.” As those who are trained to engage missionally and incarnationally in their communities, a part of that training needs to emphasize the worth of people and to declare that the people in the community are enough and have enough.

Our communities and the people in those communities are valued by God and they have an inherent worth. This inherent worth weaves through the story of God’s grace and becomes a reminder of prevenient grace – the grace of God active in every person’s life and all communities, whether people are aware of it or not. Prevenient grace is the grace that leads to salvation. The Apostle Paul declares, “...No one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3 [NLT]). Paul attributes the work of the Holy Spirit in people’s lives leading them to the moment of confessing the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Since God loves everyone, God’s grace is bestowed upon everyone, by the power of the Holy Spirit, with the intention of leading them to salvation. Prevenient grace means that God is active in everyone’s life.

Since God is active in everyone’s life, God is also active everywhere. This means that God’s presence is everywhere! God speaks to and through the Prophet Jeremiah and declares, “Can anyone hide from me in a secret place? Am I not everywhere in all the

heavens and earth?” (Jeremiah 23:24 [NLT]). Since God is active everywhere, when people engage their communities missionally they engage them with the understanding that God is already active in their community. Janathan Brooks, in writing about his missional ministry in Chicago states, “God was not waiting for me to arrive to begin the process of transformation. The Spirit of God had been present all along. I was just now joining the work. There was far more transformation happening then I realized.” For Brooks, and other missional leaders, it is important to remember that God has begun the work, not the missional leaders. Being missional has at its root the idea of *partnering* with what God is already doing – this is God’s mission that God has invited people to participate in and share with. The leaders are called to partner with God in what God is already doing.

God’s presence everywhere also means that there is no place that God’s presence is absent. Although this is a restatement of what has already been said, it is imperative that missional leaders do not ignore God’s presence. It is easy, and quite common, for people to agree that God’s presence is everywhere in one idea, but then in the next idea those very same people talk about “terrible” places that God must have forgotten – the “God-forsaken” places. However, because of prevenient grace and God’s presence everywhere, there should be the constant reminder that there are no “God-forsaken” places. Janathan Brooks quotes John Fuller and makes Fuller’s statement the thesis of his book *Church Forsaken*. Fuller states, “There are no God-forsaken places, just church-forsaken places.” Missional leaders and missional communities seek to be the presence of the church in church forsaken places. These communities and leaders highlight what God

is already doing. They do not bring God to their neighborhoods and communities, because God is already there. They simply highlight what God has been doing and continues to do through them in their communities.

As the missional leaders engage their community, they not only have the promise and reminder of God's previous presence, but also God's continual presence. Jesus Christ, the one called Immanuel, God with us, commands his followers to "Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20 [NLT]). Jesus' followers are commanded to take the message and example of Jesus' incarnation and life into the world. However, they are promised Jesus' continual presence while they fulfill that command. As Jesus' followers live out his command, Jesus assures his followers of his continual presence.

Prevenient grace is God's action in people and communities throughout the world in all places. Missional leaders recognize that prevenient grace and partner with what God is already doing. As missional leaders do this, they have the promise of God's continual presence with them. God's grace goes before and with missional leaders and missional communities. Since God is active in the world, there should be signs of God's presence. In fact, there are. Those with eyes to see what God is doing will recognize God's presence through everything that is *truly* good.

The good that happens in communities, homes, and businesses is a way to see what God is already doing as missional leaders engage communities and neighborhoods.

The New Testament declares that if there is good, God is active. James writes, “Whatever is good and perfect comes down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow” (James 1: 17 [NLT]). For James, it is clear; if there is something good it is from God. Jesus clarifies that only God is truly good (Mark 10:18). If something is truly good, it cannot come from human origins; it must come from God the creator and giver of good. Janathan Brooks reminds missional leaders that they must be trained and willing to see the good along with the bad. Brooks declares, “... We have to realize that every person and every place displays both the glory of God and the brokenness of humanity at all times. If we are unable to see either, there is something wrong with our vision, not with the place or the person.” Brooks recognizes that not everything that happens in neighborhoods and communities is good and is not calling leaders to ignore that there are negative things that happen. However, Brooks is reminding leaders that if God is at work, then there will be some evidence of that. Therefore, mission leaders and their communities, need to be able to see the good as well as the bad in their neighborhoods. If they cannot see the bad, there is a problem with their vision. However, if all they see is bad, their vision still needs to be corrected.

The idea of God providing the good in the communities plays into missional incarnational partnerships. To engage missionally, no one must start from scratch and reinvent the wheel, so to speak. The good that is already taking place can provide a partnership for the missional community to engage its neighborhood. Quite often, the good that is taking place is present to assist in combatting something negative in the community, or it can be adjusted to combat a negative. Therefore, missional communities

should partner with the good taking place and find ways to highlight God's grace that is already active.

Finally, the last biblical foundation is a reminder that God is incarnational, and God invites His people to model that incarnation in their world. Scripture makes it abundantly clear that God entered into human history at a particular time and a particular place. The Creator of the Universe became a human and entered into the neighborhoods and communities He engaged. In doing this, Jesus Christ made God known more fully to the world (John 11-5; 14; 18). However, those who follow Christ are not simply called to recognize that God is incarnational, and God entered into human history. Followers of Christ are called to imitate God. The Apostle Paul declares, "Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children (Ephesians 5:1 [NLT]). There are many ways followers of Christ can imitate God. However, one way that should not be ignored is the imitation of incarnation. God entered into neighborhoods and communities and followers of Christ are commanded to do that too. Church forsaken places were discussed above. Remember, the idea is that God is present in those places, but the church is not. Once God's people take seriously the call to be incarnational and to missionally engage their neighborhoods and communities there will be no church forsaken places. Janathan Brooks writes, "There are no God-forsaken places. And when God's people practice presence in the neglected neighborhoods all around us, we can say with confidence that there are no church-forsaken places either." Once people become missional, they are, by definition, compelled to enter into their communities in incarnational ways highlighting what God is already doing and allowing God to show through them even more.

The four biblical principles build on each other and overlap each other; they are the foundation for missional, incarnational engagement. Those four principles, stated above, are everyone has worth and value, God's grace is active in everyone and everywhere, the good in our communities comes from God, and God is incarnational, and His followers are also called to be incarnational. Without the four principles understood there can be no missional, incarnational, community.

Know the Context of the Missional, Faith-Based Community

The first step to becoming a missional, faith-based community is to decide and discern where the missional community will locate its center of mission. The location of the missional community is important in that its location will assist the missional community in reaching the people of the neighborhood it ministers in. The missional community must be able to decide what neighborhood or space to gather in because this place and space will “ground” the ministry in the community. Aubrey Malphurs, in discussing the space of ministry explains the importance of the ministry location. Malphurs declares,

The church's facility is a part of the new church's ministry. It's a place that facilitates ministry in some way. Either it's the place where we gather to worship together or it's the place from which we launch out into the community to do ministry, and the people in the community will connect us with the facility. It's their way of identifying us and knowing who we are and where we're from.”

Although Malphurs mentions the idea of a facility, his focus is not so much on the facility, at this point, but upon its location in the community. As far as facilities are concerned, Malphurs states, “It doesn't matter as long as it serves as a means to facilitate worship and outreach.” The location of the gathering, therefore, is important as it

becomes the launching point for missional interaction within the community context. Since the location is the center of missional interaction, leaders must be careful in how a location and ministry context is chosen. Malphurs advises, “We would be wise to locate the new church plant not just where we can afford the land or rent, but in a locale that is strategic to reaching the community.” What is true about investing in real estate is true about investing in a community as a missional gathering. It is all about “location, location, location.” The context of the location will determine how missional interaction takes place.

The choosing of a place of gathering and as a center for missional interaction in the community is important because it allows the goodness of God to become incarnate into a local community. J.R. Woodward and Dan White Jr. remind missional leaders that, “Certainly the truth of God is universal, but it first must become local.” The goodness of God must be declared in local communities around the parish of missional engagement. The goodness of God cannot have universal affect until it affects local communities first. Woodward and White continue their idea stating,

The kingdom of God invites us to faithfully embrace a place. The local space is where all our wishes and dreams work with the people and resources of a neighborhood. Based in a particular place, we are called us to open our eyes to what is present there, to behold the weight of our neighbors’ glory, as C. S. Lewis has so eloquently stated. We must acknowledge that God’s dwelling is already tied to the neighborhood, the streets connecting us to each other, the homes we eat in and the parks that we play in. Our first orientation as a place-based community must be to look, listen and learn. What is here? Who is here? What is God doing in this place?

The idea that has been highlighted repeatedly is that being missional in a local context does not happen automatically. Woodward and White stress, “Being a place-based church

does not happen haphazardly. How can our presence have a sense of purpose? How can it live out the truth that God's kingdom is breaking in among us?" The emphasis remains. The place and space from which leaders begin to engage their communities missionally must be thoughtfully considered before choosing. However, once the location, or portion of a neighborhood or community is chosen, then there are other questions about how a missional, faith-based community will engage in its context.

Most people are already rooted into a community or neighborhood because it is the place they live, work, and spend most of their life. It is not advisable to consider being missional in a context or community that one is not already engaged in. Christopher James, in writing of engaging missionally in the neighborhood context, declares, "The primary context in which they locate themselves is not the city qua city but, rather, their own neighborhood with its particular corners, cafés, and characters." Even in "parachute drop" styles of church planting, those who enter a context, to missionally engage that context, usually move to that neighborhood, and engage in life within the community. Clint Clifton, in writing of his experience in church planting, states, "It's difficult to express how much living in a community helps you understand it. When we moved to our mission field, we immediately formed dozens of relationships with people living there." The idea of getting to know the context will be explored more; however, it must be stated early that the neighborhood connection is the best way to know the ministry context. Therefore, in training leaders to plant missional, faith-based communities, the training will encourage leaders to begin a missional community in their own neighborhood. Simply because one lives in a neighborhood, one may not completely "know" the

neighborhood. Once a neighborhood, or context, is decided upon, the leaders must begin to know the context.

For leaders to begin to know their context, the leader must realize that there are two different aspects of knowing. The first aspect of knowing is knowledge based upon facts, statistics, and simple data. In New Testament Greek the word *eido* carries with it the idea of knowledge based upon what is observed, the data so to speak. However, there is another idea of knowledge that the Greek work *ginosko* carries. This word carries with it not only the idea of knowledge based upon observation, but a deeper knowledge, or understanding, based upon relationship and experience. In knowing and understanding a context it is important to know the data of a community, but it is more important to move deeper into understanding and experiencing the community. Therefore, it is important for missional, faith-based communities, and their leaders to be deeply rooted and involved in the “life” of their community context. Simply knowing data about a community can tempt the leaders of missional, faith-based communities to overlook the people who live in that context. Leaders see people as numbers or resources, but not as people who are important to God. J.R. Woodward and Dan White Jr. state, “The biggest temptation we face is to overlook people, seeing them as commodities to serve my needs, not people who matter to God.” The data that is collected must cause missional leaders to dive deeper into the community in order that they could know more about the *people* the data represents. Data is a beginning of knowledge about a community, but it cannot replace personal connection.

In getting to know the context of the missional community, leaders need to study

the data of the context to exegete it faithfully. Woodward and White write,

...We need to interpret our cultural context. This is a basic task for every missionary. Exegeting a culture is an art and a science. It is understanding the people and place God has called us to inhabit, so that the power of the gospel might fully connect and be transformative. When we live with a missionary mindset, we will observe what is more important to our neighbors, what they worship, what they fear, what they believe and what they idolize.

Understanding, interpreting, and exegeting the context *must* begin with hard data research.

The parameters of the context must be established to fully understand the context of ministry. As stated above, the space and place of the center of ministry will determine how the faith-based community will engage missionally within that context. Christopher James highlights the idea of the “Neighborhood Incarnational” model of ministry, and James discusses this approach’s benefits for all churches or communities that seek to be missional. James states, “Neighborhood Incarnation (NI) churches are deeply rooted in their local communities and their corporate life is shaped by the proximate needs they discern.” The importance of the NI model is that it stresses the local community. However, this model can have an impact on all sorts of missional communities. James, states, “Church planting leaders might respond to this missiologically promising current not only by adopting the NI model but also more broadly by encouraging urban church plants to reach clarity regarding the parameters of their context—whether that be a school district, Zip code, city limit, or, alternatively, a specific ethnic or subcultural group in the city.” The approach of the NI model that James Christopher highlights is the approach of the missional, faith-based communities proposed in this project. This model highlights

the importance of clarity in the parameters of a neighborhood that is to be reached. Once the parameters are established, research about the context and supporting data can be acquired.

Leaders of missional, faith-based communities must not overlook this step of acquiring and interpreting data regarding the community they seek to engage missionally. If missional communities seek to be incarnational within a specific context, those communities must learn something about that context. Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im encourage leaders to, “Do your research using census data, economic profiles, and other databases to learn demographic, socioeconomic, cultural, ecclesiographic, and spiritual information about the focus group(s). Effective missions and church planting methodologies are contextual and indigenous, meaning the planter lives, speaks, and thinks as though he were ‘from the area.’” Research is paramount in beginning to understand what makes a context a community. Research is the first step for a missional leader to understand the neighborhood with whom leader seeks to engage and share the goodness of God in Christ. Stetzer and Im also highlight the further importance of not oversimplifying the data and erroring in the exegesis of a community by believing the false truth of averages. Sometimes, data can be looked upon too simply, and certain groups, or demographics can be overlooked. They write, “Researchers may be able to avoid this problem by focusing on area tract studies (available at public libraries and online) instead of larger, potentially more diverse area-focused studies.” Stetzer encourages other areas of research beyond the census data and large research reports based upon zip codes or school districts. Sometimes, those avenues of research are too

general and the research that is needed and most useful will come from research of smaller neighborhoods in a zip code or school district.

Also, it is important in acquiring data not to overlook the personal aspect of data. This idea blends easily into the next topic of getting to know people of the community. However, sometimes those relationships can be formed in the data collection phase of missional engagement. Collecting data *can* be the beginning of missional engagement because sometimes the best source of data are the people of the context and their views, hopes, and understanding of the context. Stetzer and Im use the term “soft data” to explain the idea of data collected from people, not official researchers, and studies, about the community. They state, “...’Soft data’ surveys with community leaders, local people-helping agencies, etc., will provide additional verification.” It is often important to hear from people within the context about their perception of the context. Their dreams, passions, understandings, and concerns will fill in the gaps left unfilled by hard data research.

The second aspect involved in knowing the context of missional engagement is getting to know the people of the context. This moves beyond knowledge about *some* place and into the realm of perceiving, understanding, and having relationships with the people of that place. This taps into the idea of being in the neighborhood discussed above. The leaders of the missional, faith-based community live in the neighborhood to be a part of that neighborhood as missionaries to and for that neighborhood. J.R. Woodward and Dan White Jr. state, “If we want to imitate Jesus, we need to be with our neighbors, with the network of people we feel called to as a community on mission. Being with people is

about hanging out with them in their apartments or at work, at the coffee shop, at an art show or a party. Being with our neighbor is learning about their dreams and desires, their hurts and their hopes. We need to become a character in the community.” As missional leaders, and missional people connect with their neighbors they move from being an “outsider” into being an “insider.” As leaders become insiders, they build rapport with the community context and they get a greater understanding of the people and networks within the context. Getting to know the neighbors and the neighborhood breeds an incarnational approach to missional engagement.

An incarnational approach to ministry involves connecting with the people in that context. Woodward and White write, “The road less traveled involves a go-and-be-with approach to mission, which is incarnational.” This approach to ministry requires the missionaries to go and be with people to learn about them and understand their perspectives of life and faith. This is contrary to the approach that calls people from the context to come out of their context to see what God is doing. Instead, this approach asks people to stay in their context and know what God is doing in their neighborhood.

Knowing the neighbors and learning about them has mutual benefits. The neighborhood benefits from the engagement of the missional community on a personal level, however, those in the missional community benefit from the neighbors. This benefit goes beyond knowing how the neighborhood is structured into knowing specifically who in the neighborhood can fully benefit from the missional community’s engagement, as well as who is more receptive to assisting the missional community. In short, getting to know those in the neighborhood will allow the missional community to

learn of persons of peace who can be of great assistance for connecting the missional community with others in the neighborhood.

A person of peace is a powerful ally to have in community missional engagement. Woodward and White declare, “One way to start on the missional-incarnational journey is to find persons of peace and enter into the community through them.” Clint Clifton explains that “A person of peace is someone with a large network of friends or business contacts in your mission field who shows an interest in helping you. This person may or may not be a Christian, but for whatever reason they are friendly toward you and are willing to give you access to their network of relationships.” The person of peace is the ally in the context who connects those in the missional community to the rest of the context in a greater way. This person can be a resource to better understanding other individuals in the neighborhood as well as someone whose reputation the missional community can “borrow” to have greater rapport in its ability to connect with others. Neil Cole states, “The person of peace becomes the conduit for the passing of the message of the Kingdom to an entire community of lost people. The person's reputation gives credence to the message and becomes a magnet for a new church. A poor reputation can often be the catalyst for a dynamic church as the whole community sees the life-transforming power of Jesus.” If leaders of a missional, faith-based community do not take the time to learn, relationally, about their context, those leaders will miss out on the benefit of a person of peace who will be a great ally and channel for greater missional, incarnational connectedness.

Those who seek to engage a context in a missional, incarnational way must learn

the context, not only through data but through relational connections. If missional communities cannot connect with the people of the neighborhood, those missional communities will become simple Bible studies with no incarnational engagement. J.R. Woodward and Dan White Jr. powerfully remind missional leaders that, “Before we think of changing the world or our city, we need to get to know our neighbors. Neighbor is not an abstract, overspiritualized principle. We are linked with our next-door neighbors, and we can choose to connect or not.” Missional communities must connect with the neighbor, learning from them and engage with them. Once relational connectedness occurs, the missional community will have a greater understanding of how, exactly, to be on mission in that context.

Be Missional in the Context

For a missional community to know how to engage missionally in its context it must first know the context and then be faithful to live according to God’s Mission in that context. JR Woodward and Dan White Jr summarize this idea stating, “Followers of Christ are called to live out an alternative story in the local neighborhood.” Simply stated, the practices of a missional, faith-based community will be formed out of knowledge of a particular context – the neighborhood. The overall purpose of this section is to highlight the necessity of being missional and rooting that into the knowledge of the community context; mission will flow out of knowledge of the context.

First, a brief reminder that being missional is to be about the *Missio Dei*, the Mission of God. God was incarnate in Christ, and therefore those who seek to engage

missionally in their context and neighborhood must also be incarnate in the neighborhood. Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im remind missional leaders that, “Since God is a missional God, Christians are missional people. It is woven into the fabric of our DNA. Mission isn’t just a compartment for a church; it is the church’s entire system.” Although their intent is to remind every church that every aspect of the church’s ministry must be about mission, the point is clear for missional gatherings; it must be in their DNA to be missional among their neighborhood context. Scot McKnight makes this point clear stating, “Being missional can only begin when we turn bodies into neighbors.” Therefore, the reminder of Louie Bustle and Gustavo Crocker is appropriate that “Each new church must establish an identity in the community where it is going to work.” Being missional is rooted in God’s character and flows from the knowledge of the community that is learned through data and through getting to know the community. Once the community has been exegeted, then it becomes clearer how the missional, faith-based community can engage the neighborhood context.

Proper research and proper relationships with the neighborhood are foundational for a faith-based community to be missional. Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im explain, “While building relationships, the church planter may discover opportunities to offer support for meeting group members’ felt needs, such as a class focused on parenting, addictions, or weight loss.” Again, it is through the relational, incarnational aspect of knowing the community that these decisions can be made. Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, in their book *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned around and Yours Can Too*, also highlight this relationally formed understanding for ministry. They write, “As you begin

to love your community, you'll likely discover some community needs that aren't being met. By starting a particular ministry you'll not only help your community, but you'll build relationship with unreached people who have those particular needs." Prayerfully, the meeting of these felt needs, and the relationships missional communities have with others in the neighborhood context, will lead to meeting the *real* need. Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im state, "...High-trust relationships will afford the planter opportunities to introduce group members to the answer for their deepest need—a lasting relationship with Christ." Stetzer and Im stress that meeting "basic" human need is important for mission and ministry; however, they also remind missional leaders that unless they are seeking opportunity to introduce people to Jesus Christ those leaders are simply providing humanitarian services. Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson, in their book *The Externally Focused Church*, emphatically highlight the same idea. They declare,

Good deeds can draw people into your church and into relationship with Christians. But good deeds, in spite of all the wonderful things they can accomplish, are not sufficient to lead a person to saving faith in Jesus. Good works can be the bridge or the road, but they are not the saving message that crosses that bridge or travels that road. Good works are the complement but never the substitute for good news.

It must be emphasized that humanitarian services and good works are not bad; however, the aim of a missional, faith-based community must be to introduce people to the God whose mission the community is a part of.

Since the missional community is an active part of God's ongoing Mission, it must also be understood that God is the One who is on the Mission and God is already active on the Mission. The missional community must find its role in its specific context

as a part of what God is already doing in that context. In speaking of Neighborhood Incarnational churches, Christopher James states, “NI churches stress that God is on the move in the neighborhood and seek to discern and cooperate in this action.” In researching and getting to know the people of the context, the leaders of missional, faith-based communities will begin to understand what is needed in that context and how to engage incarnationally within that context. The missional leaders will also have a better understanding of what God is already up to and what God is calling the missional, faith-based community to act upon as a part of God’s ongoing Mission.

Another aspect of missional engagement is recognizing that the God who is already on Mission may be working through other agencies and organizations. Partnerships, therefore, are a faithful way for missional communities to engage incarnationally in their context without having to “re-invent the wheel,” so to speak. It is also important for the missional community to recognize that it cannot do all and be all for the community. The missional, faith-based community must be willing and able to partner with other ministries and other organizations to be incarnate in the community. JR Woodward and Dan White Jr. remind missional leaders that “An individual church should have no illusions that it can do all the kingdom work that needs to be done. So we need to be intentional about finding ways to partner across faith boundaries, political boundaries, denominational boundaries, class boundaries and race boundaries.” Partnerships are, and will be, important for missional, incarnational, ministry. It is also in these partnerships that relational bonds may be formed which will create a deeper relational, incarnational connection towards people in the community.

Partnership is not always about the actual doing of ministry. Many times, there is partnership in the space occupied by the residents of the neighborhood. Those spaces can become avenues of incarnational connectedness. This idea of partnership of space is often referred to as “third places” – the common shared places of the neighborhood beyond home and work. Christopher James describes third places as, “...Comfortable spaces for neighbors to experience belonging and enter into conversations beyond their homes and workplaces (first and second places, respectively).” James gives some examples of third places explaining, “...Third places have materialized primarily as coffee shops, event venues, community gardens, community meals, coworking spaces, and ‘neighborhood living rooms.’” This is not stated to highlight that the worship gatherings should happen in these third places, although they *could*. This is to state that incarnation and mission must take place in these third places because that is where people gather.

Third spaces are shared spaces for the entire community; therefore, they are spaces that conversation and partnership can take place – they are places for faithful witness. Woodard and White highlight, “The common space we indwell requires faithful presence, not one-off projects.” The idea is that the faith community must be willing to be faithful in these third places. Third places are not projects, but are the places where people gather. Some missional communities decide that there is a need to create third spaces for their context. These communities choose to do this based upon the desire for these spaces in the context. Christopher James, in writing about Neighborhood Incarnational churches explains how some of these churches have sought to have a public presence while also meeting a need in the community have created third spaces. James

writes, “Still, having a tangible, public presence in the neighborhood is a central strategy for these churches. Many have expressed this through the creation of ‘third places’—informal environments that foster bonds among neighbors.” These churches created third spaces because, apparently, that was the need that the community had. The church created a presence in the community but also created a space for the community; the space was created as a partnership and shared space.

Although there is no prescription, Christopher James has offered some practical suggestions in the following discussion. James suggests,

Several concrete practices that church planting leaders can encourage include naming churches after a specific neighborhood; designating a specific community as the context in which hospitality and mission efforts will be focused; gathering for worship in a well-trafficked site near the center of the chosen parish; hosting special church and community events in nearby public spaces and third places like parks and community centers; partnering with a local school, nonprofit, or business that provides an asset to the community; holding pastoral office hours at cafés within the parish; patronizing local businesses; displaying a map and images of the context in the worship setting; and requiring staff and encouraging members to live in the neighborhood. Church planting leaders, additionally, may find it advantageous to plant several neighborhood-focused churches in nearby neighborhoods in short succession or simultaneously, as this can promote collegiality and reinforce neighborhood identity.

These suggestions are very helpful and entail all that has been discussed above. Notice, however, how clearly James places stress on the specific neighborhood, the idea of partnerships and the use of third spaces to engage missionally in the context.

Missional engagement is driven by the knowledge and understanding of the context. Whatever that engagement looks like, it must be faithful to the context. Therefore, knowledge and understanding of the context is so important. Missional engagement beacons the missional community to meet the felt needs and necessary needs

of the context, to partner with what is already happening in the context and enjoy the third places of the context – and possibly create a third space if necessary.

Meet Regularly for Worship

While information is being gathered, while the people in the context of the missional community are being met, and while missional engagement is taking place, it is imperative that the missional, faith-based community meets regularly for worship. Scripture is clear in this regard. Hebrews 10:25 states, “And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near” (Hebrews 10:25 [NLT]). It was important for those who received the letter of Hebrews to be reminded of the need for them to gather, because it was believed that the day when Christ would return was very short. Gathering would allow the community of faith to be encouraged of its hope in the return of Christ. If the faith community needed that encouragement and reminder during the first century, why should faith communities today feel exempt from this encouragement? Another passage of great significance for this study is found in the book of Acts. Readers are informed,

...All the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved (Acts 2:44-47 [NLT]).

This passage is a reminder that as the faith community engages with each other in a worshipping community the Lord does something amazing; the surrounding community

begins to join in. When missional, faith-based communities meet regularly for worship, the Lord does something miraculous. Meeting regularly for worship is imperative.

It needs to be stated that this idea is not always accepted among church planters. Aubrey Malphurs, for example, states “...When does the development stage end and the focused preparation for the birth event begin? Most church planting teams will start too soon. People tend not to feel that they’re a church unless they’re involved in a large-group worship service. Resist the pressure.” Malphurs cautions the rush of meeting together for corporate worship. Malphurs’ understanding comes from his scope of church planting; Malphurs is focused on planting large churches that are identified by a “grand opening” style event. Much of the preparation is geared towards that event, and therefore should not be rushed. However, for the context of planting missional, faith-based communities, the corporate gathering of worship and invitation to the community to attend should begin as soon as possible. It grounds the missional activity of the community into worship of God. It separates the missional community from other humanitarian efforts. It assists in identifying the purpose of the missional community – to glorify God.

Although church planters like Aubrey Malphurs caution the speed of beginning worship services, the worship services are recognized by others to be a great evangelistic tool. Ed Stetzer and David Im write,

One of the most effective evangelistic methods a church can use is exposing the unchurched to the authentic worship of God. Unbelievers learn worship as they witness the worship of believers. Seeker-comprehensible worship gatherings create an experience of both God-centrality and openness toward the needs of seekers. Seeker-comprehensible worship is a gathering that offers God honor through worship and the preaching of the Scriptures while providing a relevant atmosphere in which unbelievers are challenged to come to saving faith in Christ.

Stetzer and Im recognize the influence that proper worship has upon unbelievers of the surrounding community. However, they challenge faith communities to plan their worship services in ways that engage unbelievers from the community. Although Malphurs cautions being too speedy in organizing the first worship gathering, his reasons are to make certain there is a greater chance of attracting unbelievers from the surrounding community. Malphurs writes, “Rather than attracting new people to Christ, many worship services are distracting them from Christ.” The concern is to make certain the worship gathering is appropriate and attractive. Louie Bustle and Gustavo Crocker echo this sentiment stating, “Your gatherings should attract rather than repel people. God does not often reveal himself in dead, dragging church gatherings. Where God is, there is life.” When the gathering is planned in such a way, “People will want to go to church because there is something that draws them to worship and serve the Lord.”

When considering the worship gathering, the missional community must consider the context of the surrounding community they seek to engage incarnationally. Incarnational mission does not cease when the worship gathering begins. Aspects such as music style, sermon delivery, sermon topics and texts, what the gathering looks like, how communion will be received, how the tithes and offerings will be received must be decided by the context and needs of the unchurched who might attend and how those elements give glory to God. In writing about music, for example, Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im state,

One way to determine the music is to know your focus group. What is their favorite musical style? Just like the frontier evangelist who adapted the tune of “Amazing Grace,” we must also write or adapt Christian lyrics suitable to that particular style. As the frontier evangelist might have said, “There’s no such thing

as Christian music, only Christian lyrics.” Change the musical style as needed without changing the gospel.

Music is identified as an example for the concept of making important the desires and needs of the community and neighborhood. Each worship gathering should reflect the culture of the context of missional engagement, sanctifying the culture in ways that bring God the glory. There is no set style or standard of worship, other than the standard to glorify God. The goal of the worship gatherings is best summarized by Stetzer and Im. They declare, “Churches should exalt God, edify believers, and evangelize the world. Worship services, first and foremost, should exalt God. This statement underscores the imperative of God-centered worship. Believers should also be built up in the faith. Finally, authentic worship can evangelize unbelievers.” The structure, flow, and elements in a worship gathering should honor God, encourage the faithful, be exciting for unbelievers. Also, in a missional, faith-based community, worship is aimed to reach the neighborhood context of missional engagement.

In meeting regularly for worship, the missional, faith-based community centers its missional engagement around the God whose Mission it is a part of. The worship services should be held regularly; they should be exciting, and they should be reflective of the needs and context of missional engagement. When this takes place, God will show up and bless the gathering in similar ways as God has done throughout history, including the book of Acts. In this regard, worship is not normal, but a conduit for Divine intervention. Louie Bustle and Gustavo Crocker state the idea well when they write, “There is no such thing as a normal church service. Every time your new church gathers, there must be an expectation from the congregation, and from you, that God is going to do something

special in that gathering.” When the missional, faith-based community meets regularly for worship, God will do special things for the missional community and for the neighborhood context. God will show up!

Conclusion

The entire discussion of how to be missional is rooted and formed in knowledge of the chosen context. After that knowledge is discerned and considered, then the missional community can have a discussion of what it would look like to be missional in that context. Finally, a large part of being missional in the context is the continued presence of faithfully worshipping God as a community in that context. In short, the process of beginning a missional, faith-based community is to decide on a context, learn about the context, meet the people of the context, engage missionally in that context, and meet regularly for worship while inviting unbelievers of the context to attend.

Chapter 7 – Conclusions

To draw a conclusion of the projects and proposed curriculum the author taught the curriculum at the Bible study for the MOVEMENT Church of the Nazarene (MOVEMEN), a satellite campus of the Pablo Church of the Nazarene in Polson, MT. MOVEMENT has existed for about three years and aims at being a missional, faith-based community. Teaching the curriculum was not only necessary for this project to draw conclusions, but it was also important for MOVEMENT's leaders to attend the seminars as it aimed to provide assistance for MOVEMENT to better do what it has been called to do in Polson, MT.

The curriculum is aimed to be a six-session discussion, however, for the MOVEMENT team the curriculum took nine session. This extended time allowed for more discussion and interaction before attempting to discuss new material. For example, session three, which looks at data took two sessions to discuss the material as well as session four where participants were encouraged to interact with the community during the week. Session six took three weeks because the discussion about worship was so rich and exciting. Also, each meeting time for MOVEMENT was a maximum of 45 minutes, where the curriculum is designed for each session to be a one hour to an hour and a half. It is highly possible that the allotted time given for each session should either be doubled, or the sessions divided into two sessions each. There might be too much information

contained in one session.

Before the discussions began, each participant was handed an “Entrance Survey.” The purpose of the survey was to have a general understanding of what the participants understood a missional, faith-based community to be. Likewise, after the sessions were completed another survey with the same questions was given to each participant to complete as an “Exit Survey.” These two surveys provided a simple benchmark to be able to detail whether the curriculum completed what it proposes to complete – encourage volunteers to plant and shepherd a missional, faith-based community.

To understand the survey, a brief discussion is necessary. Each survey contained four statements. Those questions are as follows:

- I understand what it means to be “missional.”
- I understand what a “Missional, Faith-Based Community” is and does.
- I desire to be involved in a Missional, Faith-Based Community.
- I feel equipped to being and plant a missional, faith-based, community with a group of leaders.

For each of the statements the participants rated their personal agreement with the statement on a scale of one to five. One being in complete disagreement and five being in complete agreement. The surveys were completely anonymous and there was no procedure in place to track the scores of any individual person. When looking at the

Below is the detailed table of both surveys and the scoring.

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detailed as a score of “12” in the “Entrance Survey” had increased to a score of “19” at the “Exit Survey.” That is an increase in 7 points – the greatest increase of all areas measured. Based upon these results, the conclusion is that the curriculum works.

The author admits that there are some issues with the survey and with the group that participated in the discussions. The survey was completely subjective and those who took the survey know the author of the project. It is possible that participants scored themselves higher because of their relationship with the author. Although the instructions were clear that honesty was important, it is very likely that participants could have skewed their personal results because of their relationship with the author. The other issue is that the author also was the facilitator for the discussion. In the curriculum, the facilitator is not intended to be the author, but a pastor or another missional leader in a local congregation. Although the metric shows that those who participated had improvement in missional understanding and thinking, that might not have been because of the curriculum, but because the author, who wrote the curriculum, was able to teach in ways not directly provided for in the curriculum. Therefore, the metric could show the ability of the facilitator, not the ability of the curriculum. The curriculum presented in this final project has considered that possibility and has been reformatted since the discussions with the MOVEMENT group to better assist any facilitator who chooses to lead these discussions. To be open and transparent, the curriculum should be taught by someone else with a different group. The same surveys should be given before and after the curriculum is presented and a clearer understanding will be available to discern how effective the curriculum is for both facilitator and participants.

In conclusion, this project has proposed a solution to the problems of missional engagement from churches within the Mission Valley of Northwest Montana. The project sought to provide a curriculum whereby volunteers are trained to plant and shepherd missional, faith-based communities in various neighborhoods and contexts throughout the valley. Based upon the small control group from MOVEMENT in Polson, MT it is concluded that the thoughts, theories, theology, and practices detailed in this project are effective to train volunteers to plant and shepherd missional, faith-based communities in the Mission Valley of Northwest Montana.

There is the possibility that this project could be expanded upon with additional “next steps.” After the missional, faith-based community has begun, there should be a process in place whereby the pastor of the local church can hand more leadership over to the leaders of the missional, faith-based community. This project focuses on the beginnings of a missional community but could be added upon in the future to detail a process of handing leadership over to the missional community. This process would allow the pastor to train other leaders to begin other missional communities.

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APPENDIX A

Implications of the Proposed Ecclesiology

A discussion on the implications of the stated purpose of the Church is important as it lays a foundation for the implications of missional, faith-based communities. Being a part of the Missional Elect Kingdom of God means to take seriously Jesus' example, specifically, the example of incarnation. Jesus, God the Son, became enfleshed as a part of creation. The incarnation has implications for how the Church is to be the elect Kingdom of God.

First, Jesus, as God become flesh, declares that creation is still good. Yes, sin has entered the story. Yes, a curse has entered the story because of sin. Yes, death entered the story because of sin. Sin indeed messed with the order and function of creation. However, sin, death, the curse, chaos, and evil will not have the final say on the matter. God still holds the final say. Creation is indeed still good as God declared it to be. Maybe a little marred, but it is still good. God the Son become flesh highlights that creation has not been completely given over to evil: God still finds it good and the parts that are marred are not beyond repair; they are redeemable. Jesus, according to Michael Goheen, brings the beginnings of God's plan to restore and redeem all creation back to its full potential. Again, Goheen states, "The kingdom of God breaking into the world in Jesus is about the

goal of cosmic history. That goal is about the renewal of creation, which stands at the beginning of universal history.” As the Kingdom of God we cannot overlook the importance of care for creation. If creation is still good, if God has a plan that includes all of creation, if God become flesh is a part of that plan, and if the Church is the representation of the Kingdom of God, then care for creation MUST be an aspect of the purpose and mission of the Church. If God is concerned about it, then so must the Church!

In the context of serving on the Reservation, care for creation is exponentially important. It has already been noted that a “good” person in Native American communities is one who cares for all creation. The authors of *A Native American Theology* highlight the value and connectedness of all creation for Native Americans when they discuss the words that the Lakota and Dakota peoples use during their prayers, “mitakuye oyasin.” According to these authors, the phrase functions similarly to “amen,” as it is often used to close their prayers; yet sometimes it is the only spoken words in a prayer. The authors state, “The usual translation offered is: ‘For all my relations.’” However, the authors argue that “relations” cannot be only understood as a person’s family and other tribal members. Since all of life is connected, everything is a part of a person’s relations. The authors continue their description of the phrase stating,

The phrase includes all the nations of Two-Leggeds in the world and, in the ever-expanding circle, all the nations other than Two-Leggeds – the Four-Leggeds, the Wingeds and all the Living-Moving Things of the earth...It is this inner-relatedness that best captures what might symbolize for Indian peoples what Amer-Europeans would call creation

Native American authors are not the only ones who call the Church, as the

Kingdom and Community of God, to be involved and concerned about creation.

Christopher Wright is emphatic that creation care must be important to the Kingdom of God because creation is important to God. The entirety of chapter three of his book *The Mission of God's People* highlights that God's people are to be a people who care for creation. Wright declares,

Faced now with the horrific facts of the suffering of the earth itself, we must surely ask how God himself responds to such abuse of his creation and seek to align our mission objectives to include what matters to him. If, as Jesus tells us, God cares about his creation to the level of knowing when a sparrow falls to earth, what kind of care is required of us by the level of our own knowledge?

Most people would agree that God is concerned about creation. However, most people do not agree on how God's concern for creation translates into the Church's concern about creation. Craig van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile remind the Church that because the Church reflects the incarnation of God into the world Church members must care for creation. Van Gelder and Zscheile state, "The incarnation represents a turning point in God's mission to restore humanity to communion with God and all of creation." Humans are not only restored as individuals to God, but that restoration causes us to be restored to all of creation. This idea is further emphasized by Michael Goheen who states, "Salvation is restorative and comprehensive. It is not the escape of individuals into another world but the restoration of all of human life as part of the nonhuman creation." If we forget that salvation calls us into the Kingdom of God as a community, we begin to look at salvation individualistically. However, when salvation is holistic, we realize that our participation in the Kingdom of God requires us to have a holistic approach to all of life as the Kingdom. Jesus initiated it and we follow his lead.

It also must be noted that creation care extends beyond how people care for all living things and must become particular in how people care for one another. Creation care *must* involve mercy and justice towards all creation, including human beings. Michael Goheen declares that this is another implication of salvation. Again, salvation is not personal; it has a holistic, cosmic, focus that includes individuals and all of creation. Goheen states, “Salvation is concerned with both communion with God and commitment to justice and peace.” This is a part Benjamin Valentin’s emphasis in addressing public theology. Valentin declares, “I use the term ‘public theology’ to describe the attempt to address the pressing issues in a given social context and to cultivate care for the quality of our lives together.” Valentin is concerned that the Church has separated itself into its own community, or communities, and has failed at addressing the larger issues of justice and mercy. In many regards, the churches have tried, but because they have not found a way to make their stance on issues acceptable by a broader, public audience, the Church has failed in answering the call to be an agent of New Creation in the areas of justice and mercy. Therefore, Valentin calls the church to connect with other communities of similar ideas and work together to be agents of New Creation. Ruth Padilla Deborst calls the Church to exemplify justice as bearers of the Kingdom of God. She declares, “Following the King who rose from the dead and rules sovereignly today entails resisting every form of imperialism, relativizing the authority of all rulers, nations and powers, pledging ultimate allegiance only to the Kingdom of God, and ‘bearing witness to God’s purpose of love and justice revealed in Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.’” Christopher Wright echoes these calls to justice and mercy in his discussion on ethics. Wright writes, “The community God seeks for the sake of his mission is to be a community shaped by

his own ethical character, with specific attention to righteousness and justice in a world filled with oppression and injustice.” Care for all of creation must include mercy and justice. Ethics must be holistic.

The second implication of the incarnation is the truth that God took on a particular culture in a particular area of the world to bless the entire world. God became particular in order that God could become universal. In the incarnation there are overtones to the idea of election that has already been discussed; a particular person or culture is chosen to bless the entire world. However, the implication of the cultural aspect of incarnation must not be overlooked. In taking on a particular culture, God declared all cultures to be redeemable. Van Gelder and Zscheile elaborate on this idea. They state,

Yet the incarnation speaks of God’s life and truth becoming enfleshed in the specific, unique, and local. By embracing the particularity of one culture (e.g., first-century Palestinian Judaism), God proclaims all cultures capable of receiving (and distorting) God’s life and truth while rendering moot any attempt to elevate one culture above any others.

Although the world has many different communities and different cultures, the Church is not to be fearful of culture. It is agreed that there may be aspects of culture that are negative or evil. However, not every aspect of culture is negative. As Wesleyans it is imperative that the value of prevenient grace is championed. The Church must declare emphatically that God is active in *every* culture, and because of that, there cannot be cultural superiority. One of the dangers mentioned above is the danger of colonization; an idea built upon cultural superiority. The Church, as God’s new Kingdom, must not be in the business of downplaying culture; instead, she must be in the business of redeeming culture. The Church must be willing to use culture to tell the Gospel story. The authors of

A Native American Theology ask an important question that should be asked by every cultural group. Speaking on behalf of Native Americans they ask, “How free are Indians to interpret Christianity for themselves (whether biblical text or Christian doctrine)?” If no culture is superior and all culture is redeemable, as seen in the truth of the incarnation, then it follows that every culture will have something of value to add to the Christian story.

The Church must also recognize the tension in culture. Although every culture is redeemable and every culture has value, not everything in every culture is redeemable or valuable. A part of the mission and the purpose of the Church as God’s Kingdom is to highlight what is valuable and redeemable while at the same time speaking against what is negative and opposed to God’s reign. Michael Goheen declares, “The church’s task is to faithfully translate the gospel into each culture so that the witness to the good news is both challenging and relevant, fulfilling the creational intent and longing while subverting the idolatry.” Here the example of Jesus and the incarnation is important. Jesus, the Son of God, became incarnate in a specific culture and a specific time, but Jesus did not accept all aspects of that culture. Van Gelder and Zscheile write, “In the incarnation God both embraces and critically engages culture.” The Church must both embrace culture, yet also engage it so that all aspects of culture are not simply accepted without discernment. The Church must live faithfully in this way by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that provides the discernment needed to contextualize the Gospel for a particular culture. Van Gelder and Zscheile clarify that, “Contextualization is thus an ongoing process that needs to be shaped through the Christian community’s discernment of the

Spirit's leading." Contextualization is the call to bring culture and the Gospel together. As the Kingdom of God that follows the example of the incarnation, the Church must be willing to marry culture and Gospel in appropriate ways.

Third, God become flesh gives the Church the ultimate example of what it means to be the Kingdom of God. Being a part of the Kingdom of God does not call the church to stand "outside" or opposed to the world. Yes, the Church's allegiance and citizenship is to God's Kingdom, but the Church must be incarnational just as Jesus was incarnational. God did not stand at a distance and watch creation fall apart. God entered in. God's model of becoming flesh encourages God's Kingdom, the Church, to enter into the world it is a part of. The Church must be willing to enter into the "public square." If the Church is to point to the arrival of God's Kingdom, the Church must find value in engaging the world publicly because all of life is redeemed by God's Kingdom. Christopher Wright states, "The whole of life – personal life, family life, public life, animal life – will be redeemed and restored to God-glorifying productiveness and human-fulfilling enjoyment." If all of life is in the process of being restored, then all of life must be engaged by the life of the Church and its individual members.

For the Church, as the Missional Elect Kingdom of God, to bless the world around it, the Church must be willing to engage the world while still living out the truth of the Gospel. Michael Goheen draws from Lesslie Newbigin's ideas on public truth to clarify that for Newbigin, and for the Church, the Gospel message is Good News for all. Therefore, the Church must be engaging the world in its public life declaring the Good News. This idea ties into the idea of contextualization and redeeming culture. There are

some aspects of culture that must be spoken against for the idolatry that they are. The Church must be willing to publicly engage those aspects, speaking truth, while also living differently than the world around it. There is no private life for the Church and the individuals who are a part of the Church. Goheen summarizes Newbigin on this idea stating, “For Newbigin the most powerful apologetic is a church that believes the gospel and lives by it.” Newbigin also declares that the Church, while engaging the public, points to the new order that God is bringing. Newbigin writes, “The most important contribution which the Church can make to a new social order is to be itself a new social order.” The Church and its individuals are sent into the public world to share truth in daily life, a way that counteracts the idolatries of the world.

The Church is sent out as the followers of Jesus to point to the fulfillment of God’s Kingdom. The Church is chosen, elected, to share this blessing with the world. This is how the Church follows the example of Jesus who sent out his disciples on the same mission; the Church today continues to fulfill that mission. Christopher Wright declares, “Those who are disciples of Jesus today are to be like the disciples of Jesus in the Gospels – called to be with him and to go in his name to do his work, to the ends of the earth and until the end of the world.” The Church is called, elected, to go into the world and engage the world publicly. For this reason, the morality and integrity of the Church as a whole, and as individuals, is highly important. As the Church goes to “the ends of the world” sharing public truth, the Church and its individuals must maintain their integrity as they live out that truth. Wright challenges the church, stating,

Moral integrity is essential to Christian distinctiveness, which in turn is essential to Christian mission in the public arena. Integrity means that there is no

dichotomy between our private and public “face”; between the sacred and the secular in our lives; between the person I am at work and the person I am in church; between what we say and what we do; between what we claim to believe and what we actually practice.

As the Church, corporately and individually, lives out its daily life, what is done daily, on a regular basis, matters. It matters as the Church gives testimony to the God who is actively redeeming the entire created order. As the elect Kingdom of God, what the Church does is important as it points publicly to the story God is unfolding. Wright is correct in declaring,

Your daily work matters because it matters to God. It has its own intrinsic value and worth. If it contributes in any way to the needs of society, the service of others, the stewardship of the earth’s resources, then it has some place in God’s plans for this creation and in the new creation. And if you do it conscientiously as a disciple of Jesus, bearing witness to him, being always ready to give an answer to those who enquire about your faith, and being willing to suffer for Christ if called to – then he will enable your life to bear fruit in ways you may never be aware of. You are engaged in the mission of God’s people.

Wright’s statement is a reminder of a great promise in Scripture. Paul, in writing to the church in Corinth discusses the value and hope of resurrection. In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul reminds the church that God is working a plan, a plan that includes resurrection from the dead. It is a plan that involves the restoration of all things, a plan that destroys all enemies. Paul declares,

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death (1 Corinthians 15:20-27 [NIV 1984]).

Paul declares the hope that the Church has of the Kingdom of God that was inaugurated in Christ will find its fulfillment when Christ returns. The upside-down order of this world will be turned right-side up as all the enemies of God are destroyed. The Church, and its individuals, lives their daily lives pointing to this truth. Therefore, our daily lives matter because everything that is done points to the fulfillment of the Kingdom. For this reason, Paul closes his discussion on the fulfillment of the Kingdom and the resurrection of the dead with words of encouragement. Paul declares, “Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:58 [NIV 1984]). Paul declares that daily life matters. Everything that is done to point to Christ and the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God matters. For the Church, everything she does corporately and as individuals does matter. Nothing is useless.

The importance of the understanding of Kingdom as community plays a large role in the carrying out of mission and ministry in daily life. The Kingdom is a large network of individual communities that work together with the other communities the Church engages with. Christopher Wright states, “Churches, then, are to be communities around the world, planted, nurtured and connected through ministries of sending, going and supporting – for the sake of the name of Christ and the truth of the gospel.” What individual churches do to engage their surrounding communities is beneficial for the mission of the entire Church.

This understanding is influential for Benjamin Valentin and his discussion on

public theology. Individual communities, or counterpublics must come together. If our theology is to help everyone, we must be willing to reach out and beyond our specific community to other communities that have shared understandings and goals. The Church is to reach out to other communities in order that the entire, larger community will receive the benefit. The Church as the elect Kingdom of God must engage the public life of everyone, yet at times, this means that the community of the Church must be willing to publicly engage with other communities with shared values and goals to point, collaboratively, to the fulfillment of God's plan on earth. Communities engage with each other. They may not always agree, but strong communities realize that the greater community and world benefits when all communities work together for a common purpose.

When God became flesh in Jesus, God came to a particular community in order to bring true life to *all* communities. Jesus declared, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life" (John 10:10 [NIV 1984]). Jesus' purpose of entering into creation was to bring life to *all*. Therefore, the community of Jesus' followers, the Kingdom of God, must work with *all* so that *all* may experience life. If our idea of the term kingdom holds a factor of domination, then the call, and example of Jesus to bring life is either ignored or forgotten. However, when the idea of a kingdom is understood as a community that points to a new reality - the restoration of all creation - then a focus on the life-giving purpose of God made flesh becomes clear.

APPENDIX B

A profile in Leadership

John C. Maxwell clearly states, “Everything rises and falls on leadership.” John C. Bowling emphasizes the importance of leaders when writing, “We cannot be as a whole what we are not as individuals.” Leadership is essential for any organization. This is especially true for churches. Churches with poor leadership cannot develop their strategies or approach to ministry beyond the few who are leading. Also, churches that cannot develop leaders have no future or legacy when those leaders move or die. This is the problem that has been seen in China, with the Word of Life Church, for example. The Word of Life Church is a series of rural house churches in China, and it provides an interesting case study for the idea of faith-based communities in Mission Valley, Montana. Wansuk Ma highlights the value of leadership in his discussion of the Word of Life Church by stating, “The rise and growth of the Word of Life Church provides a model for, and its influence on, house church movements in China. Its recent decline also reveals the structural vulnerability of rural house church networks, which rely heavily on their leader-founders.” Ma continues his thought stating, “In the absence of strong leadership, the entire church network is now in danger of disintegration.” It appears to be the case that without proper leadership house churches and rural faith-based communities

fail. Without leadership, everything fails!

Different people and leaders may seek to highlight different qualities of leadership. Notice, please, that the idea is *qualities* in leadership. This paper does not seek to highlight different leadership styles or even leadership roles. This paper only seeks to define four general qualities that every leader in the church should possess. These qualities are usually rooted in a person's character and are developed over time. Leadership styles and leadership roles can be taught, but leadership qualities are given by God as the leader continually connects with God. The four qualities this paper defines as necessary are integrity, servanthood, someone who invests in relationships and people, and someone who understands transformation.

After a discussion of the four necessary qualities of leadership, two biblical examples are presented to highlight how these qualities are displayed. Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of leadership. However, Moses also provides a wonderful example because, although Moses was a great leader, Moses also had flaws that leaders today can learn from.

Four Qualities Every Leaders Should Exhibit

The first necessary characteristic of any person in leadership is integrity. Everything flows from integrity. John C. Maxwell declares, "The supreme quality for a leader is unquestionably integrity." Merriam Webster's Dictionary has three ways of defining integrity and states that integrity is:

1. firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic

values: [INCORRUPTIBILITY](#),

2. an unimpaired condition: [SOUNDNESS](#),

3. the quality or state of being complete or undivided: [COMPLETENESS](#).

John Maxwell reminds readers of what Socrates had to say on the value of integrity. Maxwell writes, “‘The first key to greatness,’ Socrates reminds us, ‘is to be in reality what we appear to be.’” Later Maxwell writes, “Integrity is what we really are.” John C. Bowling states, “Character is the sum of a person’s values, actions, and attitudes.” Bowling also highlights the value of a leader’s integrity as he writes, “Because of the public nature of leadership, leaders are often held to a higher standard. Thus, a leader must be an example of honesty and dependability. Leadership is the tapestry of integrity of heart and life, words and deeds, thoughts and actions.” Integrity is at the root of any great leader because it flows from within the core of a leader. Bowling states, “Integrity is something you are, not something you do.” Rev. James L. Goss repeatedly told those entering into ministry under his leadership, “Ministry is not what you do. Ministry is who you are.” Although Rev. Goss did not use the word integrity, what Rev. Goss meant by his statement is very clear; you are what you display. People will know your true character and whether you are leading with a checklist or leading from your inner character. John Maxwell writes about his basketball coach, Don Neff, who would repeatedly remind the basketball team, “You play like you practice; you play like you practice.” Integrity is important for leadership because the leader will set and model the values for the organization. All other aspects of leadership flow from whether the leader is who the leader claims to be.

Yet, aside from being a character essential, integrity has another valuable function for any organization. People are more willing to follow a leader who “practices what is preached.” The leader who models integrity is the leader who builds trust with followers. John Bowling reminds readers, “A leader with the right style may be able to get people to do what needs to be done, but the grace-full leader whose focus is on spirit as well as style can motivate people to *want* to do what needs to be done.” Bowling is highlighting the value of a person’s character when that person leads. People follow those whom they can trust, and integrity is the foundation of that trust. Maxwell states that many leaders, “Lack authority because they lack integrity.” Maxwell continues his thought, quoting Cavett Roberts, “If my people understand me, I’ll get their attention. If my people trust me, I’ll get their action.” Tyler Reagin, in the book *The Life-Giving Leader*, states, “As it pertains to leaders, integrity means other people can trust the leader to do what he or she is made to do.” If a leader wants to establish trust, the foundation will be that the leader has integrity.

For these reasons, integrity is the character trait most needed in a leader. However, leaders allow themselves to grow stagnant. Each day a leader’s integrity is being shaped and formed. Miles Anthony Smith in the book *Why Leadership Sucks* asserts, “We must work on our character each and every day if we are to stand tall as leaders and not let others down. We must be relentless in our own character development.” Integrity is the foundation of leadership because it is the character of the leader that really matters. From that character will flow the rest of the qualities of leadership and a leader will develop trust among those being lead. Everything flows from integrity.

The second quality in an ecclesial leader is the quality of servanthood. The servant leader is the one who puts others before self. Hanz Finzel states, “Servant leadership is about caring for others more than for ourselves. It is about compassion for everyone who serves the group. It enriches everyone, not just those at the top.” Miles Anthony Smith writes, “I submit to you that sincere service shows true strength of character. Being others-focused instead of self-focused changes your worldview. Living in a selfless manner and seeking to help others enriches our very existence on a daily basis.” Servanthood is developed from the root of integrity as it points leaders to think of others first. Smith also declares that servanthood reminds the leader of where the leader came from. Smith writes, “Get your hands dirty once in a while by serving in a capacity that is lower than your position or station in life. This keeps you tethered to the real world and grounded to reality, which should make it harder to be prideful and forget where you came from.” Yet, at the same time, servanthood is not about being manipulated to do manual labor that no one else wants to do. Servanthood is the choice to put others before self. A leader of the organization cannot be manipulated into thinking only about the individuals in the organization, as important as those individuals are. The leader must consider the entire organization. Servant leadership, therefore, must also include serving the organization along with serving the individuals of the organization. John Bowling states, “The ultimate goal of understanding leadership is not to produce great or charismatic leaders but to enhance the life and effectiveness of the organization.” Bowling is not downplaying the necessity of charismatic leaders but is highlighting that the leader must consider the needs of the organization. Bowling continues, “Before satisfying your own needs as a leader, look

first to the needs of the organization and individuals who are a part of it.” Miles Smith reminds us, “Putting the needs of the organization first is painful, but necessary.”

Servanthood is difficult because leaders serve not only the individuals of the organization, but they also serve the entire organization. Often a leader must make a decision that will affect individuals within the organization. If the leader puts himself/herself first the decision may not be made because the leader fears the repercussions. If the leader is a servant, then the leader will make the difficult decision, not because it betters the leader, but because it betters the organization and its people. Also, if a leader is concerned only with self, then criticism will be responded to differently. John Bowling highlights this idea stating,

Focusing on the body rather than the head makes a difference in how a leader responds to criticism. If you are concerned only about your ego or how you will look in a given situation, then your response to criticism will probably be defensive and personal. But if your focus is on the welfare of others first, then you are better armed to respond appropriately when criticism comes-and criticism *will* come to anyone in leadership.

The servant leader will not fear criticism but will be able to explain how a certain leadership decision improves the organization or the individuals within it. This is an area where ecclesial leadership could use some coaching. Rev. Dr. Antonio Settles in his book *Power Moves: Moving Power in the Right Direction* highlights that many leaders in churches abuse power. They lead from their wants and their needs but do not consider others or the organization. Dr. Settles declares,

Some of our leaders in the church are so convinced that everything should be done their way, not allowing other variables to play a part in kingdom building. Say it this way, lead this way, minister this way, and preach it this way! Everything is done their way! Pastors, ministry leaders, and laity all have this in common, and have at one time or another used this as a way of keeping the C in

control.

What Dr. Settles highlights is the influence of self in leadership. This influence lacks true integrity. It lacks service to others and service to the church. At some point someone will need to make a difficult decision that will upset those who assume they have power in the church. Many leaders in our churches are afraid to make organizational changes because of the fear of these powerful individuals. Servant leadership is the ability of the leader to consider individuals in the church, as well as the overall needs of the church, and decide about what is the best way forward. Dr. Settles writes, “Leadership in and of itself is about thinking of others outside of themselves.” Simply stated, servant leadership places others and the organization before self.

The third quality necessary for ecclesial leadership is the quality of having a high value of people. This is similar to servant leadership, but it highlights the value of the relationship between the leader and followers; it is the value of relational capital. If servant leadership focusses on others and the organization, relational leadership places a high value on the people making servant leadership more successful. Teddy Roosevelt has stated, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” Roosevelt also stated, “The most important single ingredient to the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people.” There is a great benefit in a leader’s relationship with people as they are valued as people, not as assets or commodities. John C. Bowling states, “Leadership is personal. It is relational, collective, and purposeful. Leadership has to do more with people than techniques and procedures.

Getting along with people and caring for others is at the heart of grace-full leadership.” When people know the leader cares about them, they will be more willing to follow and trust the leader. The leader who is not a servant, but only thinks of self, will rarely invest in relational capital. People become commodities to be moved, displaced, fired, or used in any way that the leader sees fit. Ultimately, people become a means to an end, not an end in and of themselves. Sydney J. Harris states,

People want to be appreciated, not impressed.

They want to be regarded as human beings,
Not as sounding boards for other people’s egos.

They want to be treated as an end in themselves,
Not as a means toward the gratification of another’s vanity.

Treating people as a means to an end can have disastrous effects for an organization. Tyler Reagin writes, “You will get more out of your leaders when they are more than a means to an end, more than just numbers on a list.” People who are treated as commodities, not as relationships, are not developed to their full leadership potential.

A part of developing relationships is developing people. The best leaders should be those who seek to develop other people into also becoming the best leaders. John Maxwell states, “The best leaders add value to their people and help them become better than they would be if they worked alone. The first question a leader should ask is: ‘How can I help make those around me more successful?’” John Bowling agrees and states, “Leadership that does not promote the overall welfare of the people involved

might appear to be efficient and powerful, but it is not Christian.” This aspect of relational capital stems from servanthood. The leader is not thinking about herself/himself but is thinking about the person that is being led. The leader is developing those who follow not according to the leader’s needs, but according to the needs of the individual follower.

John Maxwell thinks very highly of the relational and personal development of those the leader is leading. Maxwell writes extensively on this idea in his book *The 5 Levels of Leadership: Proven Steps to Maximize Your Potential*. In this book Maxwell states, “Leadership is the art of helping people change from who they’re thought to be to who they ought to be.” Later in the book, Maxwell strongly states,

When you help other people become leaders, you change their lives. You change the way they see the world. You change their capacity. You increase their potential. You change the way they interact with others. If they become good leaders, you help them improve not only their lives, but also the lives of everyone they touch.

Leadership is about developing followers into leaders. The leader must also recognize that those who are being developed have been created by God for a specific purpose and potential. Servant, relational leadership recognizes that not everyone will develop the same way or for the same purpose. John Bowling agrees, “Grace-full leaders recognize the dignity of others and affirm the diversity of their gifts. Everyone comes with certain gifts-but not the same gifts...The challenge is to match the person to the position and need at any given time.” In order for a leader to develop the potential of followers, the leader must invest relationally into the person to know who the person is designed to be by God. Tyler Reagin states, “Life-giving leaders become

the best students of their team members' unique contributions." To know the abilities of followers, leaders must know their followers.

There is no substitute for relational capital. Reagin summarizes the call to relational leadership by stating, "Life-giving leadership is all about staying in deep relationship with our heavenly Father so we can love those around us best and bring life to the people God has put in our circle of influence." Relationship development shows people that the leader does care about them, and it is necessary to develop followers into future leaders. An organization's present and future are dependent upon the leader's ability to develop relationships that in turn develop people into leaders.

The last quality to highlight that leaders should possess is the quality of transformation. Many times, leaders believe they are needed to make change in an organization. Although it is true that a leader must be able to promote change within the organization, what is more important is that the leader demonstrates change in the leader's own life. Regarding ecclesial leadership, personal transformation is of utmost importance. The leader models that transformation to the church. The leader models what is expected. John Maxwell writes, "People do what people see." Leaders expect their followers, and organizations they lead, to change; therefore, a leader must demonstrate how to change graciously. Maxwell stresses, "If you want to continue leading, you must continue changing." William A Hewitt agrees. Hewitt says, "To be a leader you must preserve all through your life the attitude of being receptive to new ideas." Many organizations are afraid of change, and leaders become frustrated with the lack of acceptance toward a new idea. The most effective method a leader can utilize to

assist with the process of change is the leader's own ability to model change. When a leader models change, trust is built into the relationship between leader and people. The people realize that for changes to take place everyone participates in transformation.

Dr. Marty Butler highlights this idea clearly. There were several students sitting in a class on leadership and administration. One day, during the lecture, the issue of change within the church came up. Dr. Butler emphatically stated, "I always hear pastors and seminary students whine about change and how difficult it is to make changes in the church. Do you want to know something? Pastors are the worse at change and they expect everyone else to change rapidly." The point was made clear. Leaders model what they expect followers to do. But Dr. Butler was not done. Dr. Butler continued, "Here's a case study. Think of yourselves and where you sat on the first day of class. Where are you seated right now compared to where you were seated during that first lecture?" The point was extremely clear. The classroom was full of students who were adamant that change is difficult in the churches they were a part of. Yet, the class was full of students who were also comfortable in the routines that were established. If a leader wants change, the leader must first model the change.

Another example of modelling transformation is the pastor who was raised in an "old fashioned" manner. His family always wore dresses and suits to church. As a child, he only wore shorts to church during the summer months. However, if he was going to be on the platform during the worship service for any reason, he had to wear slacks and closed toe shoes, no exceptions. Eventually that young man grew up and left home to study for the ministry. He graduated college and went to seminary. Upon

graduation from seminary, he was invited back to be an associate in the church that he grew up in, and he accepted the invitation. The church eventually placed the young pastor in oversight of their “contemporary” worship service that was aimed at reaching people who had resistance to going to church. The contemporary service had been taking place for three years by the time the young pastor was given authority over the service flow and content. Immediately, on the first Sunday that the pastor had oversight over the contemporary service, he wore jeans and a nice shirt as opposed to slacks and a shirt with a tie. The pastor did not receive any negative backlash over this decision, but those who knew him, and his upbringing, asked about why he changed his wardrobe. The pastor’s response was, “To model change. I want the board to understand that things need to change for this service to reach the people it is intended to reach. Not only that, but to reach those people more effectively there will be things outside of that worship service that will need to change - things like how we talk about tithing and how we facilitate Bible studies. I want the board, and others, to know that I am serious about change. Therefore, I am showing everyone that I am willing to make the changes I need to make first before I ask them to make the changes that they need to make.” Leaders who want change must first model change.

The change that leaders must model is not only an outward appearance of change. This idea circles back to integrity. Leaders must constantly model a life that is connected to the Holy Spirit that produces transformation. The Apostle Paul declares, “...Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” (2 Corinthians 5:17 [NLT]). An ecclesial leader must be a model of the

transformation of the new life in Christ offered by the Holy Spirit, daily. A transformational leader seeks for the Holy Spirit to transform him/her before the leader seeks to speak into the transformation needed in an organization or a church. Reagin affirms the reliance Christian leaders must have on the transformation guidance of the Holy Spirit stating, “Christian leaders should be the best leaders in the world because we have the best Leader in history teaching us. We have the Creator infusing creativity into us. We have the Holy Spirit guiding us and giving us wisdom.” Leaders should seek to follow the example of Jesus Christ and be guided by God’s Holy Spirit in all activities of leadership. In doing this, leaders will model transformation and growth. Once a leader models this change, then the leader can request others to follow.

Leadership Examples

As one considers the qualities of leadership it could become overwhelming at times. The question arises as to who in the past or the present has ever exhibited those qualities. Although nobody is perfect and many leaders have made mistakes and chosen to learn from those mistakes, there are examples for leaders to follow as they begin to exhibit these qualities.

The first example that tends to stand out in people’s minds is the example of Jesus of Nazareth. Tyler Reagin in his book *The Life-Giving Leader: Learning to Lead from Your Truest Self* repeatedly highlights the example of Jesus and the role of Jesus in the lives of Christian leaders. Reagin states toward the beginning of the book, “This is 100 percent a Christian leadership book. I can’t write about life-giving leadership without

putting Jesus at the center of the conversation.” Near the end of the book, Reagin re-emphasizes the importance of Jesus’ example stating, “Jesus is the clearest and most complete picture of how leaders should lead. Leadership should center on bringing life to others. Jesus brings life to people. It only makes sense that they go hand in hand.” The name “Jesus” is written at least 150 times in his short book, and throughout the book Reagin refers to Jesus’ example and teaching. Katara Washington Patton writes, “Leadership has an amazing way of reminding us to serve, just as Jesus did for us. He is our ultimate example of a successful leader.” Later in the same book Washington Patton re-affirms this statement, declaring, “Jesus is our ultimate example. He is our true leader.” In the book *Why Leadership Sucks*, Miles Anthony Smith states, “For me, whatever power I have to serve selflessly comes not from within me but from following Jesus Christ. He is the definition of servant leadership; if you want to know what it really looks like, try reading the story of Him in the four Gospels.” Carl Madearis echoes this idea, not from a leadership perspective, but from the perspective of being able to speak and model Jesus. Madearis writes, “I tell people that if you want to get to know Jesus, the actual person, then read the four Gospels. Read them until they become part of you. Eat and breathe them.” What is it about Jesus that makes him a great example of leadership? Simply, Jesus lived it, and Jesus called others to do the same.

Here are a few snapshots of Jesus’ example for leaders. He had integrity. He remained connected to God to keep his heart and motives pure (Luke 5:16). He chose twelve disciples who would follow him and learn from him as he invested relationally into their lives (Mark 3:13-19). He also sent them to do what he had taught them (Mark

6:6-13). He modeled servanthood as he put others before himself. He declared that his life and death would set people free as he served others (Mark 10:45). He exhibited his anguish in giving up his will to fulfill God's desire and God's plan in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-46). He not only modeled change in how he transformed the world, but also in how he changed his approach with people; he was compassionate to those who needed compassion yet was harsh with those who needed him to be more direct. He also changed when it benefitted others. For example, in John 2:1-11 Jesus turns water into wine when his mother asked him to do something because the wine had run out at the wedding banquet. Although somewhat reluctant at first, Jesus does do something to keep the wedding host from experiencing shame. All these snapshots provide a model for leaders today.

Yet, there is one picture that holds the greatest significance, the picture of Jesus the leader who becomes Jesus the servant. John 13 paints the picture well. Jesus is preparing for Passover and Jesus knows that the week of Passover will end with him on the cross. In order for those around him to fully understand what he would be doing on the cross, namely serving and loving the world to the point of death, he uses the evening meal as a time to demonstrate to his disciples what it means to follow him and lead like he led. No one washed the feet of the disciples as they entered into the home for the meal. Normally, a servant would be appointed the task to wash people's feet, or in other cases where there was no servant, the person with the least significance would wash the feet. No one volunteered to have low significance. The Gospel of John declares, "He (Jesus) got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.

After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciple's feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him" (John 13:4-5 [NIV 1984]). Jesus accepted the servant's role. However, Jesus does not stop with accepting that role. He challenged all who follow him, all who lead with him as their example, to do the same. Jesus declared, "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightfully so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them" (John 13:12-13 [NIV 1984]). It is not enough to say that Jesus is the exemplar leader; leaders must model Jesus in their entire lives. He never said it would be easy, but he never said it was impossible to do, either. Jesus, the great leader, modeled the qualities he called his followers to demonstrate. Leaders should do the same.

Although Jesus is a great example, some might argue that it is impossible to fully model Jesus. A full reading and understanding of Scripture declares that it is possible to be more and more like Jesus every day; some might argue that Jesus is not the best example for us because they set aside Jesus' humanity and focus on his divinity. For this reason, it is important to view other people that have modeled leadership. People like Moses, for example.

Moses was far from perfect! He did not always "get it right" when it came to life and leadership. He did make mistakes, and sometimes they were costly mistakes. At the same time, Katara Washington Patton reminds readers, "He's arguably the greatest leader of the Old Testament, as his story has been retold over and over throughout generations."

Moses can provide a helpful example of ideas to strive for and failures to run from.

Moses' story displays that he was placed by God at a certain time and place for a very specific reason. He was rescued from the Hebrew infanticide under Pharaoh and miraculously raised in Pharaoh's household (Exodus 2:1-10). Yet, Moses did not forget who he was and where he came from. Washington Patton highlights, "He never forgot who he was. A successful leader never does; she still recalls the people she grew up with, their conditions and their needs." He maintained a relational connectedness with his people and was willing to stand up for the Hebrew people if need be. Exodus 3 highlights an error in Moses' life. Although Moses had good intentions, his actions had negative consequences as he killed an Egyptian who he witnessed beat a Hebrew slave (Exodus 3:11-12). Good intentions do not always lead to good actions. Sure, there are better ways Moses could have, and should have, dealt with this situation. At the same time, Moses demonstrates the desire of a leader to speak for those who are oppressed. Washington Patton explains, "He was a voice for the powerless. Now, I'm not advocating killing a man who is oppressing another, but standing up for the oppressed exemplifies leadership." It was the next day that Moses' sin found him, and Moses ran to the wilderness to hide (Exodus 3:14-15). Moses' miraculous story does not end with a big mistake. This is something leaders must remember. Leaders are not the sum of their mistakes; leaders can be people who learn from their mistakes and allow God to change and transform them. That is what Moses did.

God found Moses in the wilderness 40 years later and called Moses back into the leadership role God had prepared for him. Although reluctant, Moses agrees, and he is

sent back to Egypt to liberate God's people who were in bondage. Eventually and reluctantly, the Pharaoh lets the Hebrew people go free, and Moses is tasked with not only being their liberator, but he is also their leader and guide (as he follows God's direction, of course). People are not easy to lead and guide. There is a reason that leading people is often compared to "herding cats." People want to do their own thing. People want life to happen their way. People want meat or a lavish lifestyle, and people definitely do not understand God's timing and God's way of unfolding God's plan. It was people like this that Moses was instructed by God to lead (that sounds a lot like people in the church...).

Moses' ability to be a servant to the people is seen repeatedly when Moses advocates on behalf of the people to God. Exodus 32 is a great example of this. Moses has been in conversation with God on the mountain for 40 days. In the meantime, the people decide that Moses was taking too long, and they wanted an image to worship. They convince Moses' brother, Aaron, to make a golden calf out of their jewelry; this is after the people agreed to abide by God's commandments, one commandment being not to make an image of God (Exodus 20:4). After the people made the calf, they began to worship it and Moses and God see this abomination. God becomes so upset at the people that He intends to destroy the people and create a new people from Moses' family (Exodus 32:10). However, Moses, the servant, speaks up and intercedes for the people and God's anger is averted (Exodus 32:11-14). Yes, there were still consequences for their actions, but the people were not destroyed because Moses put the needs of the people before his own needs and desires. In this scene Moses exemplified what it means

to put people first.

Moses also exemplified training followers to become leaders. In Exodus 18 Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, visits Moses. Jethro sees that Moses is struggling to lead the people because of the vast amounts of work Moses is doing. Everyday Moses would act as a judge for all the people who would come to him to see what God had to say about their particular circumstances. This would wear out any leader. Jethro sees the problem and speaks into Moses' life and situation. Jethro said,

What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. Select capable men from all the people – men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain – and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied. (Exodus 18: 17-23 [NIV 1984]).

Simply put, Jethro tells Moses to delegate responsibility to people he trusts and teach them how to judge in disputes. Jethro also instructs Moses that there are certain things Moses must do as the leader, but at the same time, there are things that can be delegated to others. Moses was instructed to instruct others to be problem solvers. John Maxwell shares, "...If you are always the problem solver and never teach the people around you to think and decide for themselves, you will have a dependent group of followers." Moses, in trying to help the people, had to learn the lesson of leadership that the best way to help is to train more help. Katara Washington Patton agrees. She states,

“By stepping back, Moses could actually help his people more.”

Moses was able to better help the people by delegating responsibility to others for many reasons. First, Moses was able to be more successful in his other leadership responsibilities. Jethro encourages Moses that he would be able to be more satisfied at the end of the day as Moses delegates to others. Delegating to others freed Moses to do what *only* Moses could do, and that would lead to more satisfaction. Second, Moses was able to build a legacy into his leadership. Moses would not always be with the people. There would be days that Moses would be gone and, inevitably, there would be the day that Moses would die. In investing into relational capital, Moses was able to train leaders who would carry on the leadership responsibilities in Moses’ absence. This also allows for satisfaction because Moses would know that the work God had called him to will ultimately continue when he is away and dead. It is possible that during this time Moses learned the beautiful power of delegation, and was, therefore, able to be better prepared to lead and teach Joshua who would lead the people after Moses’ death. If Moses did not listen to Jethro, Moses may have never had a successor to take his place upon his death. Third, training leaders and delegating responsibility is good for the people because it teaches responsibility to all. The people could be satisfied at the end of the day because they have worked together to accomplish something; they are living life to their God-given potential. Jethro’s words to Moses are words every leader should read and put to use; life is more satisfying when the leader develops more leaders.

The above example of Moses also highlights that Moses was an agent of transformation and change. Moses modeled the change desired in others. When

approached with an issue by Jethro, Moses did not make excuses, but listened to wise advice, and implemented the change, thus, giving authority to the need for change. Jethro is an example of the type of person leaders should keep near them. All leaders need someone who can recognize where they are struggling and who gives good advice. At the same time, leaders must be willing to listen and follow that advice. Again, if leaders desire change, they ought to model change. Thank God for Jethro! Thank God that Moses listened to Jethro's wise council!

As stated above, Moses was not perfect. There is another aspect of Moses' leadership that must be looked at to serve as an example of what to avoid, self-understanding. As stated earlier, a leader must constantly be in right relationship with God to allow God to speak, to change the leader's heart, and to keep the leader's integrity intact. Moses, during frustration, stepped aside from God and made a terrible mistake. The story is written in Numbers 20:1-13. The people had camped near Kadesh and had no water. God instructed Moses to speak to the rock and the rock would produce water (v. 8). It is worth noting that the people had been to other places that did not have water; Exodus 17:6, God instructed Moses to strike a rock with his staff and water would come out. Although these two stories are similar, God has different instructions. However, in Numbers 20:11 Moses did not listen to God's instructions. Moses did not speak to the rock but struck it with his staff as had been done before. This was an error. Why did Moses not listen? No one really knows. Maybe it was because Moses was tired. Maybe it was because Moses was comfortable with using his staff and opposed to speaking. Maybe it was because God had gotten water from a rock by Moses striking the rock with the

staff, so why should Moses change his approach in this situation? For whatever reason, Moses failed to listen to God's instructions. Water did flow from the rock, but Moses made a mistake. God declared that Moses did not trust God and Moses would not be able to lead the people into the promised land (Numbers 20:12). That is a tough consequence for failing to listen to God.

The warning this example speaks to is pertinent today. Leaders become stuck in a pattern. Leaders refuse to change ways of solving problems. Leaders refuse to listen to guidance. And, most importantly, leaders often neglect the instructions from God. Katara Washington Patton observes the importance of Moses' example of failed leadership as a reminder for leaders today. She passionately declares,

It's a startling reminder that we need to walk carefully next to God throughout our service. Regardless of our tenure or age, we can never take for granted our relationship with God and God's instructions. A wise and successful leader does just what God says—regardless of the ever present temptation to add more or do more for emphasis. People are tough to lead. People have lots and lots of issues. A successful leader is well aware of the human relationship issues we have to deal with—and we strive to make people better. Yet we know we can't do this alone. We need to trust God—fully. Do what God says—only.

Moses is an example for leaders not because he was perfect. He is an example because in his imperfections he was still used by God. Even though Moses made a mistake, he is still regarded as one of the most known biblical figures, especially in the Old Testament. For the Hebrew people Moses is one of their most beloved prophets. The Torah, the first five books of the Bible, ends with these words,

...No prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, who did all those miraculous signs and wonders the LORD sent him to do in Egypt – to Pharaoh and all his officials and to his whole land. For no one had ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the

sight of all Israel (Deuteronomy 34:10-12 [NIV 1984]).

There might have been tragic elements to Moses' story. Moses might have made mistakes along the way. However, Moses is a great example of leadership because through his faults he allowed God to work through him to better the people he led and served. May leaders today heed Moses' warning and follow his example.

Conclusion

Leadership is a very difficult subject. There are many personal preferences that many people desire for their leaders. However, there are general qualities that all church leaders must possess. These qualities are not only rooted in the needs of the local congregations, but, more importantly, they flow from the necessity of leaders to help fulfill the mission and the purpose of the Church. The four qualities described above are necessary for leaders because they are necessary for the Church to continue its mission to be the Elect Kingdom of God.

APPENDIX C

6 SESSION CURRICULA

This curriculum, and its handouts, is provided to be a resource in training volunteer leaders to begin planting missional, faith-based communities in the Mission Valley of Northwest Montana.

Curriculum Overview and Introduction

This curriculum, and its handouts, is provided to be a resource in training volunteer leaders to begin planting missional, faith-based communities in the Mission Valley of Northwest Montana.

Many pastors and churches in our world are seeking ways to better engage with their communities. There seems to be an emphasis on church planting, or new start/re-start ministries. Although these ideas can be wonderful and exciting, many churches do not have the capital and resources to remain faithful in such a task. There is not enough personnel or finances to sustain the method of building larger or building more churches. In the areas that I have ministered, another “church” as it has become understood with its varied variety of ministries cannot be sustained by the few people who might attend. Also, these new churches tend to be planted in areas that neglect portions of the population who are “forgotten” by the ministries of other churches.

This curriculum seeks to provide a helpful model of ministry that describes how a few volunteers could partner with a pastor and plant a missional, faith-based community; small gatherings that meet in homes, coffee shops, or other shared space. As such, this curriculum is intended for the pastor of the local church to teach to a small group of no more than 12 leaders who desire to plant a missional, faith-based community. The desire of a missional, faith-based community is to improve a local context in specific ways while modeling God’s character - being incarnate - in its neighborhood and community. This model of ministry requires fewer financial resources and less personnel to begin. However, this model can have a great impact upon a local neighborhood context in ways that larger churches tend to overlook – namely, the constant presence of Christ within a specific neighborhood.

Planting missional, faith-based communities cannot be done by the pastor alone. The pastor will reach burn out, exhaustion, and a place where the pastor is greasing the wheels of ministry with no passion or desire. The pastor must train leaders to do the labor. The good news is that there are those who are interested in doing this style of ministry, but they desire direction to begin. Often there is a desire to begin reaching our neighborhoods in a different way, but the way to do that is not detailed. Therefore, excitement and interest wane away. These six lessons seek to encourage and strengthen that excitement and interest by providing a way forward for those who seek to being this style of ministry.

The following six sessions are intended to provide a discussion-oriented opportunity where the pastor and volunteers discuss the methodology and practices involved in planting a missional, faith-based community within a very specific context.

Please note some important planning details that will make teaching this curriculum more efficient.

- Plan for an hour and a half for each session, or divide each session into multiple discussions, depending upon the specific needs of each group. Group participation is important and necessary as it also builds into the group a team approach to ministry. The sessions will require the volunteers to research and practice what has been discussed in the session and to be prepared to share their revelations the next time the group meets.
- Be sure to have enough copies of the PARTICIPANT HANDOUT for each participant for every session.
- Provide a spiral bound notebook or binder with paper (8 ½” by 11” in size) and a pen or pencil for each participant. Participants will need to bring this notebook to EVERY SESSION. The notebook will be used if the participants need extra paper and will be beneficial for journaling their thoughts. It also provides a way for participants to keep all their handouts and ideas together.
- There is provided a Session Two B should the group need more time to discern where God is calling them to plant a missional community. This session may not be necessary for every group but is provided if it is needed.
- In session three the participants will need their own access to a computer or mobile device that can connect to the internet. The facilitator will also need access to computer and a way to display a computer screen (either through a monitor or projector of some sort).
- There is a pause between session five and session six. This pause is intended for the group to put into practice a missional activity that will be discussed in session five. Please allow the group the opportunity to pause from the sessions so that they can implement a missional practice!
- For these reasons, seven weeks provides a bare minimum requirement to complete these sessions, and the groups may find that taking up to twelve weeks could be

useful for thorough discussion and revelation to occur.

Session Lists and Objectives

Session One: Four Biblical Foundations for Missional Engagement

Objective: To be able to know, biblically, the call for missional engagement.

Session Two: Where Should we Plant a Missional Community?

Objective: To begin to discern what neighborhood or community where the group is called by God to plant a missional community.

Session Two B: Where Should we Plant a Missional Community? CONTINUED

This session is provided if it is necessary.

Objective: To begin to discern what neighborhood or community where the group is called by God to plant a missional community.

Session Three: Know the Missional Context

Objective: To know where to find the data about a context of missional engagement and to begin to interpret that data.

Session Four: Know(ing) the Missional Context

Objective: To begin the ongoing process of learning what the data does not detail about the context by engaging the people of the context.

Session Five: Be Missional in Your Context

Objective: To detail and plan at least one way to engage your context in mission.

PAUSE: Practice being missional

Objective: To practice one act of missional engagement as a group in the context.

Session Six: Meet Regularly for Worship in the Context

Objective: To define what is essential for corporate worship and to plan how that will be accomplished by the missional community.

Upon completion of all the discussions the group members should be confident in their understanding of a missional, faith-based community and they should be able to partner with the pastor in mission and worship as together they begin to plant a missional, faith-based community.

May God bless you and your group as you encounter God and your community in a new

way. May these lessons encourage you as you lead and being a missional, faith-based community, and may God's grace meet you on the journey as you incarnate God's goodness into your neighborhood.

Glossary of Terms

Missional Community: Simply stated, to be missional is to carry out God's mission – the *Missio Dei*. God has been on a mission to reach our world since the time of creation. To be missional, therefore, is to partner with God in God's unfolding mission. A missional community seeks to carry out the Mission of God (*Missio Dei*) in practical ways as it incarnates (displays) God's character and goodness in how it lives and relates to everyone else in the community.

Incarnational Ministry: The word incarnation literally means "in the flesh." This approach to ministry recognizes that the greatest image of the incarnation is when God became human in Jesus Christ. Incarnational ministry is the approach to ministry that understands that God has entered, and continues to enter, the world. This model of ministry recognizes that God uses normal people to enter the world with God's goodness in grace-filled ways.

Session One: Four Biblical Foundations for Missional Engagement

FACILITATOR OVERVIEW

Objective: To be able to know, biblically, the call for missional engagement.

This session lays out four biblical foundations for community engagement. The purpose of this lesson is to lay the groundwork for future discussions that are based upon a specific context chosen by leaders. As such, this lesson is more scripted and less discussion oriented, although there are times built in for discussion and group revelation. It is advised that the facilitator follow the script closely with this lesson.

The four biblical foundations are 1) our inherent worth. This means that every person is valuable to God and should be valuable to those who seek to engage missionally in their context. 2) Prevenient grace and the presence of God everywhere. As Wesleyan, the value of Prevenient Grace cannot be overlooked. God's Spirit has been moving in every community and culture around our world, and God's Spirit is still moving. There is no place we can go that is without God's presence! 3) God provides all that is good. If God values people, and if God is present everywhere then there should be examples of God's presence. In fact, there are! Everything that is truly good is a gift from God. This goodness might not always be seen in large ways, it might be seen at the small grocery store, or the laundry mat. However, if it is good it is an example of God at work and should be championed. 4) God is incarnational, and God invites us to do/be the same. God, specifically, in Jesus Christ "moved into the neighborhood" (John 1:14; The Message). God has always entered the mess of the world and brought God's goodness to that mess. God invites missional communities to do the same. Remember, God has already entered our context and is present by the Holy Spirit.

As you go through this session, be aware that some of these ideas may be new. Some people may need the grace to process some of these ideas. These foundations might be more gracious and merciful towards people and neighborhoods than most people care to extend. Allow those in the lesson the ability to process. Remember, you do not have to defend God - just state what God says. Others may not have an issue with this foundation, but they might not have heard these foundations expressed this way. Allow time between each foundation for processing and feel free to have an open discussion if you need it.

Please note, towards the end of the session there are two options to allow participant to apply and discuss the material presented in the session. Choose only one option. If you choose the first option you will need to provide more paper, pencils or pens, crayons, or markers, or colored pencils. Also, if you choose the first option, please direct participants

to answer the five questions in their PARTICIPANT HANDOUT before the next session. To close, the participants will be asked to practice at least one of the biblical foundations for missional engagement between session one and session two. Ask the participants to write down their experience and let them know that you will ask at the beginning of session two if a couple of people are willing to share, briefly, their experience.

Session One: Biblical Foundations for Missional Engagement

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Objective: To be able to know, biblically, the call for missional engagement.

Opening Prayer (2 min)

Ask: Is there a volunteer who is willing to open us with prayer

OR

Pray: Our Heavenly Father. We know that your presence is everywhere, so we know Your presence is here with us in this room. We are grateful for Your presence with us during this time. We ask that as we gather Your presence would comfort us, challenge us, change us, and transform us. We are here to learn more about being a missional community in our world that demonstrates Your goodness to our community. May we learn something about You and something about who You call us to be as we imitate You in our world. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen!

OR

Pray your own prayer.

Opening Discussion (10 minutes)

Ask the participants to pair up with one to two other people and discuss the following questions. The questions are listed in the PARTICIPANT HANDOUT.

- What are ways people may view other people in our world?
- What are ways people may view other people in our community?
- What are some of God's roles in our world today?
- How do you think God might ask Christians to respond to people and communities in our world?

Say: During this session we are going to discuss the **four biblical foundations for missional engagement**. We desire to share God's goodness with our community and these four foundations will guide us into those future discussions.

Learning about the Four Biblical Foundation for Missional Engagement (30-45

minutes)

Say: The first foundation is **Our Inherent Worth**. God values each and every one of us, and God values everyone in our world!

The Roman Catholic Priest, Gregory Boyle, who serves in the inner city of Los Angeles wrote the book *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*. In the book he discusses how his ministry was able to transform the lives of “gang bangers” because of a compassionate view of them. Father Boyle writes, “There is a vastness in knowing you’re a son/daughter worth having. We see our plentitude in God’s own expansive view of us, and we marinate in this.” God has a greater view of us that we have of ourselves!

Father Boyle also states, “Homies stare not the mirror and pronounce ‘EMPTY.’ Our collective task is to suggest instead ‘ENOUGH’ – enough gifts, enough talent, enough goodness. When we have enough, there’s plenty.” When we view people through God’s “expansive view of them,” when we view people as valuable and loved by God, we then transform their view of themselves. They are no longer empty, but can have exactly what they need from God. When we change how we view people, people will change how they view themselves!

Ask for a volunteer to read the following passages (they are printed in the STUDENT HANDOUT).

Genesis 1:26-27 (NLT) ²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like ourselves. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.” ²⁷ So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Psalms 8:1-9 (NLT) ¹ O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens. ² You have taught children and infants to tell of your strength, silencing your enemies and all who oppose you. ³ When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers— the moon and the stars you set in place— ⁴ what are people that you should think about them, mere mortals that you should care for them? ⁵ Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. ⁶ You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority— ⁷ the flocks and the herds and all the wild animals, ⁸ the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and everything that swims the ocean currents. ⁹ O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!

Psalms 139:13-16 (NLT) ¹³ You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. ¹⁴ Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. ¹⁵ You watched me as I

was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.
16 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.

John 3:16 (NLT) 16 “For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

Ask students to write their answer to the following questions on their

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT: What passage sticks out to you the most? Why?

Say: Notice how God took time to ponder humanity before making us. Also notice, that we are made to reflect God’s goodness into our world. God valued us from the moment of creation. However, even now, God highly values us. Psalm 8 declares that God thinks about us and Psalm 139 describes the care God takes in forming every person. Ultimately, our value to God is seen in how God sent His only Son for EVERYONE – not only a select few - so we can have eternal life. Eternal life is not simply what happens to us after we die, it is a quality of life that can start NOW and if that life extends through eternity, we will not complain about it. God loves us so much that He sent Jesus Christ to change our life! Everyone we encounter in our world is valued and loved by God!

Ask: Why might this foundation be a challenge for the world to understand?

Say: The second foundation is **Prevenient Grace - God’s presence is EVERYWHERE and it goes before us.** We believe in Prevenient Grace where God’s goodness and presence has been extended to everyone. This means that God’s presence is everywhere. There is no place we will go that is without God’s presence! Since God’s presence is everywhere, God is already at work in the places we will go – the places God calls us to be.

Jonathan Brooks ministers in the heart of Chicago. He deals with rough people and rough places. In the book he wrote, *Church Forsaken: Practicing Presence in Neglected Neighborhoods*, he challenges readers to look differently at our neighborhoods and our ministries. He challenges readers to accept that God is already working in our neighborhoods before we show up. Brooks declares, “God was not waiting for me to arrive to begin the process of transformation. The Spirit of God had been present all along. I was just now joining the work. There was far more transformation happening than I realized.” God is already at work and God invites us to join in the work already taking place.

Since God is already at work, there is no place that God is not present. We look around at our world and we think that there are places that God has forgotten. We call these places “God forsaken.” However, if God is present everywhere, there is no such thing as a God forsaken place. Jonathan Brooks in the book *Church Forsaken* quotes John Fuller stating, “There are no God-forsaken places, just church-forsaken places.” The places in the world that we feel are forgotten by God are not. They might be forgotten, but it is not God who

has forgotten those places.

Ask for a volunteer to read the following passages (they are printed in the STUDENT HANDOUT).

Romans 1:20 (NLT) ²⁰ For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

1 Corinthians 12:3 (NLT) ³ So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.

Proverbs 15:3 (NLT) ³ The LORD is watching everywhere, keeping his eye on both the evil and the good.

Psalms 139:7-10 (NLT) ⁷ I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! ⁸ If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. ⁹ If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me.

Jeremiah 23:24 (NLT) ²⁴ Can anyone hide from me in a secret place? Am I not everywhere in all the heavens and earth?” says the LORD.

Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT) ¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Ask students to write their answer to the following questions on their

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT: What passage sticks out to you the most? Why?

Say: These passages remind us of God’s presence everywhere. They also remind us how God’s Spirit has been revealed to people of all cultures, neighborhoods, languages, and communities (Romans 1:20). Finally, the “Great Commission” of Matthew 28:18-20 reminds us that we are challenged to enter into our world in a different way, but as we do that, we have the promise of Christ’s presence to fulfill that calling. Therefore, God’s presence is in our neighborhoods working, but God’s presence also goes with US as we engage missionally in those neighborhoods.

Ask: Can someone provide an example of a place that others MIGHT say is “God forsaken?”

Say: The **third foundation** is **God Provides All That is Good**. Logically, if God values everyone and if God’s presence is everywhere, then shouldn’t we see exhibits of that in

our world? Shouldn't we see God at work in our world? YES! In fact, we can see God at work in our world. Many times, we are looking for huge revelations of God or miracles. Yes, those things do happen. However, in looking for those big things we overlook the many other ways that God is at work. God is at work in the good in our communities.

Jonathan Brooks in the book *Church Forsaken* is helpful again in this understanding. He discusses that sometimes when we look at a neighborhood, we see only the bad, while when looking at other neighborhoods we see only the good of that neighborhood. He challenges readers to see both the good and the bad. He states, "... We have to realize that every person and every place displays both the glory of God and the brokenness of humanity at all times. If we are unable to see either, there is something wrong with our vision, not with the place or the person." We need to have the vision to see where God is already at work through the good of the neighborhood. This gives us encouragement as we engage the "bad" in the neighborhood because we know what God is already up to.

Too often, it is easy for us to see the bad in a community. We focus on the negative and that creates blinders from allowing us to see the good that God is doing. Sometimes that good is small. The good might be the woman who has persevered against incredible odds to take care of her family while also assisting another family. The good might be the grocery store on the corner that allows community members to shop in a place down the road from their apartment. The good might be the library that provides afternoon activities for children, so they have a place to be safe after school. The point is, if there is something TRULY good happening in the community then that goodness is evidence of God at work.

Ask for a volunteer to read the following passages (they are printed in the STUDENT HANDOUT).

James 1:17 (NLT) ¹⁷ Whatever is good and perfect comes down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.

Mark 10:17-18 (NLT) ¹⁷ As Jesus was starting out on his way to Jerusalem, a man came running up to him, knelt down, and asked, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁸ "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked. "Only God is truly good.

Ask students to write their answer to the following questions on their

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT: What passage sticks out to you the most? Why?

Say: Both these passages remind us that God provides what is good because God alone is good. Any goodness has its foundation in God! This is why those who create, for example artists, poets, musicians often feel they are "connecting" with God in their creative exercise because God is the source of that goodness. The same is true for people who labor. The craftsman or the lawyer who seeks to make or legislate something that is beneficial for people are partnering with God and tapping into God's goodness to bring

something good and pleasant into their community. However, we must also be discerning because the enemy of God, Satan, is a deceiver and likes to counterfeit God's goodness with a false sense of good. If something is TRULY good, it can only come from God who alone is TRULY GOOD!

Ask: Is someone willing to share an example of something "TRULY good" they see in our world?

Say: The **fourth and final foundation** is **God is Incarnational and Invites Us to Do the Same**. The incarnation comes from the Latin *en-carne* meaning "in the flesh." God showed up "in the flesh" in Jesus Christ. However, God has always showed up into the world. In Genesis 3:8 we read how God normally showed up to enjoy creation with the first humans in the evening. However, even after the humans disobeyed God and sinned, and even though the relationship with God changed, God still showed up. God continued to enter the world with and through people like Abraham, Moses, the Prophets, and even the Law of the Old Testament is a gift of God's presence to guide the community. God enters into the mess of the world and God invites us to imitate Him and to not be afraid to show up in the mess of our world; remember, God is already there.

Jonathan Brooks writes, "There are no God-forsaken places. And when God's people practice presence in the neglected neighborhoods all around us, we can say with confidence that there are no church-forsaken places either." In order for our world to understand that God is present everywhere then those who are called by God must show up everywhere. We should not be afraid to enter into the mess of our world. Yes, God is already present in that mess, but our world will see God at work more clearly when we too are present in the world – shining light on God's presence already at work.

Ask for a volunteer to read the following passages (they are printed in the STUDENT HANDOUT).

John 1:1-5 (NIV2011) ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:14 (NIV2011) ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14 (The Message) The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.

John 1:18 (NIV2011) ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is

himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

Philippians 2:5-11 (NIV2011) ⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Ephesians 5:1 (NLT2) ¹ Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children.

Ask students to write their answer to the following questions on their

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT: What passage sticks out to you the most? Why?

Say: These passages tell the story of God becoming incarnate through Jesus Christ. They are not the only passages that remind us of God entering into the mess of humanity, but they are the clearest representation of God entering our world. This is a part of God's desire and God's character – to enter the mess of our world. If we are to imitate God (Ephesians 5:1) then we must model the incarnation. We must enter the mess of our world. We cannot stand outside the mess and preach God's love and goodness. We must enter the mess and show God's love and goodness!

Ask: What is a way the Church can model incarnation?

Application Options (15 minutes)

Pick **one** of these two options to allow the participants to apply the teaching.

Option 1: (Creative Option)

(This option requires pens, pencils, crayons or markers, or colored pencils, and the PARTICIPANT NOTEBOOK)

Ask participants to take 10 minutes and draw/sketch how someone can model ONE of these foundations. Or they can write a poem or very brief short story about ONE of these foundations. After 10 minutes ask a couple of participants to share their drawing/sketch, poem, or brief story with the rest of the group.

NOTE: If you choose **Option 1** please ask participants to write their answers to the questions in their PARTICIPANT HANDOUT before the next discussion.

Option 2: (Written/Discussion)

Ask the participants to write their answers to the following questions in the PARTICIPANT HANDOUT and then to group into the same group from the beginning of the session to discuss the following questions.

- How could relationships with others change if we use these foundations?
- How could our view of ourselves, others, and our world be different because of these foundations?
- What are ways someone might live out one of these foundations?
- What foundation is the most challenging for you to live out?
- Identify one foundation you will practice this week. Be prepared to share about your experience in the next session.

Closing (5 minutes)

Say: As we prepare to leave remember, God invites us to view our world in a completely different way! Everyone has worth, God's presence is everywhere, God provides good in every neighborhood and community, and God asks us to imitate His willingness to step into the mess.

Before the next session, practice at least one of these foundations. Write your experience and I would appreciate if a couple of you would be willing to briefly share your experience in our next session.

Ask: Is there someone willing to close our time in prayer

OR

Pray: Our Good Father we thank You for Your presence that has been with us during this study. We thank You that we are loved and valued by you. We thank You for entering our messy world and showing Your goodness to us. Help us as we live this place to be bearers of Your goodness to our community. Remind us of Your constant presence in our lives and in our world. Help us as we practice being Your presence with those we encounter, whom you also love. By the power of the Spirit and in the Name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

OR

Pray your own prayer.

Session Two: Where should we plant a missional community?

FACILITATOR OVERVIEW

Objective: To begin to discern what neighborhood or community where the group is called by God to plant a missional community.

Biblical Text:

Acts 1:8 (NLT2) ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Welcome to session two!

This session begins to get into the details of the “how” of planting a missional, faith-based community. The last session provided the biblical foundations while this, and the following sessions, build upon that discussion and dive deeper into the practices of planting a missional, faith-based community.

This session will discuss the “where” of the missional community. For many, this may seem out of place. Many who seek to plant a missional community have ideas and practices for missional engagement already in their mind when they seek to begin a missional community. That is not wrong, however, for these practices it is backwards. These lessons detail that location and the nature of the missional community define what the incarnational practices look like. For this reason, location must be discerned before missional, incarnational ministry can flow from that location. The saying about real estate is true for missional, faith-based communities. It really is all about the “location, location, location.”

Session two will begin to allow leaders to think critically about the location, or locations, they are considering for planting a missional, faith-based community. The discussion will guide pastors and leaders through a discussion of Acts 1:8, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8; NLT). The discussion will center around the ideas of a Jerusalem, a Samaria, and the ends of the earth. Jerusalem is comfortable, while Samaria could be the forgotten, “God forsaken” places, and the ends of the earth embodies even more fear of the unknown.

While looking at these three categories, the reminder is that everyone has a Jerusalem – a place where they are comfortable. Sometimes we are called to plant a missional community in those comfortable places. However, sometimes in those Jerusalems there are already embodiments of the incarnation from other mission minded groups. If that is

the case, our gaze needs to look towards the Samarias – the places forgotten by the Church and others while on God’s Mission. The emphasis of the session is clear, God calls us to a specific place – often a Samaria – but we must be clear in defining the location that God calls us to minister in so that we can discern how to incarnate God clearly within that specific neighborhood or community.

As the facilitator you must recognize that discerning the exact WHERE to plant a missional community may not come easy. Sure, those in the session might have their ideas already, but others may not, or everyone may have completely different ideas. It is possible that from this lesson multiple ideas will bubble up. That is completely normal. There is excitement in discerning the “where” of planting a missional community. Try to focus the group on a common area that is acceptable to the entire group, or most of the group.

Remind the group that boundaries can change, and most likely will change, as the next steps get discussed. It is also possible that from this discussion the dream for other missional communities will be planted; champion that dream while finding a way to discern one place to begin with now. Maybe it is as easy as having a convenient place to meet to “get started.” Maybe it is in a group member’s living room. Maybe, it is a strong calling from God to “go to that place.”

Also, you do not have to rush the process. Maybe the ideas in this lesson need to be prayed about and discussed for longer than the hour and a half. Also, as more information is learned about different locations, the Spirit may lead your group to different areas, or the Spirit may solidify His calling on one area.

FACILITATING NOTE:

You do need for this session to end on a POSITIVE excitement for what God seeks to do through your group. During the discussion of discerning the exact location to plant a missional community, some participants might need more time to process and others might be determined to plant a missional community where there is no consensus to plant a missional community.

There is an option to end the session in a way that calls the group to pray for discernment. This option will postpone the other sessions. Instead of moving on to Session Three, your group will utilize Session Two B the next time you meet. This allows for prayer and discernment and allows for participants to think through where God is calling the group.

Participants need to journal during the week in their PARTICIPANT NOTEBOOK as God brings thoughts to their mind and they need to bring their written thoughts with them to Session Two B as well as their PARTICIPANT HANDOUT from Session Two in order to reference it and complete it in Session Two B. There is a detailed OVERVIEW and GUIDE provided for Session Two B.

Session Two closes with defining boundaries. Up until this point, the discussion centered around general areas. The idea of boundaries moves the group into being as specific as possible to make learning a context simpler. Often, at this point, boundaries will provide “survey flags” for a general area. In Session Three, participants will begin to understand the need for specific, smaller boundaries. However, for the purpose of Session Two, it is ok if boundaries are vast. You are simply asking participants to think in the direction of being detailed.

Before Session Two is completed, you need to encourage the participants to bring a computer or another mobile device that can connect to the internet with them to session three. Also, you will need to have with you a computer and the ability to project (either on a monitor screen, or other projection device) the computer screen so the participants can see.

May you and your leaders enjoy the struggle as you ponder God leading you to a very specific community of ministry!

Session Two: Where should we plant a missional community?

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Objective: To begin to discern what neighborhood or community where the group is called by God to plant a missional community.

Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

Ask: Is there a volunteer who is willing to open us with prayer

OR

Pray: Our Heavenly Father. We know that your presence is everywhere, so we know Your presence is here with us in this room. We are grateful for Your presence with us during this time. We ask that as we gather Your presence would comfort us, challenge us, change us, and transform us. We are here to learn more about being a missional community in our world that demonstrates Your goodness to our community. May we learn something about You and something about who You call us to be as we imitate You in our world. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen!

OR

Pray your own prayer.

Opening Discussion (10 Minutes)

Ask the following questions:

- Is someone willing to share one (or all) of the four biblical foundations we discussed last week?
- Would someone be willing to share their experience of practicing at least one of the foundations?
- Did you see God at work in the community this week? If yes, where?

Say: In this session we are going to begin the discerning process of finding out where God is leading us to plant a missional community.

Say: Before we dive into that discussion, let me provide a working definition of this term. It is important for us to understand what we mean by this term because it will guide our understanding and practices of ministry. This definition is provided in your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT. **A missional community seeks to carry out the Mission of God (*Mission Dei*) in practical ways as it incarnates (displays) God's character**

and goodness in how it lives and relates to everyone else in the community.

As we think of our missional community, we must remember the words of Aubrey Malphurs in the book *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting*. Malphurs states, “We would be wise to locate the new church plant not just where we can afford the land or rent, but in a locale that is strategic to reaching the community.” Malphurs highlights the idea that the location of the missional community is not an accident. The location is strategic for reaching the people of the community.

Some may be thinking, “Yes, locate the ministry somewhere within the city.” However, that approach does not always work. Cities, or communities, are complex organisms with different neighborhoods that have different characteristics. Often, cities, or communities, could be further dissected into other, smaller groups or neighborhoods. Christopher James, in the book *Church Planting in Post-Christian Soil*, discusses different models of ministry. One such model is the Neighborhood Incarnational model where the ministry embodies the incarnation within that neighborhood. James states of this model, “The primary context in which they locate themselves is not the city qua city but, rather, their own neighborhood with its particular corners, cafés, and characters.”

Jr. Woodward and Dan White Jr. are thought provoking when they write, “The kingdom of God invites us to faithfully embrace a place. The local space is where all our wishes and dreams work with the people and resources of a neighborhood. Based in a particular place, we are called us to open our eyes to what is present there, to behold the weight of our neighbors’ glory, as C. S. Lewis has so eloquently stated. We must acknowledge that God’s dwelling is already tied to the neighborhood, the streets connecting us to each other, the homes we eat in and the parks that we play in. Our first orientation as a place-based community must be to look, listen and learn. What is here? Who is here? What is God doing in this place?”

A missional, faith-based community is all about the location. Where we decide and discern to plant a missional community.

Discussing Jerusalem and Samaria (45 Minutes)

Ask: Is there a volunteer who is willing to read **Acts 1:8**? It is printed in your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT.

Bible Text – Acts 1:8 (NLT2) ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Say: Over the next few moments I am going to share some thoughts about this verse. Feel free to jot down notes on your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT while I discuss some ideas.

These ideas will help our discussion later.

The mission of the disciples began where they were; the message first had to be delivered to where the Lord had placed the disciples. They were currently in Jerusalem, therefore, that is where the message was to resonate from. Before the Good News and the mission of God could go out from Jerusalem, it must first be modeled in Jerusalem. There could be many reasons for this. It could be because that was the center of what it meant to be Jewish and the message was first to the Jew and then to others. The reason could also, simply, be practical; the disciples were currently in Jerusalem. They were gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost when thousands of people could hear the Good News and take the message back to their countries and its cities. They were to begin in Jerusalem because that was where God had planted them.

But notice, the message does not stay tied exclusively to Jerusalem! Yes, it begins in Jerusalem, but would flow from there to Judea, and then Samaria, and then the ends of the earth. Jesus makes clear that the message is to spread everywhere; that God's mission includes all nations, all cities, all communities. Jesus clearly includes areas that others might rather forget or exclude – Samaria and the ends of the earth. We are familiar with the tension between Jews of Israel and Samaritans. We can assume the tension between Jews and the rest of the world which was full of its pagan ways. Yet, amidst these tensions and desired exclusivities, Jesus instructs the disciples to take God's Good News and God's mission to those people of those areas as well. These are things we must ponder when we consider where to plant a missional, faith-based community.

Ask: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT write the answer to the question, “Where has God placed you?” Take a moment to define the boundaries of that place. Then, turn to someone near you and share your response.

SAY: The Good News and God's mission has found you where you are. Or, it has found you and you have brought it to where you are. However, we must recognize that God has you in your community and in your place of living, or employment, or school district for a purpose. You are to be the bearer of God's mission where you are. In answering the above question, the realization is that your very community is your Jerusalem. It is the place that God has called you to minister to first. You cannot plant in another mission field if you have ignored your Jerusalem! Being a missional, faith-based community starts at home, in your living room, and in your own neighborhood.

Ask: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT take 2 minutes to write your answer to the two questions:

“Are you ministering to your family/neighbors/etc.?”

&

“What are ways you might be able to better minister to your family/neighbors/etc.?”

YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO SHARE YOUR RESPONSES WITH THE REST OF THE GROUP!

Say: To know your Jerusalem, you must be able to define its boundaries.

Ask and allow for discussion: What are ways people might define the boundaries of their Jerusalem and their community? Are there geographic markers (for example, a hill on the south side of town, a river, a highway, railroad tracks, a building, a specific intersection, the zip code, the school district bounds, a certain block, or an apartment complex, a housing development, etc....).

Say: It is important to be specific with your boundaries. The more specific you are, the easier it will be to determine what it looks like to be missional within that boundary (more on that in a couple of sessions).

Often, the boundary is your current neighborhood. This makes the following steps easier. You already know many people in the neighborhood, and you know some of its patterns and rhythms. Of course, if you have moved into the neighborhood recently, you will find yourself doing the work of a missionary to get to know the ins and outs of the neighborhood.

Ask: Is everyone here in this session from the same neighborhood?

Say: The easiest place to plant a missional, faith-based community is the community we are currently living in. However, that is not always logistically possible. Often those planting the missional community live in different neighborhoods. Or their neighborhood already has a strong missional, incarnational presence. Remember, it is still possible to be missional within a community that you do not live in, but it takes an immense amount of intentionality to do so. That intentionality includes looking towards Samaria.

Ask: What might be significant about Samaria?

Say: Samaria can remind us of the forgotten places and/or the places we would rather not go to. Not only does Jesus command us to spread the Good News, that command includes the forgotten places. Think of the places in our community that it seems as though people have forgotten them.

Often churches forget places and people. If there are places where there are church buildings on every corner, that might not be the best place to begin a missional

community. However, if you can identify forgotten areas, for example, areas that do not have a visible church presence, areas that are “off the beaten path,” or areas that have a larger percentage of a minority culture with no “church” reaching that culture, you might have identified an area where a missional community should exist. **In other words, God may have placed you in Jerusalem, but Jerusalem is already being reached. Therefore, extend your search to the outlying areas, and especially the forgotten areas.**

Ask: Take a moment to answer the quest on your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

“What are some Samarias in our area that people in our church might identify?”

Discuss a couple of these “Samarias” with one other person in the group.

Say: To move on from this step, our group will need to discern where God is asking us to plant a missional community. Most likely, it will be in a Samaria. There is a reason other missional communities are not in that area. As our group of leaders grows, we may be able plant more communities in many Samarias. However, for now, we need to begin to discern the basic parameters for ONE Samaria we are called to reach. These boundaries can be adjusted! For now, they are simple flags that will guide future knowledge and discernment.

Defining the Missional Boundaries (15 Minutes)

Ask/Say: As we think of the list of Samarias how do we discern which one to choose from? Take time to write answers on your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT. We will discuss our answers as a group to begin to discern WHERE God is calling us to plant a missional community.

- Which location/neighborhood/community is closest to where you live, work, or shop?
- Which location/neighborhood/community do you know more about?
- Which location/neighborhood/community do you most sense God calling you to minister in?

Ask: As we look at the list of options, and as we ponder their proximity to our Jerusalem(s), is there a place that sticks out that God is leading us to plant a missional community?

Ask: Is there a GENERAL idea as to where God might be calling us?

****End on a positive NOTE: IF THERE IS NOT A CONSENSUS TO MOVE ON TO ONE LOCATION STOP HERE AND SAY...**

Say: Sometimes we already have our mind made up of where to plant a missional community. However, often we need to pause, slow down, and pray to discern God's leading. We are going to wrap up with prayer. I invite you to also be praying this week that God would direct **US** to where God wants us to plant a missional community. Write your thoughts down during the week in your PARTICIPANT NOTEBOOK as God speaks to you. **Bring your notebook with you to the next session.** Be prepared to share some thoughts with the group the next time we meet. We will finish this discussion next time after we have committed to praying.

Now go to the CLOSING.

Say: We now have identified, generally, the area we feel God has called us. **Write down this answer on your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT where it says:**

The area God has called us to is:

Detailing Boundaries (10 Minutes)

Say: Let us begin to define the boundaries of our mission field. Remember these boundaries can, and possibly will, be adjusted! For now, they are simple flags that will guide future knowledge and discernment. What is decided at this moment probably will not be the final mission field; it is simply a point of reference. However, the more specific we can be, the easier it is to shape ministry for that specific context.

Ask: How do we define the boundaries of our mission field?

Say: Write those boundaries on your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT.

***FACILITATOR:** The boundaries do not need to be specific at this point. It is helpful if they are, but the more important matter is the general area of ministry. In looking at the data in the next session, the boundaries will, most likely, become more clearly defined.*

Say: Now we need to pick a hub for ministry; a place from which to start the missional work. Just like the boundaries can shift, so could the hub of ministry. However, as we

begin to incarnate God into a specific place, we should use specific places within the mission field to meet and discuss ministry. This hub will serve as our “location” to root the ministry within that specific neighborhood. It may not be the only place we utilize for ministry or mission but will be where we gather within the community most of the time.

Ask: Is there a place that could assist in facilitating ministry within those boundaries? For example, a coffee shop, or a restaurant, or a library meeting room or hotel conference room?

Ask: What do we want to utilize as our hub for ministry?

Say: Remember, our hub can always change, but it is beneficial to have a hub identified soon to root us into the community. Let us plan to meet in our new hub for the next sessions of our discussion. This practice will begin to plant us into the fabric of the community. Also, for next session, please bring a computer or mobile device that can connect to the internet.

Closing (5 minutes)

Say: Aubrey Malphurs reminds us of the specifics of location and our ministry hub. He states, “The church’s facility is a part of the new church’s ministry. It’s a place that facilitates ministry in some way. Either it’s the place where we gather to worship together or it’s the place from which we launch out into the community to do ministry, and the people in the community will connect us with the facility. It’s their way of identifying us and knowing who we are and where we’re from.” May we begin to discern the location God is calling us to and May God create a passion within to share God’s goodness with that location.

Ask: Is there someone willing to close our time in prayer

OR

Pray: Our Good Father we thank You for Your presence that has been with us during this discussion. We thank You that You have begun to help us discern the location You want us to plant a missional community. Help us to begin to love that community. Help our love for each other to be an example to those who live in the community you have called us to. Where we have differences, may your love and grace overwhelm us. May You work in our group to work through us as we share Your goodness with those we encounter. In Jesus’ Name we pray. Amen.

OR

Pray your own prayer.

Session Two “B”: Where should we plant a missional community? CONTINUED

FACILITATOR OVERVIEW

Objective: To begin to discern what neighborhood or community where the group is called by God to plant a missional community.

As stated in the overview for Session Two, this session is provided as an **addendum** if the group needs more time to discern a general location of ministry. If the group does not need this session, then please continue to Session Three. Use this session to move the group to begin to discern ONE mission focus if you ended the last session with the short ending option. This will have provided time for the group to pray as individuals and write their thoughts on where God is calling the group.

To facilitate this session, it will be helpful if you have paper for yourself, or a whiteboard on an easel, or large piece of butcher paper attached to the wall will be useful for you to write participant answers on. As answers and thoughts are detailed, you can be helpful in finding areas that people agree upon or could easily agree upon. Depending upon how you choose to vote, if need be, for a context, you might wish to provide small slips of paper that participants can utilize to cast a vote.

This session is built around an extended listening activity that is very precise in its flow and organization. **You will need a timer or stopwatch or a way to track time through this activity.** The purpose of the activity is to allow participants to hear each other and to know the passion that God has given each other. As participants hear from one another they should begin to share each other's passion. From shared passion will come shared consensus. Be in prayer before you facilitate this session that God's Spirit will bring shared passion and consensus!

Session Two B closes in the same way as Session Two with defining boundaries. Up until this point, the discussion centered around general areas. The idea of boundaries moves the group into being as specific as possible to make learning a context simpler. Often, at this point, boundaries will provide "survey flags" for a general area. In Session Three, participants will begin to understand the need for specific, smaller boundaries. However, for the purpose of Session Two, it is ok if boundaries are vast. You are simply asking participants to think in the direction of being detailed.

Before Session Two B is completed, you need to encourage the participants to bring a computer or another mobile device that can connect to the internet with them to Session Three. Also, you will need to have with you a computer and the ability to project (either on a monitor screen, or other projection device) the computer screen so the participants can see.

May you and your leaders enjoy the struggle as you ponder God leading you to a very specific community of ministry!

Session Two “B”: Where should we plant a missional community? CONTINUED

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Objective: To begin to discern what neighborhood or community where the group is called by God to plant a missional community.

Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

Ask: Is there a volunteer who is willing to open us with prayer

OR

Pray: Our Heavenly Father. We know that your presence is everywhere, so we know Your presence is here with us in this room. We are grateful for Your presence with us during this time. We ask that as we gather Your presence would comfort us, challenge us, change us, and transform us. We are here to learn more about being a missional community in our world that demonstrates Your goodness to our community. May we learn something about You and something about who You call us to be as we imitate You in our world. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen!

OR

Pray your own prayer.

Discussion (15 Minutes)

Say: Last session we ended with the challenge to commit to praying and reflecting upon where God may be calling us to plant a missional community. We were also asked to write down some thoughts. First, we are going to review some of our discussion from last week.

Ask: What are some of the Samarias that were identified last session?

Say: Look again at your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT and find these questions that you already answered last week.

- Which location/neighborhood/community is closest to where you live, work, or shop?
- Which location/neighborhood/community do you know more about?
- Which location/neighborhood/community do you most sense God calling you to minister in?

Say: Refresh yourself on your answers. Look closely at the third questions about where you most sense God calling you and us. Look at the answer you provided last session and compare it to your notes from your prayers between these two sessions. If the location you feel God is calling us has changed, simply draw a line through your answer from last session and write the new answer in the space provided. If your answer has not changed, then circle the answer you provided last week. Or you may write your answer in your PARTICPANT NOTEBOOK.

Say: The BIG idea we are seeking to accomplish is to be able to discern our new location. Remember these boundaries can, and possibly will, be adjusted! For now, they are simple flags that will guide future knowledge and discernment. What is decided now probably will not be the final mission field; it is simply a point of reference. However, we need to be willing to LISTEN to each other and hear their heart before we can discern where to move on.

Listening Activity (20-25 Minutes)

FACILITATOR: *You will need a timer for this activity.*

Say: Take out your PARTICPANT NOTEBOOK and your pen/pencil. You will need this to write responses in this exercise. Turn to someone near you who will be your partner. You will discuss your thoughts on the place you feel God is calling us. However, this discussion is going to provide an opportunity for us to listen to others. You need to identify “Partner 1” and “Partner 2.” Pay close attention to the directions as they are given, and I will guide us through this activity.

Discussion Flow:

FACILITATOR: *Set the timer for the required time and walk participants through each step of this activity.*

- **2 Minutes:** Partner 1 shares her/his ideas where s/he feels God is calling us and why.
- **2 Minutes:** Partner 2 shares her/his ideas where s/he feels God is calling us and why.
- **2 Minutes:** At the same time both partners write a summary of what the **other** partner said.
- **1 Minute:** Partner 1 will read what s/he wrote to Partner 2.

- **1 Minute:** Partner 2 will read what s/he wrote to Partner 1.
- **1 Minute:** Partner 1 will reclarify her/his thoughts to Partner 2.
- **1 Minute:** Partner 2 will reclarify her/his thoughts to Partner 1.
- Each partner will share with the whole group what they wrote about what the other partner said (**everyone will have 1 Minute**)

Discerning Together where to “Go” (10-20 Minutes)

Say: Now that we have heard from each other it is possible our thoughts have changed. **In your PARTICIPANT NOTEBOOK write your thoughts as to where you feel God is calling us to “go.”**

Ask: Tell us your answer in **ONE sentence**.

***FACILITATOR:** While answers are given, write them down either on a whiteboard or piece of butcher paper attached to the wall. If you do not have those options, ask participants to write down the answers that everyone gives. Look for consensus and/or overlapping areas. This could help in narrowing down the options.*

Say: We need to come to a consensus now. Remember these boundaries can, and possibly will, be adjusted! For now, they are simple flags that will guide future knowledge and discernment.

***FACILITATOR:** If there is consensus, through this process, move on. If there is NOT, take a vote! You MIGHT have to do a series of votes if there is a “tie.”*

Once consensus is reached either through general discernment or through a vote (or series of votes)

Say: We now have identified, generally, the area we feel God has called us. **Write down this answer on your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT where it says:**

The area God has called us to is:

Detailing Boundaries (10 Minutes)

Say: Let us begin to define the boundaries of our mission field. Remember these boundaries can, and possibly will, be adjusted! For now, they are simple flags that will guide future knowledge and discernment. What is decided at this moment probably will not be the final mission field; it is simply a point of reference. However, the more specific

we can be, the easier it is to shape ministry for that specific context.

Ask: How do we define the boundaries of our mission field?

Say: Write those boundaries on your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT.

***FACILITATOR:** The boundaries do not need to be specific at this point. It is helpful if they are, but the more important matter is the general area of ministry. In looking at the data in the next session, the boundaries will, most likely, become more clearly defined.*

Say: Now we need to pick a hub for ministry; a place from which to start the missional work. Just like the boundaries can shift, so could the hub of ministry. However, as we begin to incarnate God into a specific place, we should use specific places within the mission field to meet and discuss ministry. This hub will serve as our “location” to root the ministry within that specific neighborhood. It may not be the only place we utilize for ministry or mission but will be where we gather within the community most of the time.

Ask: Is there a place that could assist in facilitating ministry within those boundaries? For example, a coffee shop, or a restaurant, or a library meeting room or hotel conference room?

Ask: What do we want to utilize as our hub for ministry?

Say: Remember, our hub can always change, but it is beneficial to have a hub identified soon to root us into the community. Let us plan to meet in our new hub for the next sessions of our discussion. This practice will begin to plant us into the fabric of the community. Also, for next session, please bring a computer or mobile device that can connect to the internet.

Closing (5 minutes)

Say: I want to remind us, Aubrey Malphurs reminds us of the specifics of location and our ministry hub. He states, “The church’s facility is a part of the new church’s ministry. It’s a place that facilitates ministry in some way. Either it’s the place where we gather to worship together or it’s the place from which we launch out into the community to do ministry, and the people in the community will connect us with the facility. It’s their way of identifying us and knowing who we are and where we’re from.” May we begin to discern the location God is calling us to and May God create a passion within to share God’s goodness with that location.

Ask: Is there someone willing to close our time in prayer

OR

Pray: Our Good Father we thank You for Your presence that has been with us during this discussion. We thank You that You have begun to help us discern the location You want us to plant a missional community. Help us to begin to love that community. Help our love for each other to be an example to those who live in the community you have called us to. Where we have differences, may your love and grace overwhelm us. May You work in our group to work through us as we share Your goodness with those we encounter. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

OR

Pray your own prayer.

Session Three: Know the Missional Context

FACILITATOR OVERVIEW

Objective: To know where to find the data about a context of missional engagement and to begin to interpret that data.

Biblical Text: John 4:1-42

John 4:4-8 (NLT2) ⁴ He had to go through Samaria on the way. ⁵ Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. ⁷ Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." ⁸ He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

Welcome to Session Three!

For this and future sessions gather in the community where the group anticipates the "hub" of ministry might be. Be sure to have a decent internet connection if possible. If your group has not discerned specific boundaries for missional engagement, do not become too anxious. If all you have come up with for a context at this point is a zip code, you are in good shape! Gather somewhere within that zip code boundary. What is discussed in this session could be helpful in narrowing a focus and "target" context. The more clarity the group has about its missional context the better off the missional community will be.

Session Three focusses the group around the process of knowing the missional context. To begin to know their context leaders need to understand a couple of Greek words. The Greek language has two words that are translated into English as "to know:" *eido* and *ginosko*. The word *eido* carries with it an understanding of knowledge based upon what is observed: data; science; research; and the like. The second Greek word, *ginosko*, carries with it the idea of knowledge based upon experiences and relationships. For this session, the group is going to focus on *eido* knowledge; knowledge that is based upon what can be observed through data.

The biblical text that provides the background for this discussion is John 4:1-42. This is the story of Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well. The story will also be looked at again in Session Four. In this encounter, we are told that Jesus "Had to go through Samaria" (v.4). Jesus did not *have* to go through Samaria. He could have done what traditionally had been done – he could have gone around Samaria through the Jordan

River valley. However, Jesus *chose* to go through Samaria. More clearly stated, Jesus was *compelled* to go through Samaria. Jesus went through Samaria *knowing* the tensions that existed between Samaritans and Jews. As we engage in our missional context, as we engage in our Samaria, we must *know* about the Samaria first! While in Samaria he encounters the woman at the well and has a discussion with her on religion and her life choices. This encounter becomes beneficial for Jesus' ministry in Samaria. The point for this session is the importance of *knowledge* as we enter our mission field.

Due to the nature of the data analysis, participants should be informed in advance to bring their laptop or other mobile device that can connect to the internet. The data collected will be through web-based sources and the discussion cannot happen easily if the participants do not have access to the data. If participants cannot bring their laptop or mobile devices to look up information, find a way to project the data onto a screen that everyone can view. It is best if all people involved participate in collecting and viewing the data so that the discoveries are group discoveries.

As you prepare to facilitate Session Three you need to become familiar with and understand how to navigate, the following websites:

<https://maps.nazarene.org/DemographicsNazarene/>

This is the first website to lead group members to. It contains the easiest access to the type of information needed for understanding the context. This website also allows the group to focus onto a specific neighborhood, not just a zip code.

To use this website, find your community context on the map and narrow down the desired results to the specific community and whatever radius you desire to search. It will be very beneficial if everyone can view this site, either on their own device or as it is projected onto a screen.

Most, if not all, of your data analysis could be done at this website.

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

This website will have the most comprehensive data available. The benefits of this website are its ability to see future projections as well as patterns over time.

Along with the above websites, the PARTICPANT HANDOUT lists these three sites. These sites can be used to find information that may have been overlooked, or not easily found, on the other two websites.

<https://www.zip-codes.com/>

<http://www.usa.com/>

<https://www.city-data.com/>

As the websites are being looked at, encourage participants to consider the following information:

Population and projected growth

Income

Cultural demographics and note which majority and minority groups are in the area.

Education level

Family statistics (i.e., average family size, single parent homes, children raised by other family members, children raised by non-family members)

Housing statistics (own, rent, etc.)

After the websites are looked at, allow for open discussion/discovery of the 10 discussion questions. Also, question 10 is very important as it encourages participants to think critically about what the data states and compares it to what they might already know about the context that has not made it into the data analysis. Take notes of what is not detailed in the data.

Finally, this session closes by asking participants to look at the data again throughout the time between Session Three and Session Four. This will build their familiarity with the data and the websites used to view the data. Strongly encourage the participants to continue their research and to continue to learn more about their missional context. They will be asked about their observations in Session Four.

Data collection may feel like a waste of time, but it is not. This is an aspect of missional, incarnational interaction with the community context as your group puts in the effort to *learn* about the context. Enjoy the discoveries that looking at data provides. Allow God to grant you epiphanies about the community, its life, and its people! May God bless you as you engage in missional, incarnational ways as you learn more.

Session Three: Know the Missional Community

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

Ask: Is there a volunteer who is willing to open us with prayer

OR

Pray: Our Heavenly Father. We know that your presence is everywhere, so we know Your presence is here with us in this room. We are grateful for Your presence with us during this time. We ask that as we gather Your presence would comfort us, challenge us, change us, and transform us. We are here to learn more about being a missional community in our world that demonstrates Your goodness to our community. May we learn something about You and something about who You call us to be as we imitate You in our world. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen!

OR

Pray your own prayer.

Opening Discussion (10 Minutes)

Ask: Can someone remind us of the definition of what a Missional Community is? It is printed at the top of your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT.

A missional community seeks to carry out the Mission of God (*Mission Dei*) in practical ways as it incarnates (displays) God's character and goodness in how it lives and relates to everyone else in the community.

Say: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT, Restate the mission field and boundaries of our Missional Community.

Ask someone to share for the group what the boundaries are.

Say: Remember, knowing our boundaries is vitally important for our gathering to be missional. The mission is rooted in its context.

Ask: Write on your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT the answer to the question

What might people know or assume about our missional community context?

Ask: Would some be willing to share some of their answers?

Say: In this session we get into the details of the structure of our context using data to guide our perspective. Any group that seeks to be missional, must take this step seriously. While the data of the community is being investigated, we must recognize that data will not tell everything there is needed to know about the community, but it provides a foundation of knowledge to start with.

Discussion of How to “Know” a Missional Context (15 minutes)

Ask: Is there a volunteer who is willing to read **John 4:1-42** in your Bible?

After the passage is read **ask if someone will read John 4:4-8 that is printed in the PARTICIPANT HANDOUT**

John 4:4-8 (NLT2) ⁴ He had to go through Samaria on the way. ⁵ Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob’s well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. ⁷ Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Please give me a drink.” ⁸ He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

Ask: What observations could be made about Jesus going through Samaria?

Ask: What are some reasons John may have written, “He (Jesus) had to go through Samaria?”

Say: Jesus did not *have* to go through Samaria. He could have chosen, as most Jewish people on their way to and from Jerusalem do, to go around Samaria and through the Jordan River Valley. However, something *compelled* Jesus to go through Samaria. Jesus *knows* what is in Samaria and he *knows* the tension between Samaritans and Jews. However, he also *knows* about this woman. As the story unfolds, we begin to better understand why Jesus *had* to go through Samaria or was compelled to. The encounter with this woman was important for his ministry in that place.

Say: To begin to know our context we need to understand a couple of Greek words. The Greek language has two words that are translated into English as “to know:” *eido* and *ginosko*. The word *eido* carries with it an understanding of knowledge based upon what is observed, the data, science, research, and the like. The second Greek word, *ginosko*, carries with it the idea of knowledge based upon experiences and relationships. For this session we are going to focus on *eido* knowledge; knowledge that is based upon what can be observed through data. Let us see what the data reveals.

The Work of Data Analysis (30-45 Minutes)

***FACILITATOR:** Have your computer screen projected in a way for all participants to see it. Open your browser to <https://maps.nazarene.org/DemographicsNazarene/> and show participants how to navigate this website. Project the data from the website so all participants can see and discuss the findings. Their personal device can be used to investigate more data on the same website or to utilize other sites listed. Provide paper and pencils so the participants can take notes of their findings.*

Ask for different participants to look up the following websites on their computer or mobile device.

<https://maps.nazarene.org/DemographicsNazarene/>

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

Say: The other websites listed on your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT are helpful for providing more information that might be missed or not as easily found in these two websites.

<https://www.zip-codes.com/>

<http://www.usa.com/>

<https://www.city-data.com/>

Say: As the websites are being looked at, consider the following information. Take notes on your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT or in your PARTICIPANT NOTEBOOK.

Population and projected growth

Income

Cultural demographics and note which majority and minority groups are in the area.

Education level

Family statistics (i.e., average family size, single parent homes, children raised by other family members, children raised by non-family members)

Housing statistics (own, rent, etc.)

It is also important to COMPARE the data to other nearby zip codes and to the national averages.

Summarizing the Data (20 Minutes)

Say: Now that we have seen some data let us discuss what we have learned.

Ask participants use 7 minutes and note their answers to the following questions in their PARTICIPANT HANDOUT. Then, discuss as a group their answers.

- What might we discern about this community?
- Who lives here? Who does not live here?
- What is present? What is missing?
- What is a possible strength?
- What is a possible struggle?
- Is anything a surprise to discover?
- Has anything become clearer as you observe the data?
- Has anything become less clear as you observe the data?
- How does the data confirm or challenge some assumptions people might have of our context?
- What are things that the data does not detail? Make note of those things as they will be helpful for future discussions.

Say: We have journeyed into data and are beginning to have a better understanding of our context. We are learning more and more about who God is calling us to share God's goodness with.

Take some time this week and look again at the websites provided. Refresh yourself on the data and be sure you understand the context you are called to be missional in. Take notes in your PARTICIPANT NOTEBOOK. Prepare to share some more observations in the next session.

Closing (5 minutes)

Say: Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im, in their book *Planting Missional Churches: Your Guide to Starting Churches that Multiply*, encourage leaders to, "Do your research using census data, economic profiles, and other databases to learn demographic, socioeconomic, cultural, ecclesiographic, and spiritual information about the focus group(s). Effective missions and church planting methodologies are contextual and indigenous, meaning the

planter lives, speaks, and thinks as though he were ‘from the area.’”

We are encouraged to know our context. This knowledge is ongoing and will always need revisions. However, for us to be incarnate and missional, we must know who we are engaging with the Good News. We will discuss this more in our next session.

Ask: Is there someone willing to close our time in prayer

OR

Pray: Our Good Father we thank You for Your presence that has been with us during this discussion. We thank You that You have begun to help us know the location You want us to plant a missional community. Help us to begin to love that community. Help our love for each other to be an example to those who live in the community you have called us to. Where we have differences, may your love and grace overwhelm us. May You work in our group to work through us as we share Your goodness with those we encounter. In Jesus’ Name we pray. Amen.

OR

Pray your own prayer.

Session Four: Know(ing) the Missional Context

FACILITATOR OVERVIEW

Objective: To begin the ongoing process of learning what the data does not detail about the context by engaging the people of the context.

Biblical Text: John 4:1-42

John 4:39-42 (NIV2011) ³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers. ⁴² They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

Welcome to Session Four!

At this point, your group should have a foundational idea of where God has called you to plant a missional, faith-based community. If, at this point your group has not discerned a general idea of where to plant a missional community, or you have not felt led to divide into a couple of different groups with different mission fields, you need to stop and return to the discussion of where to plant a missional, faith-based community. Look at the census data, pray, and discern the general community where God is calling you to incarnate His goodness. Unless you understand where God is leading you, you cannot continue in the process; it will not make sense without a proper understanding of your context. With that stated, a general understanding of an area or community is acceptable. More specific boundaries can be discerned in due time, but the more specific your group can be with their boundaries, the easier the practice of being missional will be.

In Session Three your group looked at the idea of what is meant to know their community. In that session, you all began to look at the data and information *about* the context of the missional community. General snapshots of the neighborhood based upon formal census data and questionnaires were observed and the data began to be analyzed as it pertains to understanding the context. This data is important, but it is not the "be all – end all" for understanding a community and context. Knowing the data, and knowing *about* a context, is only part of what it means to exegete, or fully understand a community. In this session, your group will begin the process of knowledge based upon relationship and experiences. This is the second form of knowledge, in Greek *ginosko*, that was mentioned last session.

In knowing and understanding a context it is important to know the data of a community, but also to move deeper into understanding and experiencing the community. Therefore, it is important for missional, faith-based communities, and their leaders to be deeply rooted and involved in the "life" of their community context. With this in mind, it must

be recognized that this type of knowing is easier in a context where you are already living, doing business, grocery shopping, or frequenting often. It is easier to *know* the context when you know the people and places of the context.

The leaders of the missional, faith-based community live in the neighborhood to be a part of that neighborhood as missionaries to and for that neighborhood. If you do not actually live in the neighborhood, you must be intentional about how you interact with that neighborhood (more than simply one day a week) in order to really know the people of the neighborhood. J.R. Woodward and Dan White Jr. state, “If we want to imitate Jesus, we need to be with our neighbors, with the network of people we feel called to as a community on mission. Being with people is about hanging out with them in their apartments or at work, at the coffee shop, at an art show or a party. Being with our neighbor is learning about their dreams and desires, their hurts and their hopes. We need to become a character in the community.” As missional leaders, and missional people connect with their neighbors they move from being an “outsider” into being an “insider.” As leaders become insiders, they build rapport with the community context and they get a greater understanding of the people and networks within the context. Getting to know the neighbors and the neighborhood breeds an incarnational approach to missional engagement. Missional engagement does not begin *after* we get to know the neighborhood. **Getting to know the neighborhood is an act of missional, incarnational engagement!**

In this session, John 4:1-42 will be read and discussed again. During this discussion, verses 39-42 will be looked at more closely. The discussion will center around how Jesus *knew* the woman; he did not simply know *about* her. Also, it will be noted that the people of her town began to believe in Jesus because of the woman’s testimony. This makes clearer why Jesus was compelled to go through Samaria. He had to interact with this woman so that she and others would believe. He reached out to her, and through her was able to reach out to others. People are important!

The importance of knowing people will be stressed in this session. Leaders often see people as numbers or resources, but not as people who are important to God. J.R. Woodward and Dan White Jr. state, “The biggest temptation we face is to overlook people, seeing them as commodities to serve my needs, not people who matter to God.” The first step to showing people that they matter to God is to show them that they matter to you. John Maxwell often stated, in many books and speeches, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care!” Your group will need to be able to understand the people, and the lives of people, in their missional context.

To understand the people and the context a list of questions has been provided. In the session, when the list of questions is discussed, feel free to allow people to interact with the list. If participants know the answers, let them give the answer. Maybe a participant has another question that could help the group to better understand the community context – let the participants discuss that question. Allow the group to enjoy this time with a different approach to learning. During this process, the group will realize that these are the things people inevitably learn about the places they live, work and play, but in this context, these questions are being asked because the group cannot assume the answers are

known.

The list of questions are as follows (This list is printed in the PARTICIPANT HANDOUT and the FACILITATOR GUIDE):

- Do people live in the neighborhood/context? Is it a residential area or a business area?
 - If they live there, do they have vehicles?
 - Is there public transportation? Where are the bus stops?
- Who lives in the houses nearby?
 - How long have they lived here?
 - Do they have children?
 - What language is spoken in the home?
 - What culture do they identify with?
 - Where do they work?
 - Where do the children go to school? How close is the nearest school?
 - Where do they go shopping? How far is the grocery store?
- What is the business next door? Across the street?
 - What do they do?
 - Who visits the business? Where do they live?
 - Who owns it? Where do the owners live?
 - Who are some of the people who work there? How far do they travel to work?
- What happens in the neighborhood on Friday night? Saturday? Sunday?
- Are there restaurants in the neighborhood?

- What kind? Fast Food? Family Dining?
- Are there empty lots in the context?
- What do the buildings look like?
- Are there abnormal sights in the context?
- What are the main streets like in the context?
 - Are they two laned, four laned, highways, surface streets?
 - Are they well lit?
 - Do they have curbs and gutters, are there sidewalks, etc....?
 - Are the streets paved? Is the pavement in good shape?

A note about question 8. Abnormal is not bad! Let me explain this. In the context of a specific missional community there is a 35-unit, low-income, apartment complex. This is odd because the complex is at the end of a road that has medical facilities, an aquatics center, and a community soccer field; this is not a normal residential area. The missional community meets for worship at a hotel just over a quarter mile from the apartment complex. Above the hill from the complex and the hotel are expensive homes that have a view of a lake and mountains. Across the highway there is more shopping as well as homes with larger acreage. Given the context and the surrounding businesses and homes, the apartment complex could be considered “abnormal” and is something to note in understanding the community.

Finally, the session closes with a discussion of a Person of Peace. Clint Clifton, in the book *Church Planting Thresholds*, explains that “A person of peace is someone with a large network of friends or business contacts in your mission field who shows an interest in helping you. This person may or may not be a Christian, but for whatever reason they are friendly toward you and are willing to give you access to their network of relationships.” If you, as leaders, live in the context of missional engagement, you are already considered a Person of Peace who can “bridge” the missional community to the greater community. However, if you and the other leaders do not live in the context of missional engagement a person of peace is helpful in bridging the missional community into the broader context. John 4:39 reminds us that the woman at the well became a Person of Peace for Jesus’ ministry in Samaria. In knowing the community context, and in considering the ability to easily engage that context, your group needs to be thinking of a Person of Peace who has greater connections in the community; connections to businesses, schools, and other community members who could benefit from God’s goodness made incarnate through the missional community.

Like Session Three, this session ends by assigning “homework.” The participants are tasked with practicing getting to know the context. Between the end of Session Four and when you meet for Session Five participants are required to take the time to *ginosko* the community. Walk the context. Get to know the people and places of the context. Be able to answer the questions about the context. Ask them to journal their thoughts and be prepared to share thoughts in the next session.

This session is about people and getting to know people. Enjoy it and enjoy the revelations that come from learning who people are and experiencing your missional context.

Session Four: Know(ing) the Missional Community

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Objective: To begin the ongoing process of learning what the data does not detail about the context by engaging the people of the context.

Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

Ask: Is there a volunteer who is willing to open us with prayer

OR

Pray: Our Heavenly Father. We know that your presence is everywhere, so we know Your presence is here with us in this room. We are grateful for Your presence with us during this time. We ask that as we gather Your presence would comfort us, challenge us, change us, and transform us. We are here to learn more about being a missional community in our world that demonstrates Your goodness to our community. May we learn something about You and something about who You call us to be as we imitate You in our world. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen!

OR

Pray your own prayer.

Opening Discussion (10 Minutes)

Ask: Can someone remind us of the definition of what a Missional Community is? It is printed at the top of your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT.

A missional community seeks to carry out the Mission of God (*Mission Dei*) in practical ways as it incarnates (displays) God's character and goodness in how it lives and relates to everyone else in the community.

Say: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT, Restate the mission field and boundaries of our Missional Community.

Ask someone to share for the group what the boundaries are.

Say: Remember, knowing our boundaries is vitally important for our gathering to be missional. The mission is rooted in its context.

Ask: Think back to the data and your homework to look at the data more. Are there things that the data did not detail about our mission field? What further

observations could someone deduce from the data?

Say: Last time we looked at learning about a missional context through data analysis. Data analysis will continue to be important as the context will always be changing. In this session we will look at other ways to begin to know our context.

Discussion of “Know(ing)” a Missional Context (15 minutes)

Ask: Is there a volunteer who is willing to read **John 4:1-42** in your Bible?

After the passage is read **ask if someone will read John 4:39-42 that is printed in the PARTICIPANT HANDOUT**

John 4:39-42 (NIV2011) ³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers. ⁴² They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

Ask: How did Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman end?

Ask: How might Jesus’ time in Samaria have been different if he had not met that woman?

Say: It has become clearer, now, WHY Jesus *had* to go through Samaria. He not only knew information about Samaria, but he also *knew* information about this woman; he *knew* this woman. After Jesus’ encounter with the woman, she tells everyone about Jesus. John declares “Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him [Jesus] because of the woman’s testimony” (v. 39). When we begin to know people, and they begin to know us, incarnational ministry can take place and the people of the context are affected.

Say: Remember from our last discussion the difference between the Greek words *eido* and *ginosko*. *Eido* is knowledge based upon facts, statistics, and data of a person or, in our case, a community context. *Ginosko* is knowledge based upon relationship and experience.

Ask: In your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT take 1 minute to write the answer to the following question. Then discuss your answer with someone near you.

What are some things people might do to experience the context and to know more than what the data details?

Say: The best way to know more is to get involved and get to know people. It is important for missional, faith-based communities, and their leaders to be deeply rooted

and involved in the “life” of their community context.

J.R. Woodward and Dan White Jr., in the book *The Church as Movement*, state, “If we want to imitate Jesus, we need to be with our neighbors, with the network of people we feel called to as a community on mission. Being with people is about hanging out with them in their apartments or at work, at the coffee shop, at an art show or a party. Being with our neighbor is learning about their dreams and desires, their hurts and their hopes. We need to become a character in the community.” Missional engagement does not begin *after* we get to know the neighborhood. **Getting to know the neighborhood is an act of missional, incarnational engagement!**

Leaders often see people as numbers or resources, but not as people who are important to God. J.R. Woodward and Dan White Jr. state, “The biggest temptation we face is to overlook people, seeing them as commodities to serve my needs, not people who matter to God.”

The first step to showing people that they matter to God is to show them that they matter to you. John Maxwell states this motto many times in many places; “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care!”

The Practice of Know(ing) a Context (15 Minutes)

Say: To learn the missional context, you should be able to answer many of the following questions. Let us look at this list together and see what we already know.

- Do people live in the neighborhood/context? Is it a residential area or a business area?
 - If they live there, do they have vehicles?
 - Is there public transportation? Where are the bus stops?
- Who lives in the houses nearby?
 - How long have they lived here?
 - Do they have children?
 - What language is spoken in the home?
 - What culture do they identify with?
 - Where do they work?

- Where do the children go to school? How close is the nearest school?
- Where do they go shopping? How far is the grocery store?
- What is the business next door? Across the street?
 - What do they do?
 - Who visits the business? Where do they live?
 - Who owns it? Where do the owners live?
 - Who are some of the people who work there? How far do they travel to work?
- What happens in the neighborhood on Friday night? Saturday? Sunday?
- Are there restaurants in the neighborhood?
 - What kind? Fast Food? Family Dining?
- Are there empty lots in the context?
- What do the buildings look like?
- Are there abnormal sights in the context?
- What are the main streets like in the context?
 - Are they two laned, four laned, highways, surface streets?
 - Are they well lit?
 - Do they have curbs and gutters, are there sidewalks, etc.?
 - Are the streets paved? Is the pavement in good shape?

Ask: What are things someone may do to be able to answer these questions more completely?

Say: Taking the time to be in the context and neighborhood, while meeting with people will help immensely in knowing the needed information. There is also something else that is important to remember. Think back to the John 4 passage.

Discussion of a Person of Peace (10 Minutes)

Say: We have discussed ways to get to know a community. Another helpful tool for knowledge, and missional engagement is a Person of Peace. Think back to the story of Jesus and the Woman at the Well in John 4.

Ask: How did the people of that town come to believe in Jesus?

Say: They believed because Jesus encountered the woman and she told others. The woman became a person of peace.

Clint Clifton in his book, *Church Planting Thresholds*, helps to understand who a person of peace is. He states, “A person of peace is someone with a large network of friends or business contacts in your mission field who shows an interest in helping you. This person may or may not be a Christian, but for whatever reason they are friendly toward you and are willing to give you access to their network of relationships.”

A Person of Peace is someone that has greater connections in the community; connections to businesses, schools, and other community members who could benefit from God’s goodness made incarnate through the missional community.

Say: Now think of our missional context. Consider the businesses, schools, and all the people who live or do business in the context. Consider the idea of a Person of Peace of someone who could help bridge the mission to the context.

Ask: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT write your answer to this question.

Who could be a Person of Peace for the mission?

Ask: Is someone willing to share their answer?

Closing (5 minutes)

Say: As we close, we need to plan to practice getting to know our context. We have looked at the data, now we practice knowing people. Now we have an assignment. Take the time until we meet for Session Five to *ginosko* the community. Walk the context. Get to know the people and places of the context. Answer some of the questions about the context either on your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT or in your PARTICIPANT NOTEBOOK. Write down other thoughts you have in your PARTICIPANT NOTEBOOK. Be able to answer the questions about the context. Be prepared to share your thoughts the next time we meet.

Ask: Is there someone willing to close our time in prayer

OR

Pray: Our Good Father we thank You for Your presence that has been with us during this discussion. We thank You that You have begun to stir within us the desire to know the people of our neighborhood context that You call us to plant a missional community. Help us to begin to love that community and its people. Help our love for each other to be an example to those who live in the community you have called us to. May You work in our group to work through us as we share Your goodness with those we encounter. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

OR

Pray your own prayer.

Session Five: Be Missional in Your Context

FACILITATOR OVERVIEW

Congratulations! You and your group have made it to Session Five!

You are most likely thinking, “Wow, this is taking FOREVER! Why could we not have jumped right in to the ‘doing’ of ministry? Why did we have to study and process and talk and chat about the community?” The answer is because you were LEARNING your community. You were developing relationships with people in the community as someone who cares for the community. Now, when you get to the “doing” you are doing as an insider - not as an outsider.

Have you ever experienced a business that moved into an area? At first there was excitement and interest in the business, but then after a while the business failed. Although there are many factors or reasons that a business might fail, a large reason is often that failure is a result of poor planning. Maybe the entrepreneur had a great vision. He found a building to rent and opened shop. However, the business was not a good fit for the community. For example, maybe it was an ice business opened in North Pole Alaska - there just was no need for it. Or maybe, the timing was wrong in opening the business. Not only was it an ice business in North Pole Alaska, maybe the entrepreneur opened it up in the middle of January. This does not mean that the business idea was bad; it just highlights that an idea must match the community the idea is for. This business would probably thrive in Phoenix, Arizona.

So, it is with missional gatherings. The gathering is on God’s specific mission for that specific community. Remember, God is already on mission in the context. These last couple of sessions have sought to focus on what God might already be doing and what God might be calling your group to do to join God in God’s mission! Again, this is God’s mission, we are simply invited to participate in specific ways in God’s mission.

Session Five will take what has been learned, discerned, and discussed and apply it to ways that your group can be involved in God’s mission. Your group will briefly reflect upon the Four Biblical Foundations for Missional Engagement from Session One. These four foundations have been the bedrock for thinking during these sessions. In this session they will be refreshed because they are necessary to discern what to do now. As a reminder, the Four Biblical Foundations for Missional Engagement are:

- Our Inherent **WORTH**
- Prevenient Grace – God’s Presence is **EVERYWHERE,** and it goes before

us.

- God provides all that is **GOOD**.
- God is **INCARNATIONAL** and invites us to do the same.

The biblical text your group will discuss will be from Matthew 25:31-46. In this parable Jesus discusses his return and the final judgment. Jesus declares that judgment will be based upon what people do, or do not do, to help those in need. The discussion will center around the example that Jesus gives us, and the challenge to model this ministry in our context. Jesus lists very practical ways that we can be missional in our world. The lists of things to do in Matthew 25 can provide a great brainstorming session of ministry ideas for missional, incarnational ministry!

Given that the size of most missional, faith-based communities is smaller, at least in their beginning, it is important for missional leaders to understand the value in partnerships with assets in the missional context – businesses, people, organizations, and the like. When you look at your context, pay attention to what could be an asset. Often, it is easy to spot the negatives of a community, but if God is at work, and God provides all that is good, then there will be assets that could provide opportunities for partnerships. This session will ask your group to identify those assets and consider ways that the missional community can partner with those assets in meeting needs. Partnerships are valuable resources in that they lesson a dependency that can be created when groups simply meet needs. Partnerships provide opportunities for the entire community, or a portion thereof, to come together and begin to work together to solve a need in the community. With partnerships, everyone can be a part of the solution!

After allowing the group to brainstorm ideas a list of ideas can be presented. The focus should be to allow the group to create their own ideas. Often, however, the beginning of brainstorming can be difficult, and someone needs to “prime the pump” so to speak. For this reason, a list of ways the missional, faith-based community can partner with organizations within the community has been provided. Some items have a greater description that follows to provide clarity in possible ways of fulfilling that ministry. Many of the ideas on the list have little to no cost involved; they simply take time and someone to begin doing them. Also, most of the ideas on the list provide greater opportunity to *ginosko* the community!

A list of missional ideas: Also provided in the PARTICIPANT HANDOUT without the added descriptions.

Volunteer at the school in your community.

Help at breakfast/lunch. Help teachers in the classroom. Read to the students. Let the teachers and staff know you are praying for them. Talk to them and hear about their needs and frustrations. If they mention a need, see who can assist in filling that need. Be the volunteer crossing guard.

Shop at the local grocery store.

This might cost a little more, but there is the benefit of the circulation of your dollar in your local community. Also, in doing this, you will get to know those who are regulars at the store, and you will get to know the clerks and owners of the store.

Make the coffee shop your office. Or whatever the local hang out place is.

If you can, work from the coffee shop in your community. Get to know the locals. You might have to be creative with this, but, if you want to meet people you must be willing to go where they are.

Walk the community in prayer.

This could be something you continually to do on a regular basis. Your neighborhood probably will not stay constant. Walking the neighborhood is a great way to see what changes are taking place. It is a great opportunity to foster relationships with the families and businesses in the neighborhood. Do not be afraid to ask your neighbors what their prayer concerns are.

Sit with the lonely.

Many people are alone. Spouses die and children move away. How many people are lonely in your neighborhood? Go to their home, drink coffee, sit and visit. Invite them into your home.

Assist in childcare.

Are there single parents who need help watching their children when they get home from school? Volunteer to watch their children during the week or rotate watching the children. Go to their house to watch the children to make it easier for them and the children.

Clean someone's house.

Offer to show up and clean an elderly person's house, or the house of a single parent, or someone who has just been injured etc...

Get involved with a nursing home/extended care facility.

Go Christmas caroling. Make it a regular time to connect with patients and residents.

Visit those in prison and/or their families.

This is easier said than done, I understand. Prisons/jails often have certain hours for visiting, and depending on the number of residents, it can be difficult to have an actual time to visit. However, if you know of families who have a family member in jail/prison, you could visit with the families and assist in life with them.

Organize community block parties.

Pick a date and invite people to do a potluck style party. Have them bring games, cards, or whatever they think would be fun at the party. For more creativity, schedule it around a holiday or community event.

Service cars for widows or anybody on the weekends.

Rake leaves.

Mow lawns.

Pass out lunches/dinners when the schools close or are on vacation.

This is something that has been helpful for many missional ministries during the COVID 19 pandemic. Some school districts provide free meals for all children and when school is not in session, some children go without food.

Help the boys and girls club.

Offer to help with Spring Cleaning. If they provide a sports league, offer to coach or be a referee. Volunteer in the after-school program as a helper. If you have a special skill, offer to teach a class on that skill.

Host/sponsor a scouting group.

Take gifts to local businesses.

Bake cookies for them on a regular basis. Buy them popcorn tins at Christmas time. Plan, with their approval, to provide lunch for their employees on occasion.

At the end of the discussion your group will be instructed to name something they will do and plan it and begin to do it. **For this discussion, you will need a large piece of paper**

or a whiteboard set up in a visible way for the participants to view. You will also need a marker to write possible ministry ideas on the paper/whiteboard.

Many know the saying, “Talk is cheap” but, unfortunately, many ministries do not get past the talking stages. The main point of this lesson is to figure out something and to begin to do it. Sometimes brainstorming session create excitement and groups decide to being with a large, exhausting ministry. Do not get caught up in the excitement, but at the same time, do not take a firehose to someone’s flame. Wisdom calls us to work, live and minister within our means. At some point, you might be called by God to be stretched beyond your resources and to see how God provides. However, at this point, the call is to begin being faithful with something. Pick something reasonable and manageable to begin soon and jump into it.

One final note. God calls us to be faithful and He will be fruitful. Be faithful to begin being missional in your context in a way that is faithful to the context and allow God to provide the fruit of that ministry.

Between Session Five and Session Six the group will PAUSE from the discussion so that during that time the group can BE MISSIONAL. Use this pause to plan and participate in one of the missional ideas the group decides to do. Notify the group if there will be meetings to plan the missional engagement, and when that will take place. It is imperative that your group begin being missional in the context BEFORE you move on to Session Six! Encourage the group to journal in their PARTICIPANT NOTEBOOK their thoughts about the missional engagement. Those will be briefly discussed in Session Six.

May your discussion be blessed, may it be exciting, and may God unfold the plan for the mission He has called your group to fulfill.

Session Five: Be Missional in Your Context
FACILITATOR GUIDE

Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

Ask: Is there a volunteer who is willing to open us with prayer

OR

Pray: Our Heavenly Father. We know that your presence is everywhere, so we know Your presence is here with us in this room. We are grateful for Your presence with us during this time. We ask that as we gather Your presence would comfort us, challenge us, change us, and transform us. We are here to learn more about being a missional community in our world that demonstrates Your goodness to our community. May we learn something about You and something about who You call us to be as we imitate You in our world. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen!

OR

Pray your own prayer.

Opening Discussion (10 Minutes)

Ask: Can someone remind us of the definition of what a Missional Community is? It is printed at the top of your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT.

A missional community seeks to carry out the Mission of God (*Mission Dei*) in practical ways as it incarnates (displays) God's character and goodness in how it lives and relates to everyone else in the community.

Say: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT, Restate the mission field and boundaries of our Missional Community.

Ask someone to share for the group what the boundaries are.

Say: Remember, knowing our boundaries is vitally important for our gathering to be missional. The mission is rooted in its context.

Ask: Remember, last session we closed by asking you to *ginosko* the community and to journal your thoughts and answer some of the questions about the context. Take a couple of minutes and share with a partner about some of your thoughts.

After each partner has had a couple of minutes to discuss

Ask: Is someone willing to share their thoughts with the group?

Say: “Wow, this is taking FOREVER! Why could we not have jumped right in to the ‘doing’ of ministry? Why did we have to study and process and talk and chat about the community?” The answer is because we were learning our community. We were developing relationships with people in the community as someone who cares for the community. Now, when we get to the “doing” we are doing as an insider - not as an outsider. During this session, we will discuss the “doing” of being missional.

Discussion of Being Missional in Your Context (15 minutes)

Ask: Is there a volunteer who is willing to read **Matthew 25:31-46** in your Bible?

After the passage is read **ask if someone will read Matthew 25:34-40 that is printed in the PARTICIPANT HANDOUT**

Matthew 25:34-40 (NLT2) ³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. ³⁶ I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’ ³⁷ “Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? ³⁹ When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ ⁴⁰ “And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’

Ask: What are some reasons Jesus rewarded people? What are some reasons a reward withheld from others?

Ask: What might we learn about our role in being missional?

Ask: What are some things we remember Jesus doing in his ministry? It is ok to speak generally.

Say: Jesus was INCARNATION – he entered people’s lives and their world. Therefore, he provides the best example of missional, incarnational ministry. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, challenged enemies to love each other, participated in weddings, went to people’s homes for meals, challenged the religious establishment that cared more about rules than people, and touched the “untouchable.”

Ask: Write your response to the following question on your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT. I will ask a few to share some responses in a moment.

What are specific examples from Matthew 25 that Jesus challenges us to do?

Say: Visit the sick, the imprisoned, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, take care of the forgotten... Jesus challenges us to model the INCARNATION in the way we interact with our world.

How to be Missional in Your Context (20 Minutes)

Say: Now after we have done all this research and gotten to know people in the context and have gotten to know the context, we must begin to model incarnation and God's mission in our context.

Let us refresh ourselves on the Four Biblical Foundations of Missional Engagement from Session One. These four foundations have been the bedrock and foundation for our thinking during these sessions. They will help us to discern what to do now.

Ask: Look back at your notes from Session One. Is someone willing to share the Four Biblical Foundations of Missional Engagement? Write the answers in your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT.

- Our Inherent **WORTH**
- Prevenient Grace – God's Presence is **EVERYWHERE,** and it goes before us.
- God provides all that is **GOOD.**
- God is **INCARNATIONAL** and invites us to do the same.

Say: When groups begin to minister to a community, the groups often think of combatting the negative. To be missional, and to apply these foundations to missional ministry we will shift our thoughts and ponder the positives, or assets, of our context. Remember, if there is good happening it is because God has blessed the community with that good.

Say: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT write your answer to the following question.

What are some assets in our context?

Ask: Is someone willing to share a couple of responses?

Say: The strengths and assets in the community are often people and businesses that want the community to succeed. As such, they are often willing to partner with other

organizations to see the community succeed. If God is already active, we must recognize that we do not have to go into missional ministry alone.

Say: Now that we have seen the positives, we must remember that everything is not rosy all the time. There are negatives, or needs, in our context.

Say: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT write your answer to the following question.

What are some needs of our context?

Ask: Is someone willing to share a couple of responses?

Say: Now, look back again at the assets, and look again at the needs of the context. On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT write your answer to the following question.

How might we be able to partner with the assets to assist in helping the needs?

Ask: Is someone willing to share a couple of responses?

Say: A great help in missional engagement is to partner with organizations and assets to help the community. Often, simply meeting needs can have an adverse reaction where we create a dependency. However, partnering with people and assets allows us to create new systems of engagement where the community comes together to benefit ALL in the community. Remember, we do NOT have to do it all!! It is better to be good at one thing than to be mediocre at many things!

Say: Here are some ideas, or some more ideas, to assist us in thinking about these partnerships. This list is printed in the PARTICIPANT HANDOUT as well. As we go through this list, make a note of some of the ideas that appeal to you. I will ask you about your thoughts in a little while.

A List of Missional Ideas

Volunteer at the school in your community.

Help at breakfast/lunch. Help teachers in the classroom. Read to the students. Let the teachers and staff know you are praying for them. Talk to them and hear about their needs and frustrations. If they mention a need, see who can assist in filling that need. Be the volunteer crossing guard.

Shop at the local grocery store.

This might cost a little more, but there is the benefit of the circulation of your

dollar in your local community. Also, in doing this, you will get to know those who are regulars at the store, and you will get to know the clerks and owners of the store.

Make the coffee shop your office. Or whatever the local hang out place is.

If you can, work from the coffee shop in your community. Get to know the locals. You might have to be creative with this, but, if you want to meet people you must be willing to go where they are.

Walk the community in prayer.

This could be something you continually to do on a regular basis. Your neighborhood probably will not stay constant. Walking the neighborhood is a great way to see what changes are taking place. It is a great opportunity to foster relationships with the families and businesses in the neighborhood. Do not be afraid to ask your neighbors what their prayer concerns are.

Sit with the lonely.

Many people are alone. Spouses die and children move away. How many people are lonely in your neighborhood? Go to their home, drink coffee, sit and visit. Invite them into your home.

Assist in childcare.

Are there single parents who need help watching their children when they get home from school? Volunteer to watch their children during the week or rotate watching the children. Go to their house to watch the children to make it easier for them and the children.

Clean someone's house.

Offer to show up and clean an elderly person's house, or the house of a single parent, or someone who has just been injured etc...

Get involved with a nursing home/extended care facility.

Go Christmas caroling. Make it a regular time to connect with patients and residents.

Visit those in prison and/or their families.

This is easier said than done, I understand. Prisons/jails often have certain hours for visiting, and depending on the number of residents, it can be difficult to have

an actual time to visit. However, if you know of families who have a family member in jail/prison, you could visit with the families and assist in life with them.

Organize community block parties.

Pick a date and invite people to do a potluck style party. Have them bring games, cards, or whatever they think would be fun at the party. For more creativity, schedule it around a holiday or community event.

Service cars for widows or anybody on the weekends.

Rake leaves.

Mow lawns.

Pass out lunches/dinners when the schools close or are on vacation.

This is something that has been helpful for many missional ministries during the COVID 19 pandemic. Some school districts provide free meals for all children and when school is not in session, some children go without food.

Help the boys and girls club.

Offer to help with Spring Cleaning. If they provide a sports league, offer to coach or be a referee. Volunteer in the after-school program as a helper. If you have a special skill, offer to teach a class on that skill.

Host/sponsor a scouting group.

Take gifts to local businesses.

Bake cookies for them on a regular basis. Buy them popcorn tins at Christmas time. Plan, with their approval, to provide lunch for their employees on occasion.

Discerning the Missional Engagement (15 Minutes)

***FACILITATOR:** You will need a sheet of paper on the wall, or a whiteboard, visible for all to see in this discussion.*

Say: Think back to the list and look it over. It does not contain every possibility to be missional in our context. On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT answer the following question:

Is there anything you would like to add to the list?

Ask: Is someone willing to share some answers?

Say: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT answer the following question:

Is there anything that sticks out to you that we could do?

Say: We are going to put a list together or POSSIBILITIES for missional engagement. I am going to ask you to share your responses and I will write the answer down. Please use your PARTICIPANT NOTEBOOK to also write the ideas down.

Ask: Is someone willing to share some answers to the question asking what sticks out to you that we could do?

***FACILITATOR:** As answers are being shared write them on the whiteboard or paper on the wall.*

Say: Look over the list. In your PARTICIPANT NOTEBOOK put an asterisk, or star, or circle, or note somehow the ONE thing you believe we should do IMMEDIATELY!

Ask: Please share with the group your idea of what we should do IMMEDIATELY

***FACILITATOR:** Note by either writing the ideas again, or putting an asterisk, or star, or circling or noting somehow the responses from the group.*

Say: Now we need to choose ONE thing to start. There are many great ideas listed here, and we could get to them all eventually. However, for right now, we need to consider our resources and abilities and decide on what to do NOW. Once we decide, we will DO IT.

Ask: What should we do to start?

***FACILITATOR:** Try to encourage the group to come to a consensus on something that can be begun immediately that takes into consideration the giftedness of the group and the resources available. Pick ONE thing to begin with.*

Say: Now that we have come to a consensus. On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT fill out the response for the prompt:

The missional engagement our group will begin with is.

Closing (5 minutes)

Say: God calls us to be faithful to begin and do something. Let us plan what we are going to do. We are not going to meet for Session Six until after we have begun our missional engagement. We will plan this engagement so that we can be INCARNATE in our

community.

Say: Too often we sit around and talk about starting something. Now, we are at the point of doing something. Let us be faithful to do it! The God, who is already at work, calls us to be faithful - God will be fruitful.

FACILITATOR: *Notify the group if there will be meetings to plan the missional engagement OR when the missional engagement will begin. Remember, it is IMPERATIVE to begin to engage missionally before moving on to Session Six. Encourage the group to journal their thoughts during the missional engagement. In Session Six, those will be briefly discussed.*

Ask: Is there someone willing to close our time in prayer

OR

Pray: Our Good Father we thank You for Your presence that has been with us during this discussion. We thank You that You have begun to stir within us the desire to faithfully display you to our neighborhood context that You call us to plant a missional community. Help us to begin to love that community and its people. Help us to faithfully begin to minister to that community.

Help our love for each other to be an example to those who live in the community you have called us to. May You work in our group to work through us as we share Your goodness with those we encounter. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

OR

Pray your own prayer.

Session Six: Meet Regularly for Worship

FACILITATOR OVERVIEW

Objective: To define what is essential for corporate worship and to plan how that will be accomplished by the missional community.

Biblical Texts:

Hebrews 10:25 (NLT2) ²⁵ And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

Acts 2:42-47 (NLT2) ⁴² All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles'

teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. ⁴³ A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. ⁴⁴ And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. ⁴⁵ They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. ⁴⁶ They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— ⁴⁷ all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Congratulations! Your group has arrived at the final session; Session Six. If your group has not participated in the missional ministry that you planned, wait to continue to Session Six until that has taken place.

Over the past five sessions, your group has discussed the biblical foundations for missional, incarnational, ministry. You have discussed ideas of where to plant a missional community. You have learned about the neighborhood of the missional community, both through understanding data and through getting to know the people of the neighborhood. Also, you have looked at how to be missional within that context. In this session you are going to discuss the importance of meeting regularly for worship.

Worship is integral to the mission of a missional community. It is worship that separates missional gatherings from other community engagement organizations and other humanitarian groups. It is worship that defines missional communities as Christ centered, Christ worshipping groups. It is worship that lays the foundation for a missional community to be faith-based, and it is worship that will center the mission and the community on Jesus Christ. Worship, when done correctly, can also be an act of missional engagement.

The biblical background for this discussion comes from **Hebrews 10:25** and **Acts 2:42-47**. Both passages detail the importance of worship. The Hebrews passage is an encouragement to continue to gather and worship while the Acts 2 passage provides an example of what true worship is.

A few things to take note of while reading these passages. First, the Hebrews passage shares the idea that the believers' meeting together is an encouragement to each other and, it is more necessary as the return of the Lord is closer. This idea is something powerful to ponder. The author of Hebrews feels that meeting together is a necessary encouragement for believers. Yes, Christ is glorified, but there is something powerfully encouraging for believers as they gather to worship Christ. In the crazy chaos of the world, this encouragement is necessary for believers to remain committed to their faith. It is important for missional communities to have a regular time where believers are

reminded that their allegiance is to Christ and that He will return someday. If the author of Hebrews thought it necessary for believers to be encouraged in the first century of Christianity, it is even more important that believers gather for worship today!

The Acts 2 passage tells us what the believers did during the early church. They were missional in how they lived and interacted with each other and their world. Their actions can be great example for missional, faith-based communities. However, they also met regularly for worship! When they engaged their world in missional ways and met regularly for worship a few things happened.

The first thing that happened was the world took notice! The passage details that the believers enjoyed the “goodwill of all the people” (v.47). The world noticed their life and worship and the world responded favorably to them. Secondly, and most importantly, God responded! This passage declares, “And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved” (v. 47). This is a powerful reminder that God is fruitful when believers are faithful! It was the Lord who added to their ministry. This happened because the church was faithful in its life, but also because they were faithful to worship.

To be able to discuss meeting regularly for worship, your team will need to know the basics of what worship is. The word “worship” comes from the old English word, “worthship” which highlights giving worth, and glory to God. Some traditions use the term “liturgy” to describe or define worship. The term *liturgy* literally means “the work of the people.” Worship should be done privately, during all aspects of life, but it is also important to set aside a regular time to corporately worship with other believers.

As the biblical passages are considered, especially the Acts 2 passage, an understanding of the foundations of worship is made clear. Acts 2 details these acts of worship: teaching; fellowship; prayer; sharing; community. Fellowship, sharing, and community can easily be organized into fellowship. The actions of Acts 2 define the basic foundations of worship. Those foundations are teaching, fellowship, and prayer.

When missional communities consider corporate worship the only necessary elements are teaching, prayer, and fellowship. Other than those elements, there is not a set formula for worships. Worship should give glory to God, and there should be teaching, fellowship, and prayer. Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im write in their book *Planting Missional Churches*, “Churches should exalt God, edify believers, and evangelize the world. Worship services, first and foremost, should exalt God. This statement underscores the imperative of God-centered worship. Believers should also be built up in the faith. Finally, authentic worship can evangelize unbelievers.” Missional communities do well to remember that there is no formula for the length or style of the teaching. There is no necessary algorithm for when and how the offering is received. These elements are defined by the missional community based upon the context it is a part of. What the worship looks like for a missional

community must be based upon the needs of that specific community. This is incarnational worship.

When worship is presented to honor God in a way that the community can relate to, worship becomes missional. Stetzer and Im write:

One of the most effective evangelistic methods a church can use is exposing the unchurched to the authentic worship of God. Unbelievers learn worship as they witness the worship of believers. Seeker-comprehensible worship gatherings create an experience of both God-centrality and openness toward the needs of seekers. Seeker-comprehensible worship is a gathering that offers God honor through worship and the preaching of the Scriptures while providing a relevant atmosphere in which unbelievers are challenged to come to saving faith in Christ.

Louie Bustle and Gustavo Crocker in their book *Planting* remind new worship gatherings of the importance of incarnational, and exciting worship services. They state, “Your gatherings should attract rather than repel people. God does not often reveal himself in dead, dragging church gatherings. Where God is, there is life.” Worship can be an element of missional, incarnational, engagement as it considers the context in its planning.

The ultimate question, then, is how worship is done. Who does the teaching, or praying, or leading of fellowship? The encouragement is that missional communities do not have to reinvent the wheel. The missional community needs to work with the pastor of the planting church to come up with solutions to the issue of how worship is done in each missional gathering. Whatever your missional community decides to do you must understand this caution: make sure your local pastor approves of your choices. These missional communities are tied to the ministry of the local church where the local pastor is given the responsibility of oversight. Separating from the leadership of the local pastor is caustic and can have devastating effects upon the local church. Make sure that in everything you do, you keep from “splitting” from the local church. Keep your pastor in the loop and allow your pastor to make the final approval of everything you do!

Here are some ideas on facilitating worship.

Teaching:

- **The pastor can come into the missional community and teach or preach.**

The missional community is a branch of the ministry of the local church. Your group and your pastor are partnering in this endeavor. It is important that those who gather know who the pastor of the local church is. Having the pastor teach is the easiest way for people to make that connection. It is possible that your pastor has oversight in this endeavor and is willing to

plan the worship gatherings and teachings. If that is the case, your role is to support your pastor and ask if you can assist in any way. Also, the pastor does not have to teach every week. Maybe there are weeks that you could volunteer to teach or lead a study. Be willing to offer this to your pastor.

- **The pastor can be videoed as s/he teaches at another campus and that video can be utilized in the missional gathering.**

Video the pastor while s/he preaches/teaches at the traditional location. Use that video for the missional community's worship gathering. This can be done easily with a mobile smartphone. If the worship gathering happens at the same time as the traditional location worship gathering, the teaching could be a live stream. If the gatherings happen at different times use a recording of the teaching.

- **An associate pastor can teach.**
- **Someone called to ministry can be provided the opportunity to teach (or to teach occasionally)**
- **The leaders can rotate who teaches each week.**

The teaching does not have to be a 45-minute sermon, either. The teaching could be a short Bible study. Someone could share their testimony. The leadership of the missional community could rotate who presents a part of their story.

Here is a list of resources to assist in teaching.

- **Teach from an approved curriculum.**
- **Ask the pastor what s/he will be speaking from at the “traditional” campus and partner with the pastor.**
- **Utilize an approved video series that is available through a DVD or online.**
- **People can rotate sharing their testimony or sharing about a passage of scripture they appreciate.**

Prayer:

- **Someone prays during the worship service.**
- **Someone is given the responsibility to ask someone to pray during the service.**
- **A person could start/close the prayer but provide time for people to pray aloud or silently.**
- **Someone provides a list of prayer requests and asks for volunteers to pray for a specific request.**

Fellowship:

- **Encourage people to stay after the worship service, or come before the worship service, and share snacks and coffee.**
- **Ask different people to sign up to bring a snack.**
- **Provide for times and gatherings aimed specifically towards fellowship.**

For example, a monthly potluck style meal, or a breakfast gathering.

So far, music has not been discussed. Music is helpful with worship, but it is not necessary. Recall, music is not listed in the foundational elements of worship. However, often when people think of worship, they automatically think of music. It is appropriate to have music, and if a gathering wants music, it must be well planned out.

Like with teaching, prayer, and fellowship, if your group would like music during the worship, it will need to find a way to make that happen in a context appropriate way. Worship should glorify God but also engage the missional context. Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im are correct when they write,

One way to determine the music is to know your focus group. What is their favorite musical style? Just like the frontier evangelist who adapted the tune of “Amazing Grace,” we must also write or adapt Christian lyrics suitable to that particular style. As the frontier evangelist might have said, “There’s no such thing as Christian music, only Christian lyrics.” Change the musical style as needed without changing the gospel.

When it comes to music, remember the missional, incarnational approach. Remember the context that the group is worshipping God in.

Here are some ideas to consider for music:

- **Have a musician lead the music.**

Print out the lyrics for everyone to sing along with or use a computer and projection screen.

- **Use CDs or DVDs to sing along with**

Project the DVD onto a TV screen or projection screen and encourage people to sing along with the music.

- **Have someone lead a Capella.**

Again, consideration needs to be made for how people will be provided with the words to sing along.

Remember, there is no wrong way to worship, so long as you are giving God glory and thinking of the missional context. Also, remember, as you plan the worship gatherings there is something exciting that should happen when God's people come together for worship. Louie Bustle and Gustavo Crocker in the book *Planting state*, "There is no such thing as a normal church service. Every time your new church gathers, there must be an expectation from the congregation, and from you, that God is going to do something special in that gathering."

This session provides a brief theology and overview of what is required for worship and it leads the group to begin discussing the worship elements and the "how to" of leading worship. This session is not intended to completely plan the first worship gathering but will prime the pump towards that goal. After this session, it is understood that you will take what has been discussed and plan the worship gatherings with the group. Begin your first worship gathering as soon as possible and invite the community to join you. Be authentic and trust God.

Encourage your team to gather regularly and expect God to do something as you are faithful! Bustle and Crocker are clear, "People will want to go to church because there is something that draws them to worship and serve the Lord." May your team be a part of something special that God is doing to draw people to worship!

Session Six: Meet Regularly for Worship

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

Ask: Is there a volunteer who is willing to open us with prayer

OR

Pray: Our Heavenly Father. We know that your presence is everywhere, so we know Your presence is here with us in this room. We are grateful for Your presence with us during this time. We ask that as we gather Your presence would comfort us, challenge us, change us, and transform us. We are here to learn more about being a missional community in our world that demonstrates Your goodness to our community. May we learn something about You and something about who You call us to be as we imitate You in our world. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen!

OR

Pray your own prayer.

Opening Discussion (10 Minutes)

Ask: Can someone remind us of the definition of what a Missional Community is? It is printed at the top of your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT.

A missional community seeks to carry out the Mission of God (*Mission Dei*) in practical ways as it incarnates (displays) God's character and goodness in how it lives and relates to everyone else in the community.

Say: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT, Restate the mission field and boundaries of our Missional Community.

Ask someone to share for the group what the boundaries are.

Say: Remember, knowing our boundaries is vitally important for our gathering to be missional. The mission is rooted in its context.

Ask: Is someone willing to share a reflection or two from our missional engagement that we participated in?

Say: Being actively missional is important for a missional community. However, there is something that separates us from other humanitarian, community organizations. We are a

missional, faith-based community. Therefore, it is necessary that we meet regularly for worship while we engage missionally. As we do this, we recognize that worship done correctly is an element of missional engagement.

Discussion of Gathering Regularly for Worship (20 minutes)

Ask: Is there a volunteer who is willing to read **Hebrews 10:25 and Acts 2:42-47**. They are printed in the PARTICIPANT HANDOUT.

Hebrews 10:25 (NLT2) ²⁵ And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

Acts 2:42-47 (NLT2) ⁴² All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. ⁴³ A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. ⁴⁴ And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. ⁴⁵ They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. ⁴⁶ They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— ⁴⁷ all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Say: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT answer the following question and discuss your answer with a neighbor.

What are some observations about worship from these two passages?

Ask: Is someone willing to share some answers?

Say: These passages remind us that our meeting together is an encouragement to each other **and, it is even more necessary as the return of the lord is closer.** There is something powerfully encouraging for us as we gather to worship Christ. In our world, that encouragement is necessary. It is important for us to have a regular time where we remind ourselves that our allegiance is to Christ and that He WILL return someday.

Say: The Acts 2 passage tells us what the believers did. They were missional in how they lived and interacted with each other and their world.

Say: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT answer the following question.

What were the results of the believers meeting for worship in Acts 2?

Ask: Is someone willing to share their answers?

Say: Here are a couple of things to point out. 1) **The world took notice!** We read that they enjoyed the “goodwill of all the people.” The world noticed their life and worship and the world responded favorably to them. 2) **God responded!** This is probably more important than the world taking notice – although it is important that the world be affected by our presence. In this passage we read that “And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved” (v.47) This is a powerful reminder that God is fruitful when we are faithful! It was the Lord who added to their ministry. This happened because the church was faithful in its life, but also because they were faithful to worship.

Say: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT answer the following question and discuss your answer with a neighbor.

How might someone define what worship is?

Ask: Is someone willing to share their answers?

Say: The word “worship” comes from the old English word, “worthship” which highlights giving worth, and glory to God. Some traditions use the term “liturgy” to describe or define worship. The term *liturgy* literally means “the work of the people.” Worship can be done privately during life but is also important to set aside a regular time to corporately worship with other believers.

Say: Think back to the Acts 2 passage. On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT answer the following question and discuss your answer with a neighbor.

What are some things the church in Acts 2 did that was worship?

Ask: Is someone willing to share their answers?

Say: As we look at the passage, we see these acts of worship: teaching; fellowship; prayer; sharing; community. Fellowship, sharing, and community can easily be organized into fellowship. When we look at the Acts 2 Church the basic foundations of worship are made clear. Those foundations are teaching, fellowship, and prayer.

Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im write in their book *Planting Missional Churches*, “Churches should exalt God, edify believers, and evangelize the world. Worship services, first and foremost, should exalt God. This statement underscores the imperative of God-centered worship. Believers should also be built up in the faith. Finally, authentic worship can evangelize unbelievers.”

Discerning Worship Elements (15 Minutes)

***FACILITATOR:** You will need a sheet of paper on the wall, or a whiteboard, visible for all to see in this discussion.*

Say: Worship is missional. If everything about your community is based upon the context, then worship is no different! When worship is presented to honor God in a way that the community can relate to, worship becomes missional. Stetzer and Im write:

One of the most effective evangelistic methods a church can use is exposing the unchurched to the authentic worship of God. Unbelievers learn worship as they witness the worship of believers. Seeker-comprehensible worship gatherings create an experience of both God-centrality and openness toward the needs of seekers. Seeker-comprehensible worship is a gathering that offers God honor through worship and the preaching of the Scriptures while providing a relevant atmosphere in which unbelievers are challenged to come to saving faith in Christ.

“Your gatherings should attract rather than repel people. God does not often reveal himself in dead, dragging church gatherings. Where God is, there is life.”

Say: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT take a few minutes and answer the following question.

Based upon the data and what we know about our context what should worship “look like” for our missional community?

Ask: Let us brainstorm ideas. Will someone share their answers from the last question?

***FACILITATOR:** As answers are being shared write them on the whiteboard or paper on the wall.*

A Primer for Worship “How To” (30 Minutes)

Say: If our worship needs to have teaching, prayer, and fellowship we need to decide how these elements are provided for. The most difficult is the teaching, so let us start there.

Say: There are several options for this element of the service. You do not have to have an ordained person to teach! With that said, here are some ideas to consider:

- **The pastor can come into the missional community and teach or preach.**
- **The pastor can be videoed as s/he teaches at another campus and that video can be utilized in the missional gathering.**

- **An associate pastor can teach.**
- **Someone called to ministry can be provided the opportunity to teach (or to teach occasionally)**
- **The leaders can rotate who teaches each week.**

Here is a list of resources to assist in teaching.

- **Teach from an approved curriculum.**
- **Ask the pastor what s/he will be speaking from at the “traditional” campus and partner with the pastor.**
- **An approved video series that is available through a DVD or online.**
- **People can rotate sharing their testimony or sharing about a passage of scripture they appreciate.**

Say: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT take a couple of moments to answer the following question and be prepared to discuss answers with the group.

How can our group provide for teaching?

Ask: Is someone willing to share their answer with the group?

Say: Now we need to discern prayer. Here are some ideas for the prayer portion.

- **Someone prays during the worship service.**
- **Someone is given the responsibility to ask someone to pray during the service.**
- **A person could start/close the prayer but provide time for people to pray aloud or silently.**
- **Someone provides a list of prayer requests and asks for volunteers to pray for a specific request.**

Say: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT take a couple of moments to answer the following question and be prepared to discuss answers with the group.

How can our group provide for prayer?

Ask: Is someone willing to share their answer with the group?

Say: Now, let us discuss fellowship. Here are some ideas.

- **Encourage people to stay after the worship service, or come before the worship service, and share snacks and coffee.**
- **Ask different people to sign up to bring a snack.**
- **Provide for times and gatherings aimed specifically towards fellowship.**

Say: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT take a couple of moments to answer the following question and be prepared to discuss answers with the group.

How can our group provide for fellowship?

Ask: Is someone willing to share their answer with the group?

Say: So far, we have not discussed music. Music is helpful with worship, but it is not necessary. However, often when people think of worship, they automatically think of music. So, let us discuss music.

Like with teaching, prayer, and fellowship, if our group would like music during the worship, we need to find a way to make that happen. However, remember, worship should glorify God but also engage the missional context. Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im are correct when they write,

One way to determine the music is to know your focus group. What is their favorite musical style? Just like the frontier evangelist who adapted the tune of “Amazing Grace,” we must also write or adapt Christian lyrics suitable to that particular style. As the frontier evangelist might have said, “There’s no such thing as Christian music, only Christian lyrics.” Change the musical style as needed without changing the gospel.

Say: Again, we do not have to reinvent the wheel when it comes to music. Here are some ideas to consider.

- **Have a musician lead the music.**
- **Use CDs or DVDs to sing along with**
- **Have someone lead a Capella.**

Say: On your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT take a couple of moments to answer the following question and be prepared to discuss answers with the group.

Will our group utilize music during worship? How?

Ask: Is someone willing to share their answer with the group?

Say: We have gone through the essential elements needed for worship and we have discussed ways we can provide for those elements. Now, all we must do is gather for worship. Let us plan, together our worship gathering and let us worship the Lord together!

Closing Prayer (2 minutes)

Say: Remember, there is no wrong way to worship, so long as you are giving God glory and thinking of the missional context. Also, remember, as we plan the worship gatherings there is something exciting that should happen when God's people come together for worship. Louie Bustle and Gustavo Crocker in the book, *Planting* state, "There is no such thing as a normal church service. Every time your new church gathers, there must be an expectation from the congregation, and from you, that God is going to do something special in that gathering."

Let us gather regularly and expect God to do something as we are faithful! Bustle and Crocker are clear, "People will want to go to church because there is something that draws them to worship and serve the Lord."

Ask: Is there someone willing to close our time in prayer

OR

Pray: Our Good Father we thank You for Your presence that has been with us during this discussion. We thank You that You have begun to stir within us the desire to faithfully display you to our neighborhood context. Help us to be able to faithfully worship you within this community in ways that excite the community to know you. Help our love for each other to be an example to those who live in the community you have called us to. May You work in our group to work through us as we share Your goodness with those we encounter. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

OR

Pray your own prayer.

APPENDIX D

6 SESSION CURRICULA PARTICIPANT HANDOUTS

Session 1: Biblical Foundations for Missional Engagement

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

Objective: To be able to know, biblically, the call for missional engagement.

Opening Discussion Questions

- What are ways people may view other people in our world?
- What are ways people may view other people in our community?
- What are some of God's roles in our world today?
- How do you think God might ask Christians to respond to people and communities in our world?

Biblical Foundations for Missional Engagement

1- Our Inherent _____.

“There is a vastness in knowing you're a son/daughter worth having. We see our plentitude in God's own expansive view of us, and we marinate in this.” - Gregory Boyle, *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*

“Homies stare not at the mirror and pronounce ‘EMPTY.’ Our collective task is to suggest instead ‘ENOUGH’ – enough gifts, enough talent, enough goodness. When we have enough, there's plenty.” - Gregory Boyle, *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*

Genesis 1:26-27 (NLT) ²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like ourselves. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.” ²⁷ So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Psalms 8:1-9 (NLT) ¹ O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens. ² You have taught children and infants to tell of your strength, silencing your enemies and all who oppose you. ³ When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you set in place— ⁴ what are people that you should think about them, mere mortals that you should care for them? ⁵ Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. ⁶ You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority— ⁷ the flocks and the herds and all the wild animals, ⁸ the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea,

and everything that swims the ocean currents. ⁹ O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!

Psalms 139:13-16 (NLT) ¹³ You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. ¹⁵ You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. ¹⁶ 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.

John 3:16 (NLT) ¹⁶ “For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

What passage sticks out the most to you? Why? _____

2- Preventive Grace - God's presence is _____ and it goes before us.

“God was not waiting for me to arrive to begin the process of transformation. The Spirit of God had been present all along. I was just now joining the work. There was far more transformation happening than I realized.” - Jonathan Brooks, *Church Forsaken: Practicing Presence in Neglected Neighborhoods*

“There are no God-forsaken places, just church-forsaken places.”- John Fuller

Romans 1:20 (NLT) ²⁰ For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

1 Corinthians 12:3 (NLT) ³ So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.

Proverbs 15:3 (NLT) ³ The LORD is watching everywhere, keeping his eye on both the evil and the good.

Psalms 139:7-10 (NLT) ⁷ I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! ⁸ If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. ⁹ If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me.

Jeremiah 23:24 (NLT) ²⁴ Can anyone hide from me in a secret place? Am I not everywhere in all the heavens and earth?” says the LORD.

Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT) ¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these

new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

What passage sticks out the most to you? Why? _____

3- God Provides All That is _____.

“... We have to realize that every person and every place displays both the glory of God and the brokenness of humanity at all times. If we are unable to see either, there is something wrong with our vision, not with the place or the person.” - Jonathan Brooks, *Church Forsaken*

James 1:17 (NLT) ¹⁷ Whatever is good and perfect comes down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.

Mark 10:17-18 (NLT) ¹⁷ As Jesus was starting out on his way to Jerusalem, a man came running up to him, knelt down, and asked, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁸ “Why do you call me good?” Jesus asked. “Only God is truly good.

What passage sticks out the most to you? Why? _____

4- God is _____ and Invites Us to Do the Same.

“There are no God-forsaken places. And when God’s people practice presence in the neglected neighborhoods all around us, we can say with confidence that there are no church-forsaken places either.” - Jonathan Brooks, *Church Forsaken*

John 1:1-5 (NIV2011) ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:14 (NIV2011) ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14 (The Message) The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.

John 1:18 (NIV2011) ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is

himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

Philippians 2:5-11 (NIV2011) ⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Ephesians 5:1 (NLT2) ¹ Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children.

What passage sticks out the most to you? Why? _____

Questions

Write your answers to the following questions.

- How could relationships with others change if we use these principles? _____

- How could our view of ourselves, others, and our world be different because of these principles? _____

- What are ways someone might live out one of these principles? _____

- What principle is the most challenging for you to live out? _____

- Identify one principle you will practice this week. Be prepared to share about your experience in the next session. _____

Session Two: Where should we plant a missional community?

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

Objective: To begin to discern what neighborhood or community where the group is called by God to plant a missional community.

A missional community seeks to carry out the Mission of God (*Mission Dei*) in practical ways as it incarnates (displays) God's character and goodness in how it lives and relates to everyone else in the community.

Biblical Text: Acts 1:8

Acts 1:8 (NLT2) ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

What is significant about where Jesus told the disciples they would minister?

What is significant about Jerusalem? Samaria? _____

Where has God placed you? Take a moment and define the boundaries of that place.

Are you ministering to your family/neighbors/etc.? _____

What are ways you might be able to better minister to your family/neighbors/etc.? _____

List some “Samarias” people in our church might identify. _____

Those being trained to lead a missional, faith-based community need to agree on ONE area to reach! Answer the following questions, together, to discern where God might be calling you.

Which location/neighborhood/community is closest to where you live, work, or shop?

Which location/neighborhood/community do you know more/the most about? _____

Which location/neighborhood/community do you most sense God calling you to minister in? _____

The area God has called us to is: _____

Take a moment do discuss the bounds of your neighborhood, location, and community.

Clearly define what its bounds will be. _____

After you have identified the boundaries it will also help to define the “hub” of your missional engagement. Where will you center the mission from? This HUB will serve as your “location” for worship gatherings and as a place to root the ministry within that specific neighborhood. It will NOT be the only place you utilize for ministry or mission but will be where you gather within the community most of the time.

What will be your hub? _____

Session Three: Know the Missional Community?

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

Objective: To know where to find the data about a context of missional engagement and to begin to interpret that data.

A missional community seeks to carry out the Mission of God (*Mission Dei*) in practical ways as it incarnates (displays) God’s character and goodness in how it lives and relates to everyone else in the community.

Restate the mission field and boundaries of our Missional Community. _____

Biblical Text: John 4:1-42

John 4:4-8 (NLT2) ⁴ He had to go through Samaria on the way. ⁵ Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob’s well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. ⁷ Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Please give me a drink.” ⁸ He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

What might people know or assume about our missional community context? _____

“Do your research using census data, economic profiles, and other databases to learn demographic, socioeconomic, cultural, ecclesiographic, and spiritual information about the focus group(s). Effective missions and church planting methodologies are contextual and indigenous, meaning the planter lives, speaks, and thinks as though he were ‘from the area.’”

Look at the data:

<https://maps.nazarene.org/DemographicsNazarene/>

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

Use these sites for further information:

<https://www.zip-codes.com/>

<http://www.usa.com/>

<https://www.city-data.com/>

As data is being investigated note the following information.

Population and projected growth

Income

Cultural demographics and note which majority and minority groups are in the area.

Education level

Family statistics (i.e., average family size, single parent homes, children raised by other family members, children raised by non-family members)

Housing statistics (own, rent, etc.)

What might we discern about this community? _____

Who lives here? Who does not live here? _____

What is present? What is missing? _____

What is a possible strength? _____

What is a possible struggle? _____

Is anything a surprise to discover? _____

Has anything become clearer as you observe the data? _____

Has anything become less clear as you observe the data? _____

How does the data confirm or challenge some assumptions people might have of our context? _____

What are things that the data does not detail? _____

Session Four: Know(ing) the Missional Community?

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

Objective: To begin the ongoing process of learning what the data does not detail about the context by engaging the people of the context.

A missional community seeks to carry out the Mission of God (*Mission Dei*) in practical ways as it incarnates (displays) God's character and goodness in how it lives and relates to everyone else in the community.

Restate the boundaries of the Missional Community. _____

Biblical Text: John 4:1-42

John 4:39-42 (NIV2011) ³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers. ⁴² They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

"If we want to imitate Jesus, we need to be with our neighbors, with the network of people we feel called to as a community on mission. Being with people is about hanging out with them in their apartments or at work, at the coffee shop, at an art show or a party. Being with our neighbor is learning about their dreams and desires, their hurts and their hopes. We need to become a character in the community."

Getting to know the neighborhood is an act of missional, incarnational engagement!

Refresh your thoughts on the data. Are there things that the data did not detail about our mission field? _____

Remember: *eido* is "I know based upon facts, data, research, science, etc..." whereas *ginosko* is "I know based upon *experience*." We have viewed the facts, but what about experiential knowledge.

What are some things people might do to experience the context and to know more than

what the data details? _____

The first step to showing people that they matter to God is to show them that they matter to you.

Leaders often see people as numbers or resources, but not as people who are important to God. J.R. Woodward and Dan White Jr. state, “The biggest temptation we face is to overlook people, seeing them as commodities to serve my needs, not people who matter to God.”

John Maxwell – “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care!”

What are easy ways to show someone you care about them? _____

As missional leaders you should be able to answer many of these questions:

- Do people live in the neighborhood/context? Is it a residential area or a business area?
 - If they live there, do they have vehicles?
 - Is there public transportation? Where are the bus stops?
- Who lives in the houses nearby?
 - How long have they lived here?
 - Do they have children?
 - What language is spoken in the home?
 - What culture do they identify with?
 - Where do they work?
 - Where do the children go to school? How close is the nearest school?

- Where do they go shopping? How far is the grocery store?
- What is the business next door? Across the street?
 - What do they do?
 - Who visits the business? Where do they live?
 - Who owns it? Where do the owners live?
 - Who are some of the people who work there? How far do they travel to work?
- What happens in the neighborhood on Friday night? Saturday? Sunday?
- Are there restaurants in the neighborhood?
 - What kind? Fast Food? Family Dining?
- Are there empty lots in the context?
- What do the buildings look like?
- Are there abnormal sights in the context?
- What are the main streets like in the context?
 - Are they two laned, four laned, highways, surface streets?
 - Are they well lit?
 - Do they have curbs and gutters, are there sidewalks, etc....?
 - Are the streets paved? Is the pavement in good shape?

Who could be a Person of Peace for the mission? _____

“A person of peace is someone with a large network of friends or business contacts in your mission field who shows an interest in helping you. This person may or may not be a Christian, but for whatever reason they are friendly toward

you and are willing to give you access to their network of relationships.”

Take the time until we meet for Session Five to *ginosko* the community. Walk the context. Get to know the people and places of the context. Answer some of the questions about the context either on your PARTICIPANT HANDOUT or in your PARTICIPANT NOTEBOOK. Write down other thoughts you have in your PARTICIPANT NOTEBOOK. Be able to answer the questions about the context. Be prepared to share your thoughts the next time we meet.

Session Five: Be Missional in Your Context

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

Objective: To detail and plan at least one way to engage your context in mission.

A missional community seeks to carry out the Mission of God (*Mission Dei*) in practical ways as it incarnates (displays) God’s character and goodness in how it lives and relates to everyone else in the community.

Restate the boundaries of the Missional Community. _____

Biblical Text: Matthew 25:31-46

Matthew 25:34-40 (NLT2) ³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. ³⁶ I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’ ³⁷ “Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? ³⁹ When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ ⁴⁰ “And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’

What are specific examples from Matthew 25 that Jesus challenges us to do? _____

Restate the Four Biblical Foundations of Missional/Incarnational Engagement

- Our Inherent _____
- Prevenient Grace – God’s Presence is _____ and it goes before us.
- God provides all that is _____.

- God is _____ and invites us to do the same.

What are some assets in our context? _____

What are some needs of our context? _____

How might we be able to partner with the assets to assist in helping the needs? _____

A List of Missional Ideas

Volunteer at the school in your community
 Shop at the local grocery store
 Make the coffee shop your office
 Walk the community in prayer
 Sit with the lonely.
 Assist in childcare
 Clean someone's house.
 Get involved with a nursing home/extended care facility
 Visit those in prison and/or their families.
 Organize community block parties
 Service cars for widows or anybody on the weekends
 Rake leaves
 Mow lawns
 Pass out lunches/dinners when the schools close or are on vacation
 Help the boys and girls club
 Host/sponsor a scouting group
 Take gifts to local businesses

Is there anything you would like to add to the list? _____

Is there anything that sticks out to you that we could do? _____

The missional engagement our group will begin with is: _____

Session Six: Meet Regularly for Worship PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

Objective: To define what is essential for corporate worship and to plan how that will be accomplished by the missional community.

A missional community seeks to carry out the Mission of God (*Mission Dei*) in practical ways as it incarnates (displays) God's character and goodness in how it lives and relates to everyone else in the community.

Restate the boundaries of the Missional Community. _____

Biblical Texts: Hebrews 10:25 and Acts 2:42-47

Hebrews 10:25 (NLT2) ²⁵ And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

Acts 2:42-47 (NLT2) ⁴² All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. ⁴³ A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. ⁴⁴ And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. ⁴⁵ They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. ⁴⁶ They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— ⁴⁷ all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

What are some observations about worship from these two passages? _____

What happened when the believers met for worship? _____

How might someone define what worship is? _____

What did the Church in Acts 2 do that was worship? _____

Is there a set “formula” for corporate worship? _____

“Churches should exalt God, edify believers, and evangelize the world. Worship services, first and foremost, should exalt God. This statement underscores the imperative of God-centered worship. Believers should also be built up in the faith. Finally, authentic worship can evangelize unbelievers.”

– Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im

One of the most effective evangelistic methods a church can use is exposing the unchurched to the authentic worship of God. Unbelievers learn worship as they witness the worship of believers. Seeker-comprehensible worship gatherings create an experience of both God-centrality and openness toward the needs of seekers. Seeker-comprehensible worship is a gathering that offers God honor through worship and the preaching of the Scriptures while providing a relevant atmosphere in which unbelievers are challenged to come to saving faith in Christ. – Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im

“Your gatherings should attract rather than repel people. God does not often reveal himself in dead, dragging church gatherings. Where God is, there is life.” – Louie Bustle and Gustavo Crocker

Based upon the data and what we know about our context what should worship “look like” for our missional community? _____

How can our group provide for teaching? _____

How can our group provide for prayer? _____

How can our group provide for fellowship? _____

Will our group utilize music during worship? How?

One way to determine the music is to know your focus group. What is their favorite musical style? Just like the frontier evangelist who adapted the tune of “Amazing Grace,” we must also write or adapt Christian lyrics suitable to that particular style. As the frontier evangelist might have said, “There’s no such thing as Christian music, only Christian lyrics.” Change the musical style as needed without changing the gospel. – Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im

“People will want to go to church because there is something that draws them to worship and serve the Lord.” – Louie Bustle and Gustavo Crocker

“There is no such thing as a normal church service. Every time your new church gathers, there must be an expectation from the congregation, and from you, that God is going to do something special in that gathering.”
– Louie Bustle and Gustavo Crocker