LIBERTY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

Doctor of Ministry Thesis Project

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The Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity
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Doctor of Ministry

By

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Dedication

First and foremost, this work is dedicated to Jesus. He has graciously guided me over the years to a greater understanding of the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. I am eternally grateful to be His disciple.

Second, this work is dedicated to my family. Kristin: Without your love and encouragement this work would have never been accomplished. You spent many, many hours helping me understand the truths Jesus was guiding me towards. I am blessed beyond measure to have you as my helpmate. Adalynn, Elliah, Ianna, and Samuel: I pray this work becomes a reality in your lives. I hope I demonstrate the power of Jesus to you so you can become radical disciple makers for His Kingdom.

!Vive La Mouvement!
Liberty University School of Divinity

Thesis Project Approval Sheet

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Liberty University School of Divinity, 2016

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Thesis Title: Creating and Sustaining a Missional Movement in America

This project seeks to create a paradigm and plan that would generate a sustainable missional movement in America. America, since her founding, has been home to many revivals. However, there have only ever been two missional movements, the Methodist and Baptist in the 18th and 19th century. For decades, the American Church has watched the general population increase while church attendance, participation, and involvement decrease. While the American Church loses its impact on society, the Global South and Global East are experiencing missional movements. A new missional paradigm and plan is needed to reach America, especially as culture increasingly becomes hostile towards Jesus-followers. This project will provide a qualitative analysis of the missional roots in the early church in the New Testament, missional movements throughout church history, recent American sociological movements, and an anonymous survey to 30 church leaders. Based on this research, the project will illustrate how to create and sustain a missional movement in America. The project will inspire Christian leaders to remove the current ecclesiological philosophy and insert a missional paradigm into the DNA of their churches so that each Christ-follower is encouraged and equipped to become missionary agents in and for their communities.

Abstract length: 197 Words
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INTRODUCTION

Jesus’ command before leaving Earth is for His disciples to make disciples. However, this would not occur until the Holy Spirit comes upon them. Jesus’ disciples wait in an upper room until the Holy Spirit descends. The Holy Spirit comes and the Jesus Movement is set in motion. This movement begins with approximately 120 individuals, quickly grows to 3,000, exponentially grows to over 31 million by 350 AD, and now exceeds 2.2 billion people. It is clear, “the early Christian church is, from the beginning, a movement.”

Over the past thirty years, there has been a growing interest in missional ecclesiology. This ecclesiological shift is spearheaded by Mike Breen, Alan Hirsch, Neil Cole, and others. This shift calls for all Jesus-followers to view themselves as missionaries living to fulfill the Great Commission. These followers make spiritually mature, reproducing disciples in their contexts just like the early church. This radical change challenges the current American Church ecclesiological philosophy. For many American Christians, missionary activities are limited to missionaries, missionary agencies, overseas mission trips, and missions’ boards, not for the

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1 Matthew 28:16-20. All scriptural quotations are from the English Standard Version (2001) unless otherwise noted.

2 Acts 1:8.


4 Acts 2:5-41.

5 Acts 2:41.


7 Ibid., 390.

“average Christian.” It is time for the American Church to rediscover her movemental mission and make disciples who make disciples.

Statement of the Problem

The leaders of the missional movement have provided the Church with resources to implement missional thinking. The challenge moving forward for the American Church is to take these resources and practically live as disciple makers within their cities, communities, neighborhoods, and families. This is the next step for missional ecclesiology. American churches must understand it is the mission for each Jesus follower to make disciples.

The most used ecclesiastical models in America are the traditional, attractional, and hybrid. These models have restrictions that hinder American Churches to become a missional movement. If anything, these models restrict Christians from making disciples. These models rely heavily on full-time staff to fulfill the work of the ministry. As a result, programs and events are created and volunteers are needed. These are “plug-and-play” ministries. This model does not develop spiritually mature Jesus followers, but fills “the machine of our churches.”

Furthermore, there is not much intentional thought given to the movemental ecclesiology seen in Acts and the early church.

The term “missional” is a word that is used by many Church leaders. However, there is a plethora of definitions associated with this term. In this project, missional will be defined as Jesus-followers living with the goal of sharing the Gospel with others to make disciples who are obedient to Jesus. Furthermore, a missional movement is the exponential growth of the Church

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as Jesus-followers intentionally live in obedience to the Great Commission and make spiritually mature, reproducing disciples.

**Statement of Limitations**

Creating and sustaining a missional movement requires more than five, ten, or twenty years to foster. The early church movement occurred over a period of 300 years.\(^\text{10}\) The Chinese Church movement occurred over a period of eighty years. One of the limitations of this project is that it seeks to create the foundation for a movement, but will not be able to foresee the movement to its end. The focus is on creating the culture for a movement and the initial stages, which lead to sustainability. There is a plethora of factors which can occur in a movement, but they will remain unknown until situations arise.

The findings in this project have yet to be proven in America. There are missional movements occurring in the Global East and South, but there are zero missional movements occurring in America. As noted by Ed Stetzer, “Despite our tracking and analyzing these now established Church Planting Movements, we have yet to see one in the West.”\(^\text{11}\) Furthermore, according to data provided by Ed Stetzer, Warren Bird, the North American Mission Board, and Exponential, “80 percent are plateaued or declining; 16 percent are adding but not reproducing or multiplying; 4 percent are reproducing but are not multiplying; and essentially 0 percent are multiplying.”\(^\text{12}\)

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\(^{12}\) Ibid., 17.
The project’s findings will be theoretical with the aim of providing others the practical steps to create a movement. Since there are no missional movements occurring, the project will not use existing churches as part of the movement. The focus will be creating the movement with new churches.

This project will focus on eight metropolitan areas in America: New York City, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Miami, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago. The attention is placed on urban areas, not rural areas. In these metropolitan areas, bands of network churches are created to fulfill the movement. The missional/organic model will be used to reach the cities, not the traditional, attractional, or hybrid models. The primary focus will be on neighborhood missional communities and using these communities to make disciples.

**Theoretical Basis**

Acts details the beginning of the missional movement of the Church. The Church not only existed after Jesus’ death, but she grew exponentially. The coming of the Holy Spirit produced a movement that became unstoppable in the first century. This is documented by Luke as the Church grew from 120 individuals to over 3,000. These 3,000 unnamed disciples began the process of living in union with Jesus and presenting a witness to their communities. The basis for a missional movement is evident in the Church’s founding historical document – the book of Acts.

Over the course of the past twenty years, much has been written on the term “missional.” Individuals such as Alan Hirsch, Neil Cole, Mike Breen, and Steve Addison have helped the Church understand her true nature as a missionary agent. The literature produced not only helps

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\[13\] Acts 2:41
the Western Church comprehend her nature as a missionary, but also helps Jesus-followers make disciples in their contexts. This is much more than taking on the thinking and posture of a missionary. This paradigm alerts Christians that they are all called to make disciples who then make disciples. The goal is to help both leaders and “lay people” understand this ancient paradigm seen in the pages of the New Testament.

Throughout history, missional movements occur as individuals dedicate themselves to pursuing Jesus, loving the body of Jesus, and seeking to disciple unbelievers into the family of Jesus. The two most notable movements that have occurred are the early church (33-313 AD) and the Chinese movement (1949 AD-present). The early church movement grew from 120 disciples to 31 million by 350 AD\(^4\). In 1970, there were approximately 853,000 Christians in China.\(^5\) By 2010, this number grew exponentially to 106,485,000.\(^6\)

Christianity as a movement is not a new concept missional leaders have created within the past thirty years. “The first Christians understood their mission as being sent by the risen Christ ‘into the world’ to all nations.”\(^7\)

**Statement of Methodology**

This project will be structured into two sections. The first section will provide an understanding of Christianity as a movement, the sociological components of America, and data

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\(^{14}\) Ibid.


\(^{16}\) Ibid.

collected regarding missional ecclesiology. The second section will provide the missional paradigm and strategy to create and sustain a missional movement in America.

Throughout church history there is evidence of the Christian religion being a movement. The book of Acts details the growth of the Church. Luke writes in great detail about how the movement begins primarily through Paul’s missionary journeys. The book of Acts ends with Paul in prison, approximately 62 AD. However, the Christian movement does not stop with Paul in prison. As noted previously, the early church grew exponentially between 33-350 AD. The movement that was created and sustained by the early church is incredible. Furthermore, Bible Colleges and Seminaries were not in existence during this time. Each Jesus follower in the early church becomes a disciple maker. These disciple makers equip other disciples to make more disciples who are obedient to Jesus and His commands. Again, the movement continues to grow across the globe. Recent projections reveal the global population of Christians will be over 2.6 billion by 2025 AD, and over 3 billion by 2050 AD.

As the Christian movement continues to grow globally, Christianity in America is declining. In 1960 AD, approximately 24% of Americans claimed Evangelical Christianity as their religion. During the 1960’s the Fourth Great Awakening occurs and the effects of the Awakening are noticeable. By 2000 AD, approximately 35% of the general population claims Evangelical Christianity as their religion. However, it is predicted this growth will not be

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21 Ibid.
sustained. By 2050 AD, it is predicted that approximately 30% of the population will claim Evangelical Christianity as their religion.\textsuperscript{22} Though the Evangelical Christian movement appears to be in decline, America is home to many other movements and social issues.

Sociologically speaking, Americans have endured much since 2000 AD. In 2000 AD, there was much controversy over whether President George Bush won the Presidential Election.\textsuperscript{23} In 2001 AD, the World Trade Center attack occurs killing approximately 2,800 individuals.\textsuperscript{24} America invades Iraq in 2003 AD, which ignites a war still fought today.\textsuperscript{25} The economy begins to slide into a recession in the mid-2000’s, causing many to become anxious over their retirement funds. By 2008 AD, the economy finally crashes, sparking a global financial crisis.\textsuperscript{26} The American people have been through much since the start of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century.

These developments have all occurred within the past fifteen years. America, from her inception has been a country of social movements. The start of America was a revolutionary war sparked by a social movement. These social movements have occurred throughout America’s history and still continue today.

Applied research will be conducted as part of this project. Individuals will answer questions to determine their understanding of fulfilling the Great Commission, their participation

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.


in small groups, their contribution in making disciples, and their understanding of missional thinking. The data will reveal if Jesus followers have a practical understanding of the Great Commission, if their churches place an emphasis on disciple making, and if their thoughts on disciple making as it pertains to the American church.

Urbanization is rapidly occurring in America. In 1950 AD, approximately 65% of Americans lived in an urban area. In 2010 AD, approximately 80% of Americans lived in an urban area. This percentage is not expected to remain the same, but is expected to rise to almost 90% by 2050 AD. To truly have an impact on society a missional movement must be created in urban settings. This is where the majority of people are residing. The movement must go to urban areas where Christianity is often marginalized.

In order to create and sustain a missional movement, a new ecclesiological paradigm is needed. The paradigm will be simple so it can be easily remembered and transferred from disciple to disciple. Jesus reveals the Great Commission, and the Great Commission determines the structure of churches. In other words, “Christology determines missiology, and missiology determines ecclesiology.” This is the core of the missional movement. The vision is to be centered on Jesus, to be sent out to fulfill His mission, and to be in community to encourage and exhort other Christ followers.

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28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.


The strategy for the missional movement will focus on Jesus followers making disciples in their neighborhoods and will allow organic churches to arise. The organic model will be used by leadership to equip the “lay person” to complete the work of the ministry. This is vital for the movement to become sustainable. A movement that is dependent upon its leaders will plateau and eventually wither. However, a movement that is able to generate buy in from its followers is able to endure without the leader present. Christianity is a perfect example of this structure. Jesus left the disciples, but Christianity not only continued, it grew exponentially.

**Review of Literature**

A plethora of literary sources were used in this project. These resources reveal the biblical, theological, and practical foundation for the project. Scholarly sources regarding missional theology were used to develop a basis for a theoretical approach to create a movement. The Scriptures were also examined and evaluated. Their findings reveal the early church as a movement.

**Scholarly Resources**

Christian leaders are beginning to put forth literature on missional ecclesiology. Alan Hirsch is one of the key leaders in the missional movement. Over the past decade, he has published many books that help Christians understand missional theology. *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* is his foundational book. “This book is written to help us identify its constituent elements and to help us to (re)activate it so that we might once again truly

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32 Ephesians 4:11-12.
be a truly transformative Jesus movement in the West.”33 In this work, he presents his findings on how Jesus Movements develop.

It is imperative for one to research the Christian Movement from a historical perspective. *History of the World Christian Movement: Volumes 1 & 2* both provide ample data on how Christianity developed throughout history. These volumes cover the journey of Christianity from its inception to 1800 AD. The movement focuses around one person, Jesus, but it has had many different participants. “The Christian movement has always been greater than any individual or local church community has imagined it to be. Its history reflects and enormous diversity of beliefs and practices over the past two millennia.”34

There are many different terms that describe the Church in the New Testament. One of those words is “family.” In the early church, the church was a family. This is evident as believers were meeting and eating together daily.35 *When the Church was a Family: Recapturing Jesus’ Vision for Authentic Community* stresses the importance of spiritual growth in the context of community.36 The American church is very individualistic. As a result, American Christians isolate themselves from other believers and miss the opportunity to spiritually grow with the body of Jesus. This contradicts the Early Church and Jesus’ vision for community.

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35 Acts 2:42-47.

From time to time, America experiences a generational confrontation. This will happen once again as the Millennial generation takes the baton from the Boomer generation. The Next America: Boomers, Millennials, and the Looming Generational Showdown reveals what could occur in the near future. Millennials are maturing and beginning to take on leadership roles within culture, society, government, organizations, and religious institutions. As a result, their worldviews become the norms for society and organizations. When Boomers were born, America was a strong nation with concrete values. The only concrete value today is change. “As a society, we’ve become more polarized and more tolerant – and no matter what we’re like today, we’re going to be different tomorrow. Change is the constant.”

There is friction as the Boomers become older and Millennials find the road to adulthood. With these generations in flux, America’s society will reflect the changing demographic values and beliefs.

America has experienced many social movements. The Encyclopedia of American Social Movements: Volumes 1-4 provide a detailed account of the social movements that shaped America into the nation she has become. “The Encyclopedia of American Social Movements is the first major reference work on the subject that seeks to examine these movements in all their complexity, power, and significance.” In regard to missional movements, many say “show me where these are happening in America.” There are no missional movements happening in

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38 Ibid.


America, but there are social movements occurring. Lessons can be learned from these social movements in creating a missional movement.

The world’s population is ever moving towards urban areas. In 2012, the Evangelical Missiological Society authored a volume on urban mission. *Reaching the City: Reflections on Urban Mission for the Twenty-first Century*\(^{41}\) is the product of a vision birthed out of Jonah 4:11, “And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?”\(^{42}\) This volume sought to create new strategies to reach urban settings.\(^{43}\) With the urban population increasing, there is a desperate need for the Church to become the visible witness of Jesus in cities.

*Why Cities Matter: To God, the Culture, and the Church* helps the reader to understand the importance of cities. “Cities shape the world. What happens in cities doesn’t stay in cities. What happens in cities spreads – as they city goes, so goes the broader culture.”\(^{44}\) Not only are cities important from a cultural perspective, they are also important from a missional ecclesiological perspective. Acts 19 reveals that the entire region of Asia heard the Gospel while Paul was making disciples in Ephesus. Through the city of Ephesus, an entire region heard the Gospel.

Understanding the importance of cities is paramount for a missional movement, but creating a movement goes beyond this basic understanding. Christians must also be able to

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\(^{42}\) Jonah 4:11.


\(^{44}\) Stephen T. Um, and Justin Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter: To God, the Culture, and the Church*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 15.
exegete their cities. *Exegeting the City: What you Need to Know About Church Planting in the City Today* helps church planters understand the importance of planting churches in urban areas. There is much more to a city than population demographics. “Urban density does matter. There’s something magical that happens as cities become more dense and vertical. More than merely upping the amount of people per square mile density does impact and change culture.”145

As cities become denser, the culture of the city also becomes denser. Within a one-mile radius, there could potentially be dozens of cultures. Without properly exegeting a city, a church planter would be unaware of this truth and miss the opportunity to build relationships with people of peace.146

*Culture Making: Recovering our Creative Calling* brings to light a truth for Christians that is often forgotten, a Jesus followers calling in culture. “This book is an attempt to point my fellow Christians toward new, and also very old, directions for understanding our calling in culture.”147 Movements can only happen as spiritually mature disciples make disciples within their societal context, creating a missional culture in the process.

Creating culture is important, but it is equally important to create a missional culture. *Creating a Missional Culture: Equipping the Church for the Sake of the World* helps leaders create a missional culture in their church contexts. “As our best leaders know, in just about

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every Western cultural setting that the church finds itself, we are facing something of a crisis.\footnote{J. R. Woodward, \textit{Creating a Missional Culture: Equipping the Church for the Sake of the World}, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 11.} With crisis comes the opportunity to provide the Western church with a missional DNA.

The \textit{Divine Merger} asks the question, “What would happen if Jesus collided with a community?” How would a community respond to a collision with Jesus, the living Son of God? “The invitation is \textit{simply} a request for you to join hands with Jesus and make a collision at the spot in your community where he leads you.”\footnote{Mark E. Strong, \textit{Divine Merger: What Happens When Jesus Collides with Your Community}, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 13.} For a true missional movement to occur, each Christian must become disciple makers in their community seeking to create Jesus collisions in their neighborhoods.

With this new-found opportunity, the American church has the ability to focus on making disciples instead of building ministries and programs. \textit{Creating Disciple Making Movements} is a dissertation by Dr. Paul Johnson. Dr. Johnson’s aim in his study is “to challenge believers to understand the unique mission of Christ in the world and to pursue the making of holistic disciples and the creation of disciple-making movements among all peoples for his glory.”\footnote{Paul E Johnson. “Creating Disciple-Making Movements: How the Making of Holistic Disciples Is Central to the Mission of Christ,” (Doctorate of Ministry, Western Seminary, 2011), 1.} In this volume, Dr. Johnson researches four historical disciple-making movements and provides application from said movements. For a missional movement to be created and sustained, one must look to history and understand previous missional movements.

\textit{Church 3.0: Upgrades for the Future of the Church} details the history of the Church’s structure. Church 1.0 was the early church, 33 – 313 AD. Church 2.0 occurred from 313 – 2000 AD. Now it is the time, according to Neil Cole, to revamp the Church to 3.0 software. This
change is not a simple software patch, but “it is a radical change from the core of the church.”

In the simplest terms, *Church 3.0* looks at the “several ways in which the church can accomplish its mission better in the future than it has in the past.” The goal is to move the church past where she is now so she can be more fruitful moving forward.

Mike Breen has published numerous books that help Christian leaders practically implement missional communities and Kingdom Movements. *Leading Missional Communities* was published because “it’s one thing to learn how to launch Missional Communities, but another thing entirely to learn how to lead them well so they become a reproducing hotbed for discipleship and mission in churches.” Further, *Leading Kingdom Movements* was written to explain how a Kingdom movement is formed. “This book is about movements. But not just about any kind of movement. Kingdom movements.”

“Jesus is the founder and living Lord of the movement that bears His name. The world had never seen anything like it.” The movement Jesus started was, and still is, like no other religion founded. Jesus’ vision of this movement is not limited to Jerusalem, Israel, or the ancient-known world. The vision birthed is one that saw the entire world hearing the Gospel message. This is the movement Jesus started with twelve disciples. *What Jesus Started: Joining*
the Movement, Changing the World details how Jesus trains these twelve in creating a global movement that lasts two millennia.

Disciple making relationships are forged through relationships, not via church positions. At least this is the case in the organic movement. Organic Discipleship: Mentoring Others Into Spiritual Maturity and Leadership seeks to help Christians rediscover organic discipleship.

“Christians today are reawakening to the power of an organic approach to ministry; an approach that focuses less on positions in the church and more on relationships.”\textsuperscript{56} Within this organic model, “the body of Jesus explodes in every direction.”\textsuperscript{57} Jesus followers engage in mentoring relationships with one another and are encouraged to share the Gospel with unbelievers.

Having a proper view of Jesus is paramount for Christianity. In ReJesus: A Wild Messiah for A Missional Church, Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost challenges the Church to center on Her founder, Jesus. Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost also examine if Western Christianity’s view of Jesus is complete. Yes, Jesus is gracious and merciful in the gospels, but He is also radical and wild. Jesus is a revolutionary who created the largest social movement the world has ever seen.

Scriptures

The Great Commission is at the core of this project. In Matthew 28:16-20, both Jesus who is the centerpiece of Christianity, and the mission are present. All authority, both in heaven and on earth, is given to Jesus. With this authority, He charges the disciples to make disciples who are obedient to Him. The disciples are interested in the nation of Israel being restored, but

\textsuperscript{56} Dennis McCallum and Jessica Lowery, Organic Discipleship: Mentoring Others into Spiritual Maturity and Leadership, (Houston, TX: New Paradigm Publishing, 2012), xiii.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., xiv.
Jesus’ focus is a spiritual Kingdom instead of a physical kingdom. This Kingdom Jesus establishes is one that requires an individual to fully follow Him.

The full commitment that Jesus requires is radical compared to any other religious person. To be His disciple, one must love Him so much that love to anything else looks like hate. This type of commitment cannot be misunderstood. The commitment to be a Christian is much more than walking down an aisle and accepting Jesus into one’s heart. The requirement is to love Him fully and be completely obedient to His commands. This is a radical requirement, as is Jesus’ claim that apart from Him, disciples cannot produce spiritual fruit.

Acts 2 details the first presentation of the Gospel after the Holy Spirit is received. Upon hearing Peter’s words, the crowd is convicted and 3,000 individuals are added to the Kingdom. Immediately following their baptisms, these 3,000 individuals “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” During this time, these Christians gather together daily, both in the temple courts and in one another’s homes. Community life is expected during this era. Believers were not isolated, but live with each other as family. The author of Hebrews solidifies this when he challenges Christians to remain in fellowship with one another. The mindset they exhibit is “me for the community,” not “what can the community do for me.” This mentality is dramatically different than the

58 Acts 1:8.
60 John 15:5.
62 Acts 2:42
63 Hebrews 10:24-25.
consumerism that is rampant in the American church. Even Jesus said that the world will know His disciples by their love for one another.⁶⁴ The goal of Christ followers is not to isolate oneself and grow via podcasts, but to lovingly engage in relationships with other Jesus followers.

For a missional movement to become sustainable, a biblical perspective on movemental leadership is needed. Ephesians 4:11-16 presents a clear picture of movemental leadership. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers are responsible to “equip the saints for the work of the ministry.”⁶⁵ Furthermore, these individuals help the body of Jesus become mature in Christ.⁶⁶ From a hermeneutical standpoint the Church cannot become mature unless all five leadership positions are working in unison. Also, it is the responsibility of each leader to present his congregation mature in Christ.⁶⁷ Though this is the case biblically, traditionally the Church has removed the need for apostles, prophets, and evangelists. The Church must restore apostles, prophets, and evangelists back to their rightful leadership positions.

Not only is a new leadership structure needed for a movement, but also a new mentality regarding “lay people.” The New Testament refers to all Christians as “a royal priesthood.”⁶⁸ Each and every Jesus follower is a royal priest. The term “lay person” does not exist in the Kingdom of God. The clergy lay person divide has caused significant damage to missional ecclesiology.

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⁶⁴ John 13:34-35.
⁶⁵ Ephesians 4:12.
⁶⁶ Ephesians 4:13.
⁶⁷ Colossians 1:28.
⁶⁸ 1 Peter 2:9-10.
In the New Testament, the missional movement is clearly evident. Paul’s missionary journey leads him to Ephesus where he remains for over two years. During this time, he speaks to the Ephesian disciples daily in the hall of Tyrannus.69 “This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.”70 How is it possible the entire population of Asia heard the Gospel with Paul stationed in Ephesus? The strategy he uses during this time was movemental. Individuals who hear the Gospel take the message on the trade routes. This was the result of Jesus followers seeking to fulfill the Great Commission.

A movemental strategy, which is seen in Acts 19:8-10, is not all that is needed for a movement to be created and sustained. Individuals must be discipled into leadership roles. These leaders are responsible for ensuring the movement continues. Paul tells Timothy to “entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”71 In this one sentence, four generations of spiritual leaders are present: Paul, Timothy, Timothy’s disciples, Timothy’s grand-disciples. This is how movements are sustained. Leaders train others so the movement does not plateau or die. Not only is leadership development critical to a movement, but it must involve new recruits joining the cause.

The Parable of the Sower is a story that reveals the human response to the Gospel.72 As this parable details, there are many responses an individual can have toward the Gospel.73 Jesus followers must continually sow seeds, engage in relationships and share the Gospel message with

70 Acts 19:10.
71 2 Timothy 2:2.
73 Mark 4:15-20.
unbelievers. Most will not accept the message for various reasons. Some will accept, but be lead astray by the world. However, there are some who will receive the Word and reap a spiritual harvest one hundred-fold. These laborers ensure the movement continues through the sowing of the seed.

The cornerstone of Christianity is Jesus. Without Jesus’ sacrifice, the Christian religion does not exist. Peter rightly understood that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.²⁴ It is on the Son of the Living God that the Church will be built.²⁵ Jesus is much more than a moral teacher; He is the Word which became flesh.

The apostle John gives a brilliant image of Jesus coming to earth in John 1. Jesus is the Word of God, who was with God, and is from the beginning.²⁶ Then the Word becomes flesh and lives amongst His creation.²⁷ Further, the apostle Paul gives another description of Jesus’ preeminence.²⁸ Jesus is the cornerstone of Christianity and the Scriptures make that claim evident.

The Great Commandment provides a summary of the Law. In an essence, Jesus followers are called to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind. Further, they are called to love their neighbors as themselves.²⁹ This is at the core of missional theology. Jesus followers are to love God more than they are to love anything else. The union with God is paramount to the Christian life. Christians are called to love others just as themselves. This goes beyond the

²⁴ Matthew 16:16.
²⁵ Matthew 16:18.
²⁶ John 1:1.
²⁷ John 1:14.
²⁸ Colossians 1:15-20.
²⁹ Matthew 22:36-40.
“handshake with others” on Sunday mornings. This is sacrificial love, the love Jesus displayed during His death on a cross.
CHAPTER 2
GOD’S DIVINE AND REDEMPTIVE PLANS
INTRODUCTION

The universal missional movement began the moment sin entered into the world. To understand this, Christians must understand the nature of Missio Dei. Missio Dei is a Latin phrase that translates as “Mission of God.” The term becomes popularized through a German missiologist, Karl Hartenstein. Hartenstein was summarizing the work of Karl Barth, “who, in a lecture on mission in 1928, had connected mission with the doctrine of the trinity.” Missio Dei further develops after the Willingen world mission conference in 1952. However, the mission of God did not begin at the moment of Jesus’ death. It begins immediately following the Fall in Genesis 3.

Understanding God’s universal plan for mankind is necessary when seeking to create a missional movement. Far too often, Christian leaders and pastors create missional paradigms that primarily focus on the Great Commission and the book of Acts when seeking to start a missional movement. Solely using these sources undermines the fullness of God’s divine and redemptive plan, to unite mankind to Himself, which can be seen from Genesis to Revelation. The Church needs a missional paradigm that takes into account all of God’s working; past,

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present, and future. Thus, this project creates a new missional paradigm: one that takes into account God’s divine and redemptive plans on an eternal scale.

God’s Divine Plan

God’s divine plan unfolds in Genesis chapter one. In His original design, God’s plan is for Him and His creation to exist in community. The culmination of chapter one results in God creating mankind in His image. The purpose of Genesis 1:26-28 is to “highlight humanity as the climax, the most significant, of all of God’s creative work.” Adam, Eve, and God lived in perfect community in the Garden of Eden. During this time, their relationships were unhindered by sin. However, Adam and Eve directly disobeyed God’s command to not eat from the Tree of Knowledge. At this point in time, God’s perfect creation is altered by the presence of sin, and

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83 Genesis 1:26

84 Psalm 8:4.


86 Genesis 3:6
redemption is needed to bridge the gap between God and man. God’s plan of redemption is immediately set in motion and unfolds through the pages of Scripture.

There is a distinct difference between God’s divine plan and His redemptive plan. God’s divine plan did not include the separation of God and His creation. The Garden of Eden is the divinely created area where God and mankind would live together in harmony. Sin is never supposed to break the spiritual and physical relationship between mankind and his Creator. God’s divine plan is for mankind and His creation to dwell with Him, in perfect community, for eternity. The Garden of Eden becomes the starting point for this plan. The divine plan culminates in God’s Holy City.87 Regarding this Holy City, Augustine writes, “How great shall be that felicity, which shall be tainted with no evil, which shall lack no good, and which shall afford leisure for the praises of God, who shall be all in all!”88 This is the divine plan God intends when He creates the universe.

In the book of Genesis, mankind is solely located in the Garden of Eden. This Garden is the epicenter from which mankind will expand. This expansion will ultimately lead to the Holy City, which is made known in Revelation. “This city (the New Jerusalem) is the Garden of Eden, remade. The City is the fulfillment of the purposes of the Eden of God. We began in a garden but will end in a city; God’s purpose for humanity is urban!”89 This is crucial to understanding God’s divine plan. His divine plan was not for mankind to inhabit a garden for all eternity, but for mankind to develop the garden into an urban setting. Thus, the culmination of

87 Revelation 21:2
88 Augustine City of God PNF 2:509
the divine plan is for God and mankind to dwell with one another in perfect community while building the Holy City together.

There are many similarities between the Garden of Eden and the Holy City of God. The river of life and the tree of life (Genesis 2:9-10) are both present in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:1-2). Both of these elements are prominent in Genesis and Revelation. The tree of life is one of two trees mentioned in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve have the ability to eat of the tree of life, but do not. Before they are able to eat of this tree, God removes them from the Garden of Eden. Mankind is banished from eating of this tree until the New Jerusalem is created.

The tree of life and the river of life play a prominent role in the New Jerusalem. The tree of life is next to the river of life, which flows in the middle of the street in the Holy City. Once the redemptive mission of God is complete, mankind will be able to eat of the tree of life freely. In Genesis, the river of life becomes four mighty rivers: Pishon, Gihon, Tigris, and Euphrates. In Revelation, the river of life runs through the center of the street in the Holy City. This river originates from the throne of God.

The divine plan of God comes to an abrupt end when Adam and Eve sin. The complete manifestation of the plan is never fully realized. The divine plan of God is altered, but restoration and reconciliation is promised. Until then, mankind and all of creation live and function within God’s redemptive plan.

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91 Genesis 3:22.
God’s Redemptive Plan

As previously stated, the moment sin entered the world, God’s redemptive plan is set in motion. God’s desire is for Him and mankind to remain in relationship, but sin physically separates God from mankind. The redemptive plan is for all of creation to be restored back to God. God Himself, not mankind, begins this voyage when sin enters into His creation.

Old Testament

God’s redemptive plan does not begin with Jesus’ death or the Great Commission, but in the Old Testament. “The early followers of Jesus Christ did not perceive missions as a new concept or function for God’s people. They perceived the task of bringing the nations to faith in Yahweh as the responsibility of Israel from its beginnings.” Therefore, the idea of God’s people joining Him in His redemptive plan is foundational to God’s nature, not a new command given at the time of Jesus’ ministry.

The Fall

While in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve are presented with a choice. Instead of choosing obedience to the Lord, they choose disobedience. The Serpent deceives Eve. Eve eats of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and convinces Adam do to the same. This decision alters the course of history. God’s divine plan is disrupted and harmony in all

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92 Romans 8:20-21.


creation is broken. Though harmony is broken, God provides a means of reconciliation in a prophecy.

“Scripture documents the sad consequences of Adam’s sin and explains what God in His grace has done to rescue us.”[^95] The *protoevangelium* becomes known in Genesis 3:15. In Genesis chapter three God speaks to the first sinners of mankind.[^96] The missionary nature of God is evident in the midst of a newly broken world. God promises to send a Man who will bruise Satan’s head. This is the promise of reconciliation for mankind.

After the Fall, Adam and Eve meet God while wearing fig leaves and explain their disobedience. God provides clothing made of animal skin for Adam and Eve. Sin requires a blood sacrifice and this is evident in the Garden of Eden. “Innocent animals had to die so that man and woman might have a new beginning and be back in fellowship with the Lord.”[^97] The Garden of Eden, originally intended to be the dwelling place of God amongst mankind, becomes the stage of sin and death. The first animal sacrifice occurs and the skins of that animal become the clothing for Adam and Eve.

Though consequences are given for sin, the gracious nature of God is still evident. God banishes mankind from the Garden of Eden because He does not want them to eat of the tree of life.[^98] The Garden of Eden is protected by cherubim and a flaming sword. What appears to be a harsh consequence is really a measure of grace. If Adam and Eve eat of the tree of life, then they


would have been destined to an eternal life with a sin nature.\textsuperscript{99} God understands this reality and separates Himself from mankind until His redemptive plan is fully complete.

The account of the Fall is the start of the disobedience of mankind. From this point on, mankind will be separated from God until the promised Messiah comes and frees mankind from bondage. Though this reality is true, the missionary nature of God becomes evident. After the Fall, God initiates reconciliation with mankind.

Israel

As Genesis 4-11 unfolds, there is story after story of sin. Cain murders Able, the Flood destroys all mankind (except for Noah and his family), and the Tower of Babel results in mankind being dispersed across the Middle East. Against this “background of human sin and rebellion in Genesis 3-11, we encounter Israel with a mission, beginning with the call of Abraham in Genesis 12.”\textsuperscript{100} Israel is given a mission that does not exclude the nations, but rather, it includes them since God desires to bless the nations through Israel, His elect nation.\textsuperscript{101} This blessing begins with the Abrahamic Covenant.

The Abrahamic Covenant, Genesis 12:1-3, is God’s promise that the nations will be blessed through Abraham. “The promises of Genesis 12:1-3 set the agenda, not simply for the rest of the book of Genesis, but for all of the subsequent material in Genesis to Kings – indeed,


\textsuperscript{101} Deuteronomy 7:6.
arguably well beyond that to the NT fulfillment through Jesus Christ.”¹⁰² These three verses become the foundation of the rest of the Old Testament, and arguably the rest of God’s redemptive plan. “The sweep of all the evidence makes it abundantly clear that God’s gift of a blessing through the instrumentality of Abraham was to be experience by nations, clans, tribes, people groups, and individuals. It would be for every size group, from the smallest people group to the greatest nation.”¹⁰³

The phrase “all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” is reiterated five times in Genesis 12.¹⁰⁴ This God-intended blessing is so foundational that Paul describes it as “the gospel in advance.”¹⁰⁵ Genesis 12:1-3 is not just a covenant with Abraham, but it is the gospel message before the life of Christ. This covenant becomes a significant point in God’s redemptive plan. Not only does God bless all nations through Abraham, but also through the nation of Israel.

Was Israel’s mission intended to be outward focused like the Church’s mission? Do the pages of the Old Testament reveal Israel’s mission to be centrifugal or centripetal? These are questions that have puzzled theologians for centuries. However, present day theologians and missiologists are afforded a few thousand years of hindsight. It is easy to view Israel as a non-missionary engaging nation. Regardless of Israel’s reality, their instruction was to be a light for the Gentiles.¹⁰⁶ “The fact that the Israelites failed to live up to God’s expectation should not


¹⁰⁵ Galatians 3:8.

deter present-day readers from seeing that they had the responsibility to go and be a blessing in order to present God to any people who did not know him.”

Israel’s responsibility to make God known to the world is reflected in Psalm sixty-seven. “Psalm sixty-seven has long been known for its ‘whole world’ perspective on God’s blessing.” Psalm sixty-seven, written to the choirmaster, asks the Lord to bless Israel so that the world, may in turn, know the true God. There is clearly an underlying mission for the nations in this Psalm. The psalmist does not ask for blessings to be enjoyed only by Israel, but by all nations. “Psalm 67 is built on the Aaronic benediction from Numbers 6:24-26 in which the name of the Lord, Yahweh, is changed for God (Elohim) to stress the universal call of God to all nations to praise Him.” Throughout the psalm there are requests for the nations to know God, His salvation, and for His salvation. The psalmist’s focus is not for Israel, but also for all the nations. God’s redemptive plan is for all of mankind to be reconciled to Him, both Jews and Gentiles.

As Israel continues to disobey God’s commands, prophets are sent to her. “Prophets and prophetesses in the OT were spokespersons for God who announced God’s will or intentions for people, or predicted the future, or did both.” Of all the prophetic books in the Old Testament, the book of Jonah stands outs as “the great missionary book of the Old Testament.”

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108 Ibid., 34.


Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach against its wickedness.\textsuperscript{112} Jonah disobeys God. His disobedience results in him being swallowed by a fish. Ultimately, the fish spits Jonah on land and he travels to Nineveh. Jonah’s sermon is as follows, “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned.”\textsuperscript{113} The Ninevites believed God, and He has compassion on them and does not destroy the city and its inhabitants. Jonah’s anger is kindled against the Lord for saving the city. Jonah displays anger while God displays compassion. “Jonah had pity on the vine that perished, but he didn’t have compassion for the people who would perish and live eternally apart from God.”\textsuperscript{114}

In Jonah, readers see a missionary with no compassion for a Gentile city and a God who is compassionate towards Gentiles. The redemptive mission of God is on display. His desire is for all mankind to be reconciled to Him, including Gentile nations. The Ninevites were not a God-fearing nation. Regardless, God reveals His compassion towards a city that did not deserve or understand repentance.\textsuperscript{115} Jonah’s story is a foreshadowing of what is to come: God sending individuals to Gentile nations for the purpose of repentance and reconciliation. The meta-narrative continues in the New Testament after 400 years’ worth of divine silence.

New Testament

Though there is 400 years’ worth of silence between the Old Testament and New Testament, one must not see this break as a change in God’s missiological plan. God’s desire is

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{112} Jonah 1:1.
\item \textsuperscript{113} Jonah 3:3.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Warren W. Wiersbe, \textit{The Bible Exposition Commentary: The Old Testament – The Prophets}, (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2008), 386.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Tremper Longman and David E. Garland, \textit{The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Daniel-Malachi}, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 489.
\end{itemize}
still for His creation to be reconciled to Him. Believing there are two different natures of God often occurs within Christian theology. This theology believes God is more wrathful in the Old Testament and that God in the New Testament is more merciful and loving, which is evident in Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. The missional paradigm in this project understands God’s redemptive plan was set in motion after The Fall. Therefore, the redemptive plan in the New Testament is a continuation of the plan in the Old Testament. This plan is not a new plan and certainly not a deviation from the Old Testament’s.

Four-hundred years of silence. No prophetic word. No divine manifestations from Yahweh. Nothing. Simply, divine silence. The nation of Israel is left without a word from God. The redemptive plan of God seems to be forgotten. These 400 years come to an end when an angel of the Lord foretells the birth of John the Baptist.\textsuperscript{116} The angel of Lord’s announcement is only the beginning of Yahweh breaking His silence.

Soon after the prophecy of John’s birth, the birth of Jesus is foretold to Mary. This is the beginning of the fulfillment of the \textit{protoevangelium} found in Genesis 3:15. The birth of Jesus is the continuation of God’s redemptive plan. Yes, Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection is the pinnacle of God’s redemptive plan, but it is not the entire redemptive plan shown in the Scriptures.

Jesus

The life of Jesus reflects God’s redemptive plan. The Israelites were looking for a political Messiah that would overthrow Rome. However, “Jesus does not come as a conquering king ready to take over Rome. Rather, he comes as a humble teacher prepared to die on behalf

\textsuperscript{116} Luke 1:11-22.
of his people.”117 This Jesus is the One who started a movement that would span the globe. Jesus’ mission was not to bring about political restoration, but to do the will of His Father.118 His mission was inseparable from the Old Testament prophets’ description of the Messiah. “According to the Old Testament prophets, the ministry of the Messiah is first to gather Israel and then to purify and empower Israel for its missional calling.”119

As the prophesied Messiah, Jesus’ mission is “to Israel and then continues as a renewed Israel is invited to participate in his mission to the remaining sheep of Israel and then to the nations.”120 Though the Great Commission does command believers to go to all nations, Jesus’ primary mission was not to other nations. His mission was primarily focused on the house of Israel. “Jesus’ ministry defined a missionary ministry in the proper sense: he understood himself as “sent” by God (Luke 4:43) to gather ‘the lost sheep of the house of Israel’ (Matthew 15:24).”121

In Matthew 15:21-28, Matthew writes about an encounter between a Canaanite woman and Jesus. This woman asks for Jesus to heal her daughter. Jesus’ initial response is confounding. Instead of telling her that her daughter is healed, He says He is sent to the lost sheep of Israel. The Gospel of Matthew “makes it clear that Jesus’ mission is limited to Israel.”122 Jesus’ response to the Canaanite woman is not unloving. It is in line with His

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118 John 6:38.


120 Ibid., 51.


mission. This woman and her daughter were not Israelites, and therefore, not a part of His Messianic mission.

Another aspect of Jesus’ ministry is to announce the arrival of the Kingdom of God. “Jesus’ proclamation focused on the ‘kingdom of God.’ The summaries that describe Jesus’ ministry, the frequency of this term and the central role that it has in many texts indicate that the kingdom of God is the cantus firmus, the heart, of Jesus’ proclamation.”

Jesus’ proclamation of the Kingdom of God ushers in the reality that the Kingdom is both now and later. The Kingdom of God becomes present as Jesus ushers in the Kingdom. However, the Kingdom of God will never be fully realized on earth. Therefore, a unique paradigm becomes reality during the ministry of Jesus.

Jesus proclaims, “the Kingdom of God has arrived!”

The unique paradigm that becomes a reality is not what the Israelites expect based upon their understanding of Old Testament prophetic literature. The Israelites believe the Kingdom would come immediately and a new age would emerge. However, the Kingdom proclamation of Jesus is hard for the Israelites to understand. John the Baptist does not fully understand this and sends his own disciples to ask Jesus if He truly is the Messiah. Furthermore, Jesus’ disciples do not fully understand the “here, but not fully realized” reality of the proclamation of the Kingdom. As a result, Jesus “tells them parables so that they might understand that although the kingdom has

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124 Mark :14-15


already dawned, it has not yet arrived in its fullness.” These disciples, the ones who never fully realize this truth during Jesus ministry, become paramount for Jesus’ mission upon His ascension.

As Jesus ministers to Israel, He allows His disciples to join Him in ministry opportunities. These discipling relationships allow Jesus’ ministry to continue after His death. Jesus’ relationships with these disciples is more than theoretical knowledge. He trains them and releases them for missionary ministry. “He calls them to be involved in his ministry of gathering ‘the lost sheep of Israel,’ which eventually will be extended to gathering the nations from the corners of the world.”

In What Jesus Started: Joining the Movement, Changing the World, Steve Addison reveals the six characteristics of Jesus’ ministry. “Jesus saw the end, Jesus connected with people, Jesus shared the gospel, Jesus trained disciples, Jesus gathered communities, and Jesus multiplied workers.” One aspect of Jesus’ ministry is the training of the Twelve. This equipping went beyond classroom training. He taught the disciples how do to ministry, allowed them to see Him in ministry, and gave them authority to fulfill the work of the ministry. Jesus trains the disciples in this manner because He “always intended that his followers would continue the movement he founded and multiply communities of disciples throughout the world.”

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130 Ibid., 53.
Mission

The Great Commission is not a new mission God gives upon Jesus’ death. It is a continuation of His redemptive plan. Though many assume God has given a new mandate, this is not the case. A comprehensive view of God’s divine and redemptive plans reveals His mission: the reconciliation of mankind and creation back to the Holy Creator.

The mission in the New Testament is not limited to Matthew 28:18-20. Since the mandate is recorded five times in the New Testament the term “Great Commission” is not fully accurate. It should be called the “Great Commissions.” Though this passage is the most quoted of all the Great Commissions, it would be irresponsible to only use this passage as a means to discover Jesus’ mission for His disciples. The Great Commission is given in all four Gospels and in Acts. Each time the Commission is given, there is a direct correlation between the mandate and the purpose of the book in which the mandate is given.

Matthew’s account of the Gospel is written for a Jewish audience. Matthew’s Gospel details Jesus’ mission to the house of Israel. Though this is a primary theme of Matthew’s gospel, there are growing references of the mission extending to Gentiles, which ultimately leads to the global commission to make disciples. Matthew’s progression “proceeds along salvation-historical lines… Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, offers the kingdom to Israel; Israel rejects Jesus, issuing in his crucifixion; the kingdom is offered universally to all those who believe in Jesus the Messiah, Jew and Gentile alike.”

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Israelites, as prophesied in the Old Testament. Israel rejects her promised Messiah, and the Great Commission, Matthew 28:18-20, becomes a global commission that includes the “lost sheep of Israel” and all Gentile nations.

Mark’s Gospel also shows Jesus’ mission is almost exclusive to Israel.\textsuperscript{134} However, Mark’s Gospel is written to Christians in Rome. Jesus’ proclamation of the Kingdom of God does not occur until the later chapters of Mark, specifically chapters thirteen and fourteen. Like Matthew, Mark’s Gospel account is limited to Israel, but there are glimpses of Jesus’ ministry to Gentiles. When the Great Commission is given in Mark 16:13-15, it is no surprise that the disciples are called to proclaim the Gospel to all nations. Yes, Jesus’ ministry is predominantly to Israel, but His interaction with Gentiles opens the door for salvation to be given to all people.

Luke’s Gospel and the book of Acts present “the clearest presentation of the church’s universal mission in all of the New Testament.”\textsuperscript{135} Luke’s Gospel account is written to Theophilus, as a first volume.\textsuperscript{136} Like the other Synoptic Gospels, Luke details Jesus ministry as specific to Israel. Jesus’ mission is made clear in Luke 4:18-19 and is four-fold: Jesus is to “preach the good news to the poor,”\textsuperscript{137} to “proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,”\textsuperscript{138} to “set at liberty those who are oppressed,”\textsuperscript{139} and to “proclaim the year of


\textsuperscript{136} Acts 1:1.


\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid.
the Lord's favor.”¹⁴⁰ This mission takes place within the context of ministry to Israel. As Luke’s Gospel unfolds, he is careful to include world events, and he traces Jesus’ lineage to Adam. This reveals Jesus identifies with all, not just Israelites.¹⁴¹ Thus, when the Great Commission is given in Luke 24:44-49, there is a clear understanding the Gentiles are to be included in the mission.

John’s Gospel is chock-full of Jesus’ mission and the mission of His disciples. Jesus is understood to have a unique mission from God the Father. This is evident from the start of John’s Gospel. This is evident in the first chapter as John details Jesus being the Word sent in flesh.¹⁴² The Synoptic Gospels clearly reveal Jesus’ mission is to the house of Israel. However, John’s Gospel does not make this as clear. What is clear is Jesus has a mission that directly comes from His Father who sent Him. This culminates as Jesus tells His disciples, “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”¹⁴³ The mission of the disciples directly correlates to the “sentness” of Jesus’ mission.

The Gospels reveal that Jesus’ mission is to the house of Israel. This ministry fulfills His identity as Messiah, which was prophesied by the Old Testament prophets. Jesus’ mission is the continuation of God’s redemptive plan. The earthly ministry Jesus includes His life, death, resurrection, and deliverance of the Great Commission. Indeed, “all four Gospels – in fact, the fourfold one Gospel – jointly bear definitive witness to the way in which mission is rooted

¹⁴² John 1:14.
¹⁴³ John 20:21.
ultimately in nothing other than the loving heart of the Trinitarian Godhead.”\textsuperscript{144} As Jesus sends His disciples, this sets the stage for the beginning of the Church. A continuation of God’s redemptive plan, which becomes the greatest movement ever recorded on earth.

Church

“The early Christian church is, from the beginning, a movement.”\textsuperscript{145} Since the Church’s inception, she has formed communities across the globe. The New Testament details the early Christian mission “and their missionary activities in the second half of the first century.”\textsuperscript{146} Though today Christianity is the world’s largest religion with over 3 billion adherents.\textsuperscript{147} Acts details this movement albeit small, but a movement nonetheless. Acts is the historical narrative of the early church and the next stage in God’s redemptive plan. Luke, writing to Theophilus, provides an account of the disciples becoming Jesus’ witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

The Church plays an important role in God’s redemptive plan. Each member of the Church is called to be a disciple-maker. Christians in the early Church were disciple-makers. This is the account that Luke details as Christians make disciples across the known world. By the end of Acts, a movement is underway with the beginning of the Church. The Church launches on Pentecost as 3,000 individuals enter into the Kingdom.


\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 1439.

The ascension of Jesus leaves the disciples in a unique position. In the past three months, they have watched their Lord die, raise from the dead, and ascend into heaven. At best they are confused. They ask Jesus if now is the time that Israel will be restored. However, Jesus’ answer is not what they expect. Instead of telling them when Israel will be restored, He tells them they will receive the Holy Spirit and then be His witness in all the earth. Upon saying this, Jesus ascends to Heaven. The disciples return to the upper room in Jerusalem and select a disciple to fill Judas’ apostleship.

The day of Pentecost arrives and the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus’ disciples. The disciples start to speak in other languages. Dispersed Jews have traveled to Jerusalem for Pentecost and they hear the disciples speaking in many languages. They are mystified and some believe the disciples are drunk. In the midst of this chaos Peter explains to the crowd about Jesus’ death and resurrection. Those hearing the message were convicted and asked what they needed to do. Peter’s response is simple: repent and be baptized. The total number of those baptized were approximately 3,000 souls. On the day of Pentecost, the disciples fulfill a part of the Great Commission in Acts 1:8. The disciples become witnesses in Jerusalem.

On this day, the Church is founded as a sent community. “The founding of the Church and the beginning of mission coincide. Mission was mission-of-the-Church and Church was missionary Church.” Immediately after Pentecost the newly formed Church begins her missionary mandate.

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Acts records that residents from “Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians” hear Peter’s message. These new believers stay in Jerusalem for Pentecost and then return home. They take their new faith with them and rely upon the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, these individuals become disciple-makers and churches are formed in their communities. The mission to be disciple-makers is evident from the founding of the Church.

For the next few years, the Church predominately revolves around Jerusalem. This changes on the day Stephen is martyred. The Church of Jerusalem is scattered throughout Judea and Samaria as She is persecuted. The only Christians left in Jerusalem are the apostles. This persecution leads to the regions of Judea and Samaria hearing the Gospel. Philip proclaims Christ in Samaria with miraculous signs. People experience forgiveness of sins through Jesus’ sacrifice. Peter and John travel to Samaria and pray for these individuals to receive the Holy Spirit. The Spirit falls upon these new believers. Peter and John leave the city and preach the Gospel to other cities in Samaria as they return to Jerusalem. At this point, the disciples fulfill two aspects of their mission. They have been witnesses for Jesus in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria.

In Acts nine, Luke records Saul’s salvation experience. On the way to persecute Christians in Damascus, the Lord Jesus blinds him. Jesus commands Paul to go into Damascus and wait for further instructions. Ananias receives a vision from Jesus and tell his Ananias to place his hands on Paul to restore his sight. At first Ananias is hesitant to follow Jesus’

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151 Acts 8:1.
command, but ultimately he obeys. In Damascus, Paul immediately begins to preach that Jesus is the Christ. The Jews are infuriated and plan to assassinate Paul. Paul escapes to Jerusalem and is only accepted by Barnabas. The apostles are fearful of him and do not engage with him. This story seems out of place, but is in fact Luke foreshadowing Paul’s ministry.

Acts ten reveals God’s mission for the disciples is not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles. God instructs a centurion name Cornelius to have Peter come to his house. During this time, Peter has a vision that food which was unclean under the Law is now clean. Peter leaves the city of Joppa and goes to Cornelius’ home. There he presents the Gospel message and the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the message in Cornelius’ house. Peter is astonished because the Holy Spirit has now been poured out onto Gentiles. Peter immediately reports this back to the Church and the saints glorify God.

After the Holy Spirit falls upon the Gentiles, the missionary journeys of Paul become the primary focus of Acts. Other missionaries were active during this time, but less is known about their endeavors.\footnote{Jonathan Hill, 	extit{Zondervan Handbook to the History of Christianity}, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 57.} Paul’s missionary journeys show God’s redemptive plan for both Israel and the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas are sent as missionaries from the Antioch church. Their journey together becomes foundational for a missional paradigm. As mentioned earlier, the missionary nature of the Church is an integral part of the missional paradigm, but it is not the full paradigm. This nature of the church, seen in Paul’s missionary journeys, is built upon God’s workings in the Old Testament and in the Gospels. The Church is a continuation of the redemptive plan.

Paul’s missionary ministry does not focus only on establishing churches, but on creating movements. Paul’s missionary journeys led him to: Damascus, Arabia, Jerusalem, Syria, Cilicia,
Antioch Cyprus, Southern Galatia, Pamphylia, Macedonia, Achaia, Ephesus, Illyricum, Judea, Rome, and possibly to Spain and Crete.\textsuperscript{153} By the end of Paul’s ministry, he creates six church planting movements in an area of approximately 25 million people. These movements occur within fifteen years.\textsuperscript{154} These movements occur in Cyprus, Phrygia, Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia.\textsuperscript{155} This is astonishing. There have only been a few movements like this in the course of history. Other disciples certainly believe that Christianity was a movement. This was not specific to Paul. “These first Christians had expansionist tendencies without worldly power.”\textsuperscript{156} Luke happens to record Paul’s journeys, and they were monumental journeys. Paul’s vision is beyond planting churches. He is planting movements.

The end of Acts shows Paul in Rome. He is able to rent his own house and welcomes anyone who comes to see him. For two years, he openly preaches the Kingdom of God. The book ends and leaves readers with many questions. What happened to Paul? Was he able to be freed from the charges against him? What happened to the Church after this time? Thankfully, church history answers some of those questions. Paul is freed from Rome and continues to preach the Kingdom of God elsewhere. The Church continues to grow as a missional movement in God’s redemptive plan, even after the death of the apostles and Paul. Though there were full-time missionaries in the first century, the Gospel did not enormously spread due to them. Rather


\textsuperscript{155} Ibid.

the Gospel quickly spread because of “Christians who traveled for other reasons.” This is why
the movement continues. Christianity did not center around “prominent Christians” such as
Peter, James, or Paul. Instead the movement spread because of Christians making disciples as
they went about their lives.

Church History Post New Testament

The movement of the Church does not end with the apostles’ deaths. The Church
continues to grow exponentially for the first 300 years. By 350 AD, Christianity has
approximately 31 million followers. This exponential growth is astonishing, especially
considering Christianity was an illegal religion up until 313 AD.

The apostle John dies in approximately 100 AD. This moment brings the Church into a
new era: an age without a disciple of Jesus living. Though there are no direct disciples of Jesus
living, the Church does not die or even lose momentum. The Church continues to grow as
disciples of Jesus travel away from Jerusalem to other urban areas via trade routes. “The
apostolic impulse led people to travel to new regions of the world, where they began telling the
story of Jesus and organizing new house-church communities in his name.” Christ-followers
did not lose their missionary impulse simply because the apostles died.

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158 Rodney Stark, *The Triumph of Christianity: How the Jesus Movement Became the World's Largest

159 Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist, *History of the World Christian Movement: Earliest Christianity to

160 Ibid., 92.
These early churches did not rely solely on the apostles. This is why the movement continues after their death; the movement has a missional identity. The early church is “possessed by what can best be called a missionary identity.”\textsuperscript{161} This missionary identity becomes paramount to the spread of the Gospel. The Christian movement crosses “political, cultural, and linguistic boundaries.”\textsuperscript{162} As the movement crosses these boundaries, new expressions of churches are formed to fit the culture of the local community. The Church of the first two centuries had the ability to look “beyond themselves in their local situations, toward other Christians and churches in places that they knew of, and beyond into new regions of the world in mission.”\textsuperscript{163} By the end of the second century, Stark estimates there are approximately 218,000 Jesus followers.\textsuperscript{164}

The third century brings many opportunities for the Church. During this time, the movement spread through two major empires, Rome and Persia, as well as smaller kingdoms.\textsuperscript{165} Christianity begins to take root in urban areas and “takes on aspects of local cultures around it.”\textsuperscript{166} Structurally, the Church looks nothing like it does after Constantine’s edict. At this point, the Church “cannot be described as a monolithic entity. Institutionally it was a network of local churches stitched together across several cultural zones by lines of communication and person

\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 92.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., 92.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 95.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., 103.
The two prominent empires during this time are Rome and Persia. Both empires are opposed to Christianity. The Roman empire is known for their harsh persecution against Christians. These persecutions occur in four waves: beginning of the third century under Septimius Severus, 250 AD under Decius, 258 AD under Valerian, and the end of the third century under Diocletian. Despite the persecution, the Christian movement is rapidly growing in the third century. By the end of the third century, there are approximately 6.3 million Christians in the world.

A seismic change happens for the Church in the fourth century. Constantine embraces Christianity and makes it the official creed of the Roman empire in 313 AD. In a matter of years, Christianity goes from being illegal to the public religion of Rome. This forever alters the course of Christianity. Though at the time this comes a huge, in hindsight, this acceptance was going to eventually happen. Christianity is impacting the empire in both numbers and influence. Constantine’s creed set in motion the institutionalism of the Western Church and the intermingling of the Church and the State. When Christianity was an illegal religion, there was a strict lifestyle a Christian must follow. “Now Christian identity seemed to require less of a break with previous lifestyles and even religious practices than it had once demanded.” In this one creed, the missionary identity of Church is lost for a time.

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167 Ibid., 105.
168 Ibid., 110.
171 Ibid., 155.
172 Ibid., 163.
In the fifth century, 432 AD, a missionary named Patrick brings the Gospel message to Ireland. Patrick, a citizen of Britain, is enslaved for six years in Ireland. He escapes Ireland, joins a monastery, and seeks ordination as a bishop in hopes of returning to Ireland.\textsuperscript{173} He returns to Ireland in 432 AD, with no Christian presence, and sparks a movement in which thousands are converted to Christ.\textsuperscript{174} Patrick formed monasteries and he trained the leaders with a missionary passion.\textsuperscript{175} This movement is significant. First, this marks a turning point in the Catholic Church. “Catholic churches had since the second century no longer been sending bishops or other clergy into regions where no Christian presence was thought to exist.”\textsuperscript{176} For the first time in two centuries, the Catholic Church has a bishop or clergy that is a missionary. Second, this movement is rumored to have created missionaries in Ireland who traveled to unknown lands across the Atlantic to preach the Gospel.\textsuperscript{177} Patrick’s missionary vision sees a movement span a nation, and potentially spread across an ocean to unknown lands in the West.

Over the course of the next thousand years, the Church gains more and more political power, but loses her missionary identity in the process. In the eighth century, Pope Leo crowns Charlemagne and declares him \textit{Imperator Romanorum}. “The act was unprecedented. Nowhere previously in Roman church history had the bishop of Rome presumed to have the authority to elevate someone to the imperial throne.”\textsuperscript{178} The Church and the State became one and this

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., 236.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 236.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., 237.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., 336.
\end{flushright}
arrangement continues until Martin Luther nails the 95 Thesis in Wittenberg. The missionary identity of the Church is lost as she gains political power in the West. Christendom becomes the norm, instead of living on mission.\(^{179}\)

Following the Reformation, a few movements emerge stemming from Pietism. Jakob Spener (1635-1705) believed his responsibilities as a pastor went beyond preaching and issuing the sacraments. His belief in fostering the growth of his parishioners led to him developing “colleges of piety.”\(^{180}\) Spener’s teachings emphasized the priesthood of all believers. He believed that each Christian is responsible to be obedient to God’s Word. This teaching is not new thinking, but one that was suggested during the Reformation. What Spener proposed was “a new reformation – or at least the completion of what had begun in the sixteen century and… interrupted by doctrinal debates.”\(^{181}\) This new reformation calls for lay Christians to live a life of intense devotion.

In the seventeenth century, John Wesley begins a movement. Ultimately this movement becomes known as the Methodist movement. This organization establishes societies which are churches that met in homes and buildings. However, these societies did not allow for personal discipleship. As a result, classes form that include eleven members and a leader.\(^{182}\) Wesley’s movement grows rapidly, and he travels throughout the British Isles preaching and training his members. As the movement grows, Wesley’s schedule becomes strained due to his traveling and

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\(^{179}\) In *The Future of the Global Church: History, Trends, and Possibilities*, Patrick Johnstone details the spread of Christianity throughout each century. Between the sixth and sixteenth centuries, Christianity expands only into Asia, but growth is not sustained.


\(^{181}\) Ibid., 160.

\(^{182}\) Ibid., 269.
preaching schedule. This result in the rise of lay preachers. At first Wesley plans to banish lay preachers, leading to a conversation with lay preacher Thomas Maxfield. Wesley initially plans to ask Maxfield to stop preaching, but Wesley’s mother asks him to listen to Maxfield. “Maxfield so impressed Wesley that he decided that the use of lay preachers was God’s answer to the movement’s urgent need for preachers.” Wesley’s movement spans the globe. Including spreading throughout America during the westward movement of settlers.

In recent history, there has been a resurgence of the gospel spreading in movement form. The Church in China has grown exponentially in the past sixty years. Mao Tse-tung becomes the leader of China in 1949. Upon taking leadership, he orders that all Christian leaders to be killed and foreign missionaries are banished. It is estimated that there are approximately 2 million Christians in China at this time. The borders of China are closed to foreigners until the “Bamboo Curtain” is lifted in the 1980’s. Christian leaders are shocked. They expect the Church to be dead, but instead the Church grew exponentially. It is reported that there were as many as 60 million Christians in the eighties. Now that number has grown to over 80 million.

A new missional paradigm is needed for the American Church. The American Church can no longer continue to operate in Christendom mindset. This new paradigm must understand God’s mission has been in place since the Fall and is evident in the Old Testament, New

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183 Ibid., 270.
184 Ibid., 271.
186 Ibid., 19.
Testament, and throughout Church History. This paradigm is a comprehensive understanding of God’s missionary nature. It is time to invest in movements, which is clearly seen by studying God’s mission throughout the course of human history.
CHAPTER 3

A RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT SURVEY OF AMERICAN HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

Religiosity and Social Movements are a constant in America’s history. Religion has always played an important role for Americans. Even before America became a free nation, her foundation was built on religion, specifically Christianity. Since this time, America has become home to many different religions. Some of these religions were brought to America as individuals immigrated to the nation. Others, on the other hand, were created in America as a reaction to society or religious tradition. Overall, “American religions are in a constant state of evolution resulting from centuries of contact between competing groups of religious people.”

Social Movements have also been the norm in America. Various groups throughout history have taken their cause to the public and found a following. These Social Movements can either be regionally or nationally focused. Whatever their focus and location, these movements cause the public to rethink their position on a specific issue.

Only two missional movements occur in America’s history. These are led by the Methodist and Baptist. Both these movements occur during the Second Great Awakening. It is important to note the differences between a revival, an awakening, and a missional movement. Patrick Johnstone provides excellent insight into these terms.

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### Revival
- A sovereign work of the Holy Spirit among God’s people, the Church
- Usually preceded or accompanied by passionate corporate intercessory prayer
- Often accompanied by a deep conviction of sin, repentance, and restitution
- Often followed by a manifestation of God’s presence and power
- Fruitful in a deepening or resurgence of Christian life and witness

### Awakening
- Is a wider movement of the Holy Spirit that often begins with the revival of a group of Christians but then touches nominal and backsliding Christians
- Stimulates a deep concern about a relationship with God among nominal Christians and unbelievers previously careless about sin and ungodliness
- Usually leads many to seek God and attend a place of worship and increases church membership
- Produces new visions and new structures, and new networks and movements to spread the Gospel
- Prompts many to volunteer for Christian work and go out as missionaries to the ends of the earth

### People Movement
- Is often the result of revival in the home cultures of the missionaries who first bring the message of the Gospel to a people who have no knowledge of it or the Bible
- Is a turning-to-Christ of many in a people group that previously had little or no contact with the Gospel
- Is a work of the Holy Spirit within a culture, which not only makes the Gospel relevant to that culture but changes the culture so that it conforms more closely to biblical standards
- Should be followed by careful discipling, leadership development and translation of Scripture

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### A NEW WORLD

In 1607, England’s first permanent settlement arrives in Jamestown, Virginia. The Virginia Company of London plans to make a profit in the New World, but there are threads of religiosity. For instance, Reverend Robert Hunt holds a communion service upon their arrival, which all of the travelers attend. The colony begins to unravel and is on the brink of extinction by 1610. At this time, Lord De La Warr arrives and becomes the new governor and he issues a call for biblical sacrifice. Virginia’s earliest legal rules require all citizens to attend

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191 Ibid., 37.
weekly services and contain “harsh laws prohibiting violations of the Sabbath, adultery, and excessive dress.”\textsuperscript{192} Though harsh laws are created, there is also a missionary spirit present. John Rolfe, husband of Pocahontas, writes “I will never cease until I have accomplished, and brought to perfection so holy a worke, in which I will daily pray God to blesse me, to mine, and her eternall happiness.”\textsuperscript{193} Furthermore, Alexander Whitaker, a leading minister in Virginia, regularly ministers to Native Americans in hopes of seeing them turn to Christ.\textsuperscript{194}

Plymouth, Massachusetts is England’s second permanent colony. Though Jamestown, when originally settled, shows undertones of religiosity, Plymouth is definitively a Puritan colony. “The Puritans believed that in coming to America, they were establishing an unbreakable covenant with God, which was chronicled by Plymouth, Massachusetts, govern William Bradford.”\textsuperscript{195} These Puritans risk the Atlantic Ocean due to the strain of contending for religious reform in England. For them, it is easier to abandon the fight, come to America, and establish a society for themselves. Furthermore, they believe they can create a holy city in the New World and provide a model to England.\textsuperscript{196} The Puritans original destination was Virginia, but the \textit{Mayflower} was blown off course. They arrive in Cape Cod in early November 1620. Prior to leaving the ship the men signed an agreement that stated:

\begin{quote}
Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our King and Country, a Voyage to plant the first colony in the northern
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
  \item[192] Ibid., 37.
  \item[193] Ibid., 37.
  \item[194] Ibid., 37.
  \item[196] Ibid., 926.
\end{footnotes}
parts of Virginia; [we] Do by these Presents, solemnly and mutually in the Presence of God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation, and Furtherance of the Ends aforesaid.¹⁹⁷

Each of these men come to America to advance the Christian Faith. These men are not clergy, but “lay people.” Even though they were not clergy they assume the responsibility to become missionaries in “northern Virginia.”

Though hard times fall upon the colony of Plymouth, the colony is able to maintain to the spring primarily by the efforts of Captain Miles Standish and Elder William Brewster.¹⁹⁸ Approximately half of the Pilgrims die the first winter. Puritanism becomes the focal point of colonies established in New England: Plymouth, Massachusetts, New Haven, and Connecticut.

At the heart of the Puritan town square is a church. Like Virginia, strict laws are implemented in these four colonies. An individual is not able to vote unless they are a member of a church and all citizens are required to attend Sunday service.¹⁹⁹ Though the church and state are separate, ministers are called upon to assist magistrates. Furthermore, ministers frequently meet with magistrates to strategize how to best promote religious life in New England.²⁰⁰

The Puritans believe Christian faith must be influential beyond an individual faith. At its core, the Puritan faith believes Christians should be concerned about the good of the whole. “Local congregations had responsibilities for the good of the whole, not just for themselves.”²⁰¹


¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 39.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 42.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 42.
This doctrine is consistent with the New Testament. Christ-followers have the responsibility to care for the Body of Jesus and disciple one another.  

Though Puritans are the most dominant Christian faith in the New World, they are not the only Christian denomination present. The Baptists arrive soon after the Puritan immigrants come to America. In general, the Baptists hold similar beliefs as the Puritan. Prior to leaving Holland, these Baptists issue a creed that was radical for the time. They believe “local churches should control their own business, magistrates should not be given power over church affairs.” These beliefs were contrary to the ecclesiology held by the Church of England and the Catholic Church. The first American Baptist congregation is formed in Rhode Island in 1639. Rhode Island ultimately becomes a center for the Baptists. In the 1630’s, a division within the Baptist ranks occurs. The “General” and “Particular” Baptists become the two dominant Baptist denominations after the split. Both denominations experience rapid growth and establish nearly 300 churches in New England by 1660.

In 1656, Ann Austin and Mary Fisher arrive in Boston with hopes to convince New Englanders to become Quakers. Quakers are immediately removed by Puritan authorities, but they keep returning and preaching their message. The Puritan authorities issue judgment upon Quakers and they are beaten, whipped, and given fines. Between 1659 and 1661 four Quakers are hung. Though the Quakers are not welcomed in New England they eventually establish a 

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201 Ibid., 42.
202 Ibid., 56.
203 Ibid., 56.
204 Ibid., 56.
205 Ibid., 65.
206 Ibid., 65.
community in Pennsylvania. The idea of Pennsylvania is forged in the mind of William Penn. He believes a colony can be created with religious freedom for all who believe in one God. It is here the Quakers are able to thrive without the fears of persecution from other denominations.

Notable other Christian denominations come to America as the New World is beginning to be established by Europeans. These include Presbyterians, who establish a church in “New England, New York, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina.”\(^{207}\) In a large part, these churches are established by the work of Francis Makemie, who establishes the first Presbyterian church in Snow Hill, Maryland in 1684.\(^{208}\) Also, the Dutch and German Reformed denomination plants and establishes fifty congregations by 1740.\(^{209}\) The Christian faith is evident in America as individuals and families emigrate to America from Europe. By the end of the seventeenth century, America becomes a pluralistic Christian colony.

**THE FIRST GREAT AWAKENING**

The First Great Awakening, in the 1730’s-1740’s, does much more than revive American churches and individual Christians. The First Great Awakening also influences American society, specifically the “yawning cultural divide between blacks and whites.”\(^{210}\) This awakening is predominantly made up of local revivals. In New England, Congregational and Baptist churches experience growth. In the middle colonies, Presbyterians and Dutch Reformed experience growth. Finally, in the southern colonies, Baptist churches experience growth.

\(^{207}\) Ibid., 68.

\(^{208}\) Ibid., 68.

\(^{209}\) Ibid., 70.

\(^{210}\) Ibid., 91.
Though these revivals are largely local, George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards are recognized as two of the national leaders of this movement.

George Whitefield is an ordained minister in the Church of England. Whitefield comes to America in 1739 and his reputation as a great preacher precedes him. In 1740, he preaches to thousands of individuals in New England. His preaching ultimately becomes the key to the awakening in New England. By the end of his tour he becomes a national celebrity. “Certainly he was the single best-known religious leader in America of that century, and the most widely recognized figure of any sort in North America before George Washington.”

One of Whitefield’s greatest strengths is the fact that he knows how to speak to the ordinary person. His preaching applies to their emotions and hearts. For all his strengths, Whitefield is not an organizer, and thus, those who are converted must find a congregation to join on their own. Overall, Whitefield’s tour takes him to all the colonies in America. Ultimately, he becomes a figurehead of Christianity in America, helping to spur the First Great Awakening.

The second prominent figure in the First Great Awakening is Jonathan Edwards. Edwards is a theologian and is also the greatest apologist of the time. Edwards’ influencers are Isaac Newton and John Locke, both philosophical geniuses of their day. “The major themes of his theology are the greatness and glory of God, the utter dependence of sinful humanity on God for salvation, and the ethereal beauty of the life of holiness.” Edward’s greatest sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”, reveals his major theological themes. Some of

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211 Ibid., 91.
212 Ibid., 94.
213 Ibid., 95.
214 Ibid., 97.
Edwards’ work is a defense of the revivals, while other works seek to help Christians to understand true godliness. Edwards’ primary goal is “not to teach static doctrine, but to bring about a change of consciousness in listeners.”

The results of Whitefield’s and Edwards’ labor is clearly seen as individuals join churches. Between 1730 and 1740, an average of eight people join each congregation in Connecticut. Between 1741 and 1742, this average multiplies to thirty-three people. However, though these statistics are impressive, they do not tell the full story of the Awakening in Connecticut. These numbers dramatically decline in the late 1740’s, even below the averages in the 1730’s. The average number of individuals added to a Connecticut congregation between 1730 and 1750 is proportionately the same as the preceding thirty years. Furthermore, for all the colonies, “it does seem as if both church membership and church ‘adherence’ declined gradually from 1700 to the time of the American Revolution.” The chart below illustrates the growth prior to the height of the Great Awakening, during this height, and afterwards.

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217 Ibid., 97.

218 Ibid., 97.

219 Ibid., 97.
The First Great Awakening is just that: an awakening. Whitefield and Edwards strengthen the churches, but their toils do not lead to a missional movement. This is not negative. In fact, their work helps Christians become more Christ-like and sets the stage for both the Baptist and Methodist movements in the Second Great Awakening. Though both are remarkable, the Methodist movement “would soon transform not just the Christian faith of the South, but the whole of North American Protestantism.”  

THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING

In American history, there is no other Christian movement that compares to the Second Great Awakening. This awakening occurs from 1795 to the Civil War in the 1860’s. However, the main thrust of the awakening occurs between 1795 and 1810.\textsuperscript{221} The First Great Awakening

\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., 100.

\textsuperscript{221} Ibid., 166.
and the Second Great Awakening are similar in that there is a call for personal salvation. The churches come together and rejoice when revival occurs and sorrows as revivals decline.\textsuperscript{222} However, there were great differences between the two awakenings. Congregationalists, Anglicans, and Presbyterians dominate the first awakening, Methodists, Baptists, and Disciples spearhead the second.\textsuperscript{223} Ultimately the Second Great Awakening left a longer legacy than the first.\textsuperscript{224}

The seeds of the Second Great Awakening are put in place following the First Great Awakening, especially for Baptists in the southern colonies. Following the First Great Awakening, the Baptists in the southern colonies create the Sandy Creek Association of Baptist churches in 1758. This association is comprised of churches in North Carolina and Virginia.\textsuperscript{225} In rural areas, like the southern colonies, a full-time preacher is not the norm due to the rapid growth of Baptist churches in the 1770’s. Thus, the farmer-preacher becomes a mainstay in these colonies. Ultimately, this model becomes a foundation of the denomination’s growth.

Sociologically during this time, Christianity is floundering. Interest in Christianity is in decline. The faith comes under attack and individuals wonder if Christianity is worth preserving. At this time, less than ten percent of Americans formally belong to a church.\textsuperscript{226} This is only in reference to established colonies. The Western Frontier is completely devoid of Christian

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{222} \textit{Ibid.}, 169.
\item \textsuperscript{223} \textit{Ibid.}, 169.
\item \textsuperscript{224} \textit{Ibid.}, 169.
\item \textsuperscript{225} \textit{Ibid.}, 101.
\item \textsuperscript{226} \textit{Ibid.}, 166.
\end{itemize}
influence. At best, Christianity in American is struggling. At worst, the religion is dead. It is within this context that the greatest American awakening and movement occurs.

Like the First Great Awakening, the Second Great Awakening is led by two prominent figures, Francis Asbury and Charles Finney. Asbury is a Methodist pastor who travels America seeking to convert non-believers. Finney’s ministry has a profound effect on America, even more so than politicians of his time.\textsuperscript{227}

In 1771, John Wesley asks for volunteers to move to America to spread Methodism. Francis Asbury quickly volunteers, and upon his arrival, he oversees four Methodist workers who are already ministering in America. When the Revolutionary War begins, all the Methodist missionaries return to England, except for Asbury. When the Revolutionary War finishes, it is Asbury who builds an infrastructure that produces a missional movement. Asbury’s focus is not on settled areas where clergy already exist. Instead, he believes Methodist clergy are to be missionaries, going where the Gospel message is not present.\textsuperscript{228} He believes in “setting up an organization that bound eastern centers to missionary outposts on the frontier.”\textsuperscript{229} This paradigm shift becomes the missional foundation for the Methodist Movement.

Asbury’s vision to equip pastors to go into the mission field is unlike any religious organization in American history up to this point. Those who settle in the New World come to America with hopes of establishing a religious nation. Asbury’s vision is to equip individuals to fulfill the Great Commission. Asbury’s organization focuses on Wesleyan principles: “God’s free grace, humanity’s liberty to accept or reject that grace, and the Christian’s need to strive for

\textsuperscript{227} Ibid., 170.

\textsuperscript{228} Ibid., 171.

\textsuperscript{229} Ibid., 171.
‘perfection’." He also uses the Methodist pattern of organization originally created by John Wesley. Asbury thoroughly believes that outward behavior should match the inner workings of the Gospel. Furthermore, he believes that the outward working must also include an increase in social responsibilities.

Through Asbury, Methodism thrives in America. At the time of his death, in 1816, Methodism is a movement. There are 2,000 pastors and over 200,000 Methodists in America. Following Asbury’s death, Methodism begins to take form as a denomination. This ultimately leads to pastors attending seminary, which dramatically slows the growth of the movement. By 1820, Methodism no longer resembles a missional movement, but a traditional denomination.

Charles Finney is the other leader of the Second Great Awakening. Finney’s legacy is still felt in American Evangelical Christianity. Finney introduced the “anxious bench” at the end of his sermons. “The anxious bench was a specially designed area, usually in front of the auditorium to which Finney called people for prayer or to be admonished about the condition of their souls.” In Lectures of Revival, Finney writes that one can create the right conditions for an individual to come forward and decide to follow Christ. However, Finney recants these

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230 Ibid., 172.
231 Ibid., 173.
232 Ibid., 173.
235 Ibid., 176.
claims in a later writing.\textsuperscript{236} Though he recants some of his writings, the practice of creating the right environment for a decision is still very evident in American Evangelical Christianity today.

Finney’s influence is not limited to the “anxious bench.” He also places an emphasis on “Moral Government of God, the powers of the human will, and the state of the entire sanctification.”\textsuperscript{237} These beliefs become a central point of Evangelicalism as it evolves in America. Not only are these beliefs prominent during the Second Great Awakening, but they are still prominent today.

Another major religious movement that occurred during the Second Great Awakening was the growth of the Baptists. In 1812, there were approximately 200,000 Baptists in America. By 1850 that number jumps to 1,000,000. Even more impressive is 75\% of the 1,000,000 were involved in national missionary ventures.\textsuperscript{238} During this period, the Baptists become intensely focused on local missions. They also demonstrate their commitment to evangelism by sharing the Good News on the frontiers and around the globe.\textsuperscript{239}

During the Second Great Awakening, the Baptists do not have a leader as popular as Francis Asbury or Charles Finney. However, their zeal for all members living on mission becomes the driving factor for their exponential growth. Along with this zeal they implement a strategic plan for growth. Baptist missionary agencies become the most active in the Protestant

\textsuperscript{236} Scot McKnight, \textit{The King Jesus Gospel}, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 74.

\textsuperscript{237} Mark A. Noll, \textit{A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada}, (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2003), 175.

\textsuperscript{238} Ibid., 178.

\textsuperscript{239} Ibid., 179.
faith in America.\textsuperscript{240} “What they lacked in visible leadership, however, they made up in vigor.”\textsuperscript{241} This vigor and aggressive strategy allows the Baptists to become a missional movement in the South and the Western frontier during the Second Great Awakening.

The First Great Awakening focuses primarily on the Church’s upward relationship with God. There was a new sense of discovering who God was and how to relate to Him. The Second Great Awakening focus was three-fold. The Church understands her upward relationship with God, her inward relationship with other Christ-followers, and her outward relationship with non-Christians. This understanding allows the American Church to grow in spiritual maturity, as well as to exponentially grow as non-Christians are discipled into the Kingdom of God.

Many missionary agencies are established during the Second Great Awakening. “One feature of the evangelical mobilization that had dramatic long-range consequences for Christianity in America was the new vision for missionary work that emerged.”\textsuperscript{242} The missionary organizations are created, in large part, due to the outward vision put forth by Francis Asbury, Charles Finney, and Baptist farm-preachers. However, “the work done by those who stayed at home to evangelize and civilize America was the truly great missionary story of the century.”\textsuperscript{243}

\section*{THE THIRD GREAT AWAKENING}

The Third Great Awakening occurs between 1850 and the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century. After the Civil War concludes, Northern Christians believe they can return to the goals they set during the

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{240} Ibid., 180.
\bibitem{241} Ibid., 180.
\bibitem{242} Ibid., 185.
\bibitem{243} Ibid., 185
\end{thebibliography}
Second Great Awakening. These goals are extremely ambitious: “to evangelize the population and the whole world, to reform personal and public life, to redeem the cities, and to effect institutional unification of Protestantism itself.”

Free from the Civil War, these Protestants envision a future with the Church as a central piece of America. During this time, Dwight L. Moody is the most prominent evangelist and two notable movements, known as the Social Gospel and the Ecumenical Movement take place.

Dwight L. Moody was the most well-known evangelist during the second half of the nineteenth century. His time as a prominent preacher comes after Charles Finney and before Billy Sunday. Moody was different than both men. Moody was not as intense as Finney, nor was he as theatrical as Sunday. “He dressed like a conventional businessman and spoke calmly and plainly.”

Moody’s ministry in America reached its height following the Civil War. He believed himself to be a winner of souls. “I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, “Moody, save all you can.”

Moody’s ministry flourishes in Great Britain in the early 1870’s. When he returns to America, he is in high demand because Christians are seeking revival. The Church was in turmoil once again. This crisis was due to the fact that churches did not know how to respond to the social and political crises of their day. These social and political issues left the Church without a sense of local Christianity community. Moody’s revivals in the 1870’s resemble the revivals during 1857-1858.

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244 Ibid., 287.
245 Ibid., 289.
246 Ibid., 289.
247 Ibid., 289.
248 Ibid., 288.
Moody’s efforts for evangelization went beyond his revival meetings. He created a Bible training center in Chicago, which later become the Moody Bible Institute. Furthermore, he held mission conferences near Northfield, Massachusetts. The Student Volunteer Movement was birthed in 1876 out of these conferences. The goal of this organization is “the evangelization of the world in this generation.” This vision inspired thousands of students.

One of the driving visions of the Third Great Awakening is to biblically reform society. This leads to the founding of the Social Gospel. The theory behind the Social Gospel is to provide a “Christian response to the rapid social changes of the period, but one in which an analysis of corporate entities supplemented the appeal to individuals.” Since the Third Great Awakening, the Social Gospel has become known for liberal theology and social activism. Not all entities associated with the Social Gospel have liberal theology during this time. The Salvation Army is formed in the 1860’s with the vision of “providing social services from religious motivation.” It was the influence of individuals like Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbusch that ultimately leads the movement towards liberal theology, largely in part due to the popular biblical higher criticism movement.

There is another movement that occurs during this time known as The Ecumenical Movement. This movement seeks to bring together Protestants. The goal is to “make a notable advance in the reconciliation of intramural Christian differences.” There has been numerous

249 Ibid., 290.
250 Ibid., 290.
251 Ibid., 304.
252 Ibid., 304.
253 Ibid., 307.
attempts in cooperation among Protestants during this time. The first event is the formation of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ. This council represents 33 Christian denominations and approximately 18,000,000 members. The second event is the worldwide Edinburgh Missionary Conference. This conference took place in Edinburgh, England, in 1910.

The Third Great Awakening seeks to continue the missionary movement from the Second Great Awakening. However, the vision is never fully realized. The driving force of expanding God’s Kingdom is still a focus, but it is not the primary focus. The Social Gospel and unification of Protestant Christians becomes the focus and, ironically, shifts the vision away from fulfilling the Great Commission.

THE MISSIONAL MOVEMENT IN CONTEXT

The Missional Movement is not a new movement to Christianity. The theory of Missional Movement began almost thirty years ago as individuals like Alan Hirsch, Mike Breen, Bill Hull, and Neil Cole, begin to wrestle with what the future of the Western Church will be. In their minds, the answer to them is simple: return to the ecclesiastical principles found in the New Testament, mainly the fulfillment of the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

Though these individuals, as well as other Christian leaders, have been promoters of Missional Christianity, the movement did not take hold until recently. However, to fully understand the rise of this movement, one must understand the sociological history of America’s past 50 years.

There have been numerous social movements in America within the past 50 years. The Civil Rights Movement, the Women’s Movement, the LBGT/Q Movements, the Racial Justice Movement, the Reproductive Justice Movement, and Global Movements in general, have all

254 Ibid., 307.
played a critical role in shaping America. In addition, each of these movements played a
prominent role in the lives of Americans and the shaping of the American Church.

Up until the 1960’s, the Church held a central role in the lives of Americans. During the
1960’s, the percentage of Americans who claim to be Evangelical reaches a new low, 24%.\textsuperscript{255} There are various social factors which contribute to this regression. From a “bigger picture”
look, the American Church is not willing to acknowledge a shift in culture. The Baby Boomers
are reaching adulthood in the 1960’s and see the American Church as legalistic. They reject the
rules and boundaries their parents set up in Church. The Silent Generation, the generation prior
to the Baby Boomers, is more likely to claim they are Christian, 85% vs. 78%.\textsuperscript{256} This is a
significant socio-religious change.

The 1960’s also saw three social movements, the Civil Rights, the LBGT, and the
Women’s. In the Southern United States, the Civil Rights movement gains momentum through
nonviolent sit-ins. At first, these sit-ins disrupt the economy on a small scale. However, the
movement gains momentum and resistance builds. In Nashville, the response towards these sit-
ins are unpredictable. “Groups of angry whites would surround the demonstrators, taunting, and
shouting at them, and often burning them with cigarettes or dousing them with ketchup and
mustard.”\textsuperscript{257} Other nonviolent measures by African-Americans are taken including freedom
rides. Martin Luther King Junior is the greatest known leader of the movement during this time.
He continually advocates that all people are created equal, regardless of their skin color. On


\textsuperscript{256} Alan Cooperman, “America’s Changing Religious Landscape: Christians Decline Sharply as Share of
Population; Unaffiliated and Other Faiths Continue to Grow,” (Pew Research Center), accessed May 20, 2017,
http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/chapter-4-the-shifting-religious-identity-of-demographic-groups/

August 28, 1963, he gives his most famous speech, *I Have a Dream*. In 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 bans discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, or national origins. In 1965, the Voting Rights Act bans discrimination of voting based on race. There are many victories during this decade and the progress continues into the 1970’s.

Another major social movement during this time is the LGBT Movement. At this point in American history, those who identify as LGBT seek to “end the discrimination of homosexuals.” Randy Wicker states, “By the 1960’s, we began to see that discussing the cause and nature of homosexuality would not help us. We began to insist on our rights, to spell them out clearly.” The work of the LGBT leaders during this time becomes the foundation for much work built after them. This is the beginning of a movement that spans from the 1960’s to present day.

The Women’s Movement of the 1960’s seeks to bring equality for all women into the workforce. “The feminist movement of the 1960s and ’70s originally focused on dismantling workplace inequality, such as denial of access to better jobs and salary inequity, via anti-discrimination laws.” This movement began to take hold in the late 1960’s as many women’s liberation groups are formed throughout the nation. These groups seek to address the oppression status of women in the United States.

The three social movements in the 1960’s continue into the 1970’s. The Civil Rights movement experiences the same division seen in the 2010’s. “African-American males in particular were increasingly the victims of what may be viewed as ‘state terrorism’ enforced by

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258 Ibid., 1339.

259 Ibid., 1339.

local police.” Furthermore, like today, conservatives adopt a “support your local police” campaign. The Women’s movement gains political support in the 1970’s as the National Organization for Women demands that all of Congress to hear the Equal Rights Amendment. This amendment is originally introduced to Congress in 1923. In 1972, the Equal Rights Amendment is passed by Congress. In 1973, the Supreme Court reaches a decision to legalize abortion. Within the LBGT movement, opinions vary on how to best further their cause. Some believe a grassroots approach is best while others believe the effort needs to become political. Gay men believe the best strategy is to become more politically involved, while lesbians create a counterculture. Regardless of the discord, political activity becomes the norm for the movement.

The 1980’s saw the continuation of the Women’s and LGBT Movements. In the mid-1980’s the Women’s Movement evolves into the Reproductive Justice Movement. Reproductive Justice:

is the complete physical, mental, spiritual, political, economic, and social well-being of women and girls, and will be achieved when women and girls have the economic, social, and political power and resources to make healthy decisions about our bodies, sexuality, and reproduction for ourselves, our families, and our communities in all areas of our lives.

This movement becomes more holistic in nature. The focus is no longer just on equal rights in the workplace. The movement shifts to the well-being of women and girls through healthy decisions regarding their bodies.

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262 Ibid., 1347.

From the 1990’s till today, there have been two dominant sociological movements. The LGBTQ+ movement and the Racial Justice Movement. Each of these movements have stirred the hearts of many Americans. The LGBTQ+ movement built off the LGBT movement in the 1960’s. Since the 1960’s, public support for the LGBTQ+ movement has increased. In 2001, for the first time, a survey reveals that the majority of Americans believe homosexuality should be legal.\textsuperscript{264} The Supreme Court makes homosexual marriage legal in the United States on June 26, 2015. In the 1960’s, the homosexual agenda was not well-received by Americans. Since the 1960’s, public support for them has increased dramatically.\textsuperscript{265}

The Racial Justice movement begins in the 1980’s and is directly related to the Civil Rights movement of the 1960’s-1970’s. The Racial Justice movement is one “that builds on the legacy of civil rights while bringing crucial new elements to our political and social lives.”\textsuperscript{266} The racial landscape of American has drastically changed over the past thirty years. The Millennial Generation is now the largest generation in America and is 43% non-white, which is the highest diversity of any generation.\textsuperscript{267} Furthermore, it is projected that by 2055 America will not have a single racial majority.\textsuperscript{268} The ethnicity of America is changing rapidly. The Racial Justice movement is a key movement as America transitions ethnically. Currently, there is a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{265} Ibid., 1359.
\item \textsuperscript{268} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
great divide among Americans over the Black Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter movements. This movement may prove to be a larger movement as America becomes more diverse over the next few decades.

What did the American Church do during these years? During the 1960’s, the Church Growth model is born due to the work of Donald McGavran. McGavran work the book *Bridges to God* in 1955 and is recognized as the father of the Church Growth Movement. This book became the framework of the Church Growth model. McGavran’s desire was to move away from a view of “people” to “peoples”, which is a missionary mindset. McGavran openly critiques the missionary model that is in use during this time. He states, “A new pattern is at hand, which, while new, is as old as the Church itself. It is a God-designed pattern by which not ones but thousands will acknowledge Christ as Lord, and grow into full discipleship as people after people, clan after clan, tribe after tribe and community after community are claimed for and nurtured in the Christian faith.”

However, the Church Growth Movement takes an unfortunate turn in America, primarily due to the leadership of C. Peter Wagner. As Ed Stetzer states, “To be honest, we Americans are guilty of turning anything good into a business. The Church Growth movement is no exception.” The passionate plea of McGavran evolves into a business-like model in American churches. Not only does it become a business-like model, but it becomes successful. The model is copied throughout America. As churches see other churches growing, they adopt the model

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and are glad to see an increase in attendance. However, disciples are not being made. The mentality shifts from McGavran’s original movement to a goal of bringing Christians into the “church building” 24/7.271

The Church Growth model spans from the 1960’s to the early 1990’s, reaching its peak in the 1980’s under the leadership of C. Peter Wagner. During the 1960’s, it is easy to see that the American Church is no longer the epicenter of society. Many movements occurring during this time push the Church away from the social center of the Nation. The Church Growth model seeks to invite non-Christians into the church building to hear the Gospel and ultimately have their lives changed. The heart behind the Church Growth model is good, get non-Christians to hear the Gospel. However, there is a fundamental flaw in this model: the focus on the “church building.” The focus on the church building is now the norm when someone hears the word “church.” Instead of realizing the body of Jesus is the church, individuals now view buildings as the church. This belief ultimately moves the American Church towards a static, institutionalized, business-like religion which still hinders Christ-followers today.

The 1990’s saw a new church model, the Attractional model. Bill Hornsby wrote a book entitled The Attractional Church: Growth Through Refreshing, Relational, and Relevant Church Experience. He writes, “A growing movement of churches is offering people a refreshing, relational, and relevant church experience. Because of their ability to attract large numbers of people to their places of worship, these churches have been defined as attractional.”272

271 Ibid.

certainly used this model and many came to a real relationship with Jesus through these churches.

This model built upon the Church Growth movement. As stated previously, the Church Growth movement sought to bring non-Christians into the church building. This type of church “attracts unbelievers to ‘come and see’ what God is doing in their church. The church members practice a method of evangelism called ‘invest and invite.’”\(^\text{273}\) This does not equip the saints to do the work of the ministry, but instead reinforces the ideology that the “pastor” does evangelism for the church.

The staffing for an Attractional church looks like a business model. The lead pastor is the CEO. Serving under him are other pastors and directors who run their programs or ministries. The saints are trained to be volunteers for programs, but not for the Great Commission. The ultimate goal of an Attractional church is “evangelism done through the gifted communicator.”\(^\text{274}\)

There are two churches who are synonymous with the Attractional model, Willow Creek and Saddleback. Willow Creek is located in a suburb of Chicago, Illinois. Bill Hybels is the senior pastor and dedicated his life to helping people to become more like Jesus. Willow Creek conducted a congressional survey and they facts are alarming.

Bill writes:

They wrecked my day. Three colleagues I trust and respect had just walked me through the findings of an elaborate — and quite expensive — congregational survey, and the results weren’t at all what I’d expected. I’ve always believed the local church is the hope of the world. I still do. But what I learned from the survey on that day was that the local


\(^{274}\) Ibid., 232.
church I’d led for more than thirty years was not doing as well as I thought when it came to helping people grow spiritually.\textsuperscript{275}

Bill is shocked by the results and realized changes are needed. Willow Creek revamps their Wednesday night service and also works to get their people to engage with the Bible themselves.\textsuperscript{276} This is the core issue with the Attractional model. The primary focus is evangelism and not discipleship. Since discipleship is not the primary focus, Christ-followers do not become fully active Kingdom agents, which ultimately leads to mass consumerism. No longer is the goal of a church member to become a disciple-maker. Instead a culture of consumerism creates a “what can you do for me” mentality.

Around 2010, a change begins to happen in churches and seminaries. Leaders begin to realize the church is no longer the center of society. Furthermore, more and more Americans are either leaving the church or have no interest in church. Times have changed and the American Church realizes she is now living in a missionary context. This is confirmed during in a 2017 American Culture and Faith Institute report. Only 10% of Americans and 4% of Millennials say they have a biblical worldview.\textsuperscript{277} These younger adults state they reject Jesus because Christians have rejected them.\textsuperscript{278}

The American Church is now on the fringe of mainstream culture. Furthermore, non-Christians believe there is a political agenda behind organized Evangelicalism. “I don’t trust the

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{275} Greg L. Hawkins, Move: What 1,000 Churches Reveal About Spiritual Growth, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 9.
\bibitem{276} Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
church. All you ever see is men who have their political agendas basically brainwashing people in their church that if they don’t believe the same things the church leaders do, and vote the same way, they are going to hell.”

This becomes evident during the 2016 Presidential election. Many Evangelical leaders openly support now-President Donald Trump, but their congregations did not.

The Bible is the sacred writing of Christians. The way in which Christians are to live is written in this sacred book. However, the Bible is not seen as total truth by Americans. Approximately 30% of people believe the Bible is totally truthful, while most believe there is some truth. Less than 40% of all American adults read the Bible in a week. The Bible is seen as foundational to Evangelicals, but it is not as important to Americans as a whole.

As the American Church is ignored by mainstream culture, many realize Christians must now take on a missionary posture. Gone are the days of Christendom. The Missional Movement seeks to correct the poor ecclesiology accepted by the American Church. This paradigm shift restores the priesthood of all believers, which is currently lacking.

One of the greatest hindrances to missions is treating the Great Commission like a calling for some instead of a mandate for all. Christians do not need to be specially called to go overseas, no more than they need to be called to live missionally where they are – it is inherent to being a disciple.

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Each Christ-follower is a disciple and a disciple-maker in the Missional Movement. Being a disciple is not an option. However, the current paradigm does not require Christians to be disciples and disciple-makers. Instead, the paradigm includes a conversion, attending Sunday gatherings, and tithing. This paradigm hinders each Christ-follower from being a true Kingdom citizen and is unbiblical. The Missional Movement is birthed out of a desire to restore the Great Commission as the primary action of the Church.

As one reviews the religious history of America, there is a significant change in the focus of Christianity. First, immigrants come to America in the 17th century with the hopes of spreading the Gospel in the New World. This focus continues and reaches its peak during the Second Great Awakening. However, since then the American Church looks more like a static business organization than a Jesus movement. Methods and models have trumped the Great Commission. Many present-day churches will spend countless hours strategizing on improving their programs, but fail to show their congregations how to be a disciple and a disciple-maker. It is time to refocus on the Great Commission and return to the Jesus Movement emphasis.
CHAPTER 4

MISSIONAL MOVEMENT STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

The strategy for creating and sustaining a missional movement encompasses many different methods. The missional movement will begin in major cities. The movement will have a missional culture. Discipleship leading to leadership is key for reproducing spiritually mature disciple makers. Finally, the model used will be a missional group network. All these different concepts work together in creating a missional movement culture. Furthermore, the culture must be sustained to see the movement continue. If any of these factors are removed from the culture the movement dies.

Urbanization

According to the 2010 Census, 80.7% of Americans live in an urban setting. Urban areas in America grew 12.1% from 2000-2010. People are moving to urban areas, but is there a reason?

“Cities shape the world. What happens in cities doesn’t stay in cities. What happens in cities spreads – as the city goes, so goes the broader culture.” Urban areas are where culture is created, defined, and sent to the world. What happens in cities eventually migrates out to rural

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284 Ibid.

285 Stephen T. Um and Justin Buzzard, Why Cities Matter: To God, the Culture, and the Church, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 15.
areas. Furthermore, cities are shaping the world. What happens financially in Hong Kong will have either a direct or indirect effect on cities in America. Depending on the situation, this could affect America even more than what happens in the suburbs of a city.

People are also moving to the cities because of the potential urban areas hold. “We find ourselves in the middle of the fourth and greatest wave of urbanization; it is being identified as the era of the megacity, the megapolis, the postcolonial city, and the global city.” Urban areas create optimism for individuals looking to “make it.” While this is a high risk, high reward environment, these opportunities are found only in urban areas, not in rural areas.

Teams will be sent to major cities to begin the missional movement. This means the movement must go to urban areas. Jesus-followers must go beyond the walls of their church buildings and their homes to reach non-Christians. At one point in time, American churches were once associated with the city. However, churches left the city when families began to leave for the suburbs in the 1950’s and 1960’s. As a result the cities lost churches and Jesus-followers. The “American Dream” was born and the church bought into a safe life, including safe neighborhoods and safe families. Jesus doesn’t promise the “American Dream” full of safe environments. Providing protection for one’s family is certainly biblical. However, Jesus did not call the church to the “American Dream”. He called His body to fulfill the Great Commission and that is a risky adventure.

The cities are an optimal setting for missional ministry. However, the church is still responsible to build relationships with urban people. “Many of the 1,250 uses of the word ‘city’ in the Bible deal directly with God’s call to be in relationship with urban dwellers.” There is a

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286 Ibid. 25.

clear biblical mandate that the church must be building relationships with urbanites. Cities are filled with individuals who are living in poverty and have no hope for the future. “The city becomes the land of those left behind – the poor, the underemployed, the ethnic outsider. The conditions they inherit are economic decline, physical decay and social disintegration.”288 The cities are ripe for redemption. The church must go and provide the ministry of reconciliation for this is where people will be located in the next century. “What will be remembered about the twenty-first century… is the great, and final, shift of human populations out of rural, agricultural life and into cities. We will end this century as a wholly urban species.”289

**Urban Areas for Starting the Missional Movement**

A total of eight teams consisting of five leaders each will be sent to urban areas. These areas will be Silicon Valley (California), Austin, TX, Boston, MA, New York, NY, Seattle, WA, San Francisco, LA, and Charlotte, NC. These urban areas were selected for various reasons. First, these cities are some of the least Bible-minded cities in America, except Charlotte. The Barna Group composed a ranking of 100 cities and their engagement with the Bible.290 In this data, Silicon Valley ranked 94th with 15% of it’s residents being Bible-minded, Austin ranked 47th/27%, New York City ranked 91st/17%, Seattle ranked 75th/21%, San Francisco ranked 94th/15%, Los Angeles ranked 94th/15% and Charlotte ranked 6th /46%.291 These cities have a great need for Jesus.

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288 Harvie M. Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City, & the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 70.


291 Ibid.
A second reason these urban areas were chosen is because they are areas of influence. These cities are home to the most influential decision-makers in America. Furthermore, these cities are prime locations for interns. Interns work for a year or two in these cities and then accept jobs in other areas in the United States. When these individuals come to know Jesus they become missionaries to other cities in America. They are quickly trained to become leaders and then start their own groups when they move to a new location. These cities become a hub to train and send missionaries around the country.

Finally, each of these cities have been identified in the JLL City Momentum Index of 2017. “42 elements of a city’s dynamism are covered, which are grouped into three main sub-indices: socio-economic momentum, commercial real estate momentum, and high-value incubators.”292 Each of the cities selected for the missional movement rank in the index’s top 60 most dynamic global cities. The missional movement will begin in the most dynamic cities in America.

Current Movement Discipleship

At best, the American Church is struggling regarding discipleship. 25% of Christians are being discipled.293 Only 20% of Christians are discipling someone.294 Furthermore, 41% of Christians believe their faith in Jesus is meant to be a private affair.295 Recent data reveals that 37% Christians who believe spiritual growth is important want discipleship to be done in


293 The Navigators and Barna Group, The State of Discipleship, (Caron Stream, IL:NavPress, 2015), 44.

294 Ibid.

295 Ibid.
isolation with no interaction with others. Somehow, true and biblical discipleship became replaced with discipleship programs and events. The current state of discipleship looks nothing like what Jesus intended for His Church.

As part of this project, a survey was given to determine if Christians were missional-minded. The results proved that Christians were missional-minded, but they lacked the proper understanding of missiology to implement living as a missionary in their daily lives. As Eckhardt Schnabel writes, “concepts of mission do not automatically lead to missionary praxis.” Though Schnabel was writing about Israel, the sentiment is still the same with the Church. This seems to be a trend across American Christians in general. Those who took the survey generally have a deep desire to integrate the Great Commission into their lives, but fail to do so because they lack the training. This seems to point more to a problem with leadership than individuals not wanting to fulfill Jesus’ command to make disciples.

A total of 36 individuals took the “Missional Movement” survey with 77% of them being involved in a small group. Almost all individuals hold a position in the church they attend. These positions are pastor, deacon, small group leader, adult Sunday school teacher, youth leader, Sunday school director, and worship member. Three people are not in a position at their local church. The current outlook of these individuals’ churches ranges anywhere from survival mode (14%), to an evangelism focus (17%), to success measured by programs (22%), to success is measured by making disciples by the Great Commission (47%).

The first two questions directly relate to discipleship. Individuals were asked 1) How many Christians are you discipling, helping them to become more like Jesus and 2) How many

\[296\text{ Ibid.}\]
non-Christians are you engaging in relationships with the goal of introducing them to Jesus. The results are as follows:
Almost 50% of individuals who took this survey stated that they are discipling 5 or more other Christians to become like Jesus. This is astounding, especially since only 5% of individuals stated they are not discipling anyone. There is a high percentage of individuals who are not building relationships with non-Christians. Approximately 25% of individuals who took this survey are not building relationships with non-Christians. However, this also means that 75% are engaging with non-Christians in some form. The potential for a missional movement is present if these individuals answered truthfully, especially since 49% are building relationships with 3 or more non-Christians.

The second set of questions dealt with the focus of these individuals’ churches. To achieve a missional movement the individuals must remove the “church building” paradigm. Instead, people must believe their primary place of ministry is within in their communities. The
answers to these questions reveal a difference in the thought and practice of Christians and their churches as an organization.

This is where the breakdown between leading people towards missional living occurs. The majority of individuals, 81%, attend events or programs in their “church building.” However, 55% of these individuals are also attending community events more than five times a year. The
individuals taking this survey are already engaging in their community. However, there is also a deeply embedded mindset of “church activities” being tied to the “church building.” To move to a missional movement, this mentality must cease to exist. In fact, there should be more interactions with the community than with a “church building.” Jesus’ people are called to go and make disciples, not isolate themselves to a comfortable building.

The next question sought to understand if individuals understood the theological concept that the Great Commission determines the Church. Most individuals answered that Jesus determined the Mission and the Mission determines the Church.

![Pie chart showing survey results](image)

However, their answers for why they chose this indicates that not all have a full grasp as to why they believe this is true. Some of their responses included: “Would have selected neither if possible (Selected Jesus -> Mission -> Church). Jesus determines the mission and the church. The mission does not determine the church nor the church the mission.” “Jesus is the Shepherd of the Church. Shepherd leads, guides, sets direction.” “Everything begins and ends with Jesus.” “More closely resembles my belief structure.” “It’s biblical.”
Though some answered in a way that showed they believe this truth but are not able to articulate, others showed an understanding as to why the mission determines the Church. “The church is the body of believers in Christ. He determines the mission and that should direct the church.” “Jesus established both the church and the mission; however, the mission should guide the church.” “God is on Mission and invites man into His Mission and His Mission is carried out best through the church.” “The mission drives the church, not the other way around. Jesus gave the command in Scripture, which should be the mission and focus of every church.” Though many acknowledge the Great Commission drives the Church, there is a clear disconnect as to why individuals believe this.

The next two questions help to identify if the vision or mission of a church/small group was to make disciples, as well as if this was practically being fulfilled. Like most churches, the desire to make disciples was evident, but practically speaking churches and small groups fail to equip their people.
The majority of individuals who took this survey believe their church’s primary mission is to make disciples. According to their answers, their churches and small groups seek to fulfill the Great Commission. However, only 57% of these individuals believe their churches or small groups help them reach their full potential. As mentioned earlier, there seems to be a breakdown between theory and practice in churches and small groups. The desire for most of these churches and small groups is to make disciples. However, nearly half of these leaders do not believe they are being fully equipped. Data from this survey further supports their claims:
The majority of these churches are not biblically discipling their congregations. Discipleship in the New Testament includes teaching, mentoring, and apprenticing. 63% of these individuals claim their discipleship process does not include mentorship and apprenticeship. This is a major flaw in discipleship. Individuals cannot be discipled to their full potential if they are only learning about discipleship in a classroom type setting. Furthermore, they can never become spiritually mature reproducing disciples. Failure to include hands-on training and immersion will always handicap the discipleship process. This removes all possibility of Christianity becoming a movement. If discipleship is limited to the classroom lecture experience, it will not equip the Church and it will fail to impact non-Christians and society.

One of the greatest aspects that determines the mindset of a church is the leadership structure. David Earley and Rod Dempsey write about the leadership structures of churches in *Disciple Making Is... How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence*. According to Dempsey there are four types of church structures: Traditional (Single pastor/deacon led or congregation led), Attractional (Single Elder), Organic (Multiple Elders), or Hybrid (Single Elder...
with deacons or Elder Board). These leadership structures determine the culture of each church. The individuals who took the survey listed their church leadership as the following:

![Pie chart showing distribution of church leadership structures](image)

According to the data, most of these individuals are a part of an Attractional or Traditional leadership structure. This immediately presents a missional movement issue as missional movements are always lead by multiple elders leading collaboratively towards the Great Commission. ²⁹⁸

Every person who took the survey believes discipleship is important for the future of the American Church. However, their reasons varied as to why. Some believe it is important because the culture is currently attacking the church. Others believe it is important because it is how Christianity will sustain in the next generation. However, very few referenced that it is important because it is the command Jesus gave Christians to fulfill. Though these individuals know discipleship is important, they fail to understand why it is important.

²⁹⁸ For more information regarding polycentric leadership and missional movements read *The Forgotten Ways* by Alan Hirsch.
Finally, most individuals (91%) believe they are missionaries in and for their community. This is a great understanding of the Great Commission. Each believer is called to be a missionary discipling individuals to become spiritually mature reproducing disciples. This is an important piece of the missional movement. The missional element of Christianity cannot be separated from discipleship. If it does become separated, the Church fails to expand Jesus’ Kingdom.

**Movement Minded – Chasing the Mission**

The current projections of Christianity in America are bleak. By all accounts, it is quite possible that mainline Protestantism will die within 23 years. As Albert Einstein famously said, “We can not solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them.” A radical paradigm-shift is necessary for the American Church. Failure to make this shift will result in the death of Christianity in America. For those curious to see what American Christianity looks like without a change, look no further than across the Atlantic where Christianity has all but died in Europe. The projections are bleak using current methods. It is time for a radical change in how “church” is done. However, what does this new paradigm look like?

At the age of sixteen, Albert Einstein began a thought-experiment which became labeled as “chasing the light.” This experiment forever impacted Einstein, and ultimately helped him develop his theory of special relativity. Not only did it impact Einstein deeply, it also changed

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the scientific community. A similar thought-experiment is needed for a Missional Movement. Instead of “chasing the light”, the church must “chase the mission.”

Einstein chases the light until he catches up to the beam, in his imagination. Likewise, the Missional Movement must imagine the end result of a successful movement. What does it look like to achieve a missional movement in America? The answers to this question determine the mindset and practice of those within the movement. First, the movement must understand her identity is directly connected to the notion that Jesus is Lord. As Alan Hirsch writes of the Early Church,

The early church rejected this claim of lordship of Caesar; the early Christians refused to see Jesus as merely part of Rome’s pantheon of gods. The confession “Jesus is Lord” became in their mouths and in this context a deeply subversive claim that effectively undermined the rule of Caesar and all other absolute claims to political lordship. The Christians wanted to bring all life under the lordship of Jesus, and that meant subverting the lordship of Caesar.300

Roland Allen details “Jesus is Lord” in the midst of the spontaneous expansion of the Church,

The spontaneous expansion of the Church reduced to its elements is a very simple thing. It asks for no elaborate organization, no large finances, no great numbers of paid missionaries… What is necessary is faith. What is needed is the kind of faith which uniting a man to Christ, sets him on fire.301


First and foremost, the Missional Movement is centered and founded on her Cornerstone, Jesus.  

Second, the Great Commission is the sole mission of the movement. The Great Commission centers on making disciples, baptizing the new disciples, and teaching them to be obedient to Jesus. When this happens then, and only then, will Jesus go with His people. Far too often the American Church is focused on everything but the Great Commission. Programs, events, calendars, buildings, budgets, and attendance dominate the majority of meetings. However, Jesus’ command to make disciples is not often talked about, let alone strategized. If there is a strategy in place, it is often connected with the programs and events. The Great Commission must become the primary focus of the movement. Ministries will be started in the movement if the Great Commission is the focus. If the movement focuses on ministries, she will never get to the Great Commission. Out of the Great Commission ministries are formed.

Third, a movemental culture must be established. Culture entails many different aspects of society. Culture is complex, and yet, it influences the lives of every person. As such, a definition can be hard to determine. J.R. Woodward writes, “Choosing to live between complexity and simplicity, my approach to understanding culture involves six elements—language, artifacts, narratives, rituals, institutions and ethics. These elements interrelate to create culture and make up what I call the ‘cultural web.’”302 This definition works in a movement because the movement establishes its own culture and also influences the larger culture set by society. Culture making is two-fold: both within the movement and how the movement will influence those in the larger community. This Missional Movement will create a culture where Jesus’ Kingdom is expanded and Satan’s is diminished.

Great Commission: Discipleship Through Obedience

The Great Commission is the mission the church is commanded to fulfill. For the past few decades, this command has been modeled in many ways. These models have included evangelistic crusades, church growth, multi-sites, church planting, and now, church planting movements. However, the core of the Great Commission is simply to make disciples and train them to obey Jesus. It appears as though the American Church has come up with great models and systems, but has failed to realize the central principal of the Great Commission: discipleship. This failure has lead to serious damage in America. “Today just 16 percent of non-Christians in that age(sixteen- to twentynine-year-olds) bracket have a “good impression” of Christianity. In the study, evangelical Christians come under the severest attack, with just 3 percent of sixteen- to twentynine-year-old non-Christians indicating favorable views toward this subgroup of believers”\(^{303}\) The tides have changed. No longer is Christianity accepted by mainstream American culture.

Personal discipleship is crucial to any Missional Movement. First, an individual who comes to Jesus must immediately be taught how to fulfill the Great Commission. This is an area where the American Church currently fails. Instead of immersing new Christians in the Great Commission, these new Christians are taught they must know a certain amount of information before they can begin fulfilling the Great Commission. Practically this new method would mean they return to their homes, share the Gospel with family and friends and baptize them. From the start, Jesus-followers are disciples and disciple-makers. This is what is occurring in Asia, Africa, and South America. New Christ-followers are immediately trained to start their own church, in their own cities, towns, and villages. During the process, they are discipled and trained to be

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obedient to Jesus. These new Christians are trained for true spiritual authority instead of positional power from organizational leadership. The result is a keen understanding of the Great Commission, both in theory and practice. This type of discipleship must become the norm in America to develop a Missional Movement.

The notion of discipleship “on the go” is radical to the American church. However, if the Western Church is going to create and sustain a missional movement, She must reimagine the word “church.” Too often “church” conjures images of a building. However, the church is not the building, but the people of God. This has led many to believe church is merely the place where people worship. Again, discipleship is not a major factor in this paradigm. Discipleship is for those who want to take their faith “to the next level.”

Many churches have a three to six month waiting period before an individual can become a member. During this time, these individuals must prove they are Jesus-followers and committed to the specific local church. After becoming members, these individuals may begin to serve. Though this service is often in a limited role. Discipleship must be reimagined if the church will create a movement in America. She must take notes from Jesus concerning biblical discipleship.

Chapters nine and ten in the Gospel of Luke reveal Jesus’ hands-on ministry training. In Luke 9, Jesus sends the Twelve to villages to proclaim the Kingdom of God. During these journeys, they preach the gospel and heal people everywhere the travel. Luke 10 details the same command given, but this time it is to 72 disciples, not just the Twelve. No information is given regarding these 72 disciples. Who are they? How long has Jesus trained them? If one were to read the text, from Luke 9-10, as is, it would appear as though these disciples were added
because of the journey the Twelve took in Luke 9. They spent a small time being trained by Jesus. Then He sends them out to do exactly what the Twelve did in Luke 9.

Most churches and denominations require at least a bachelor’s degree to become a professional pastor. Some even require the minimum of a master’s degree, or more specifically a Master of Divinity. During their training, these individuals learn a plethora of information. Most of the information is stored in a person’s short-term memory to be quickly forgotten. There is nothing wrong with gaining a formal education. In fact it has helped many grow spiritually and in leadership. However, the focus of biblical discipleship is not acquiring information. The focus is being obedient to the commands of Jesus. Discipleship is not being taught a new lesson on Sunday mornings, or during the week in a small group. This is the transference of information, not discipleship. Discipleship involves individuals intentionally and sacrificially training believers to be image bearers of Jesus. It is within this definition that a movement is created.

The discipleship process will remain simple so that it can be passed down from generation to generation. First, a core curriculum of six lessons will train individuals on the basics of Christianity. These lessons include knowing Jesus, the Great Commission, the Church, the Father, the Holy Spirit, and spiritual gifts. This core foundation will equip new Jesus-followers to fulfill the Great Commission in their communities immediately.

After this core is learned, individuals will be taught the entirety of Scripture in one year. Each week a small group of 2-3 people will read 25 chapters of the Bible, which will enable the group to read through the Scripture in one year’s time. Upon reading their weekly assigned chapters, the group will meet and discuss what the Holy Spirit revealed to them. Furthermore,
this group will hold one another accountable to live like Jesus, reach the lost, and live in community with Christ-followers.

Finally, each Jesus-follower will engage in a life-long relationship with other Christ-followers. This will include reading Scripture, holding one another accountable, and helping each other through life’s difficulties. There is not set curriculum in this life-long discipleship process. Those participating in the process, as well as the Holy Spirit, set the agenda.

**Missional Leadership**

“Everything rises and falls on leadership.” This quote is often used when individuals speak on leadership. Leadership is essential in Church Planting Movements. However, this type of leadership will be vastly different than what is currently seen in American churches. Imagine you walk into a room and meet with a leader. He is strong, but humble, and knows the needs of his staff and people. He begins to describe his leadership model within the organization. There are a few associates who report directly to him. They oversee major sections of the organization’s vision. Underneath them are directors who help achieve the vision in their specific offices. Finally, he states that a board of advisors holds him accountable for his actions and decision-making. Is this a picture of the American church or a Fortune 500 business? It is difficult to discern.

The American church has modeled their leadership structure after successful business models. These models have produced results, but have they produced disciples of Jesus? This is the question leadership must ask, instead of asking “will this yield more people in our building?”

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There is a biblical leadership structure, but has the western church moved away from it? Even more frightening, has it misrepresented what Jesus taught regarding leadership in church?

Ephesians 4:1-17 details unity within the body and how the church can grow to maturity. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:11-17 that it is the responsibility of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip the body for ministry. Through this equipping, the body will become mature and united in the faith.

First, it must be understood that the fivefold leadership gifts are simply that, gifts. These gifts are to be used to unite and mature the body. Unfortunately, there have been many who claim to have these gifts, but flaunt them for self-gain. This is why many people within Evangelical denominations have become skeptical of some of these gifts, primarily the apostolic, prophetic, and evangelistic gifts. With this in mind, envision how this leadership structure could be used.

Acts clearly reveals how the apostolic gift functions. Peter and Paul both have the apostolic gift and use it to further the Kingdom of God through discipleship multiplication. In a culture that is skeptical of this gift, a biblical definition is needed. From the Greek word apostolos, an apostle is one who is sent.305 “Apostles help to create a discipleship ethos and call people to participate in advancing God’s kingdom by awakening people and communities to discover and live out their calling in life.”306 Furthermore, being “apostolic means to be sent as a representative with a message. We are here for a purpose.”307 Apostles are adventurers,

305 Mike Breen and Steve Cockram, Building a Discipling Culture, (Pawleys, SC: 3DM Puglishing, 2009), 117.


pioneers, entrepreneurs, and architects; they are missional, futuristic, and decisive.\textsuperscript{308} One with this gifting is strategic in their thinking regarding the expansion of the Kingdom of God. This usually results in discipleship multiplication. Individuals are awakened to understand the need to fulfill the Great Commission, which is disciple-making.

Scripture is full of those with the prophetic gift, especially in the Old Testament. Prophets are often viewed as people who bring bad news. To be fair, the Old Testament prophets consistently revealed the pending judgment to come to Israel. However, this is not the prophet’s heart. Prophets are guardians of the covenant with God, continually encouraging and provoking God’s people to live according to His Word.\textsuperscript{309} Furthermore, “prophets help people pursue God’s shalom by calling the church to live in God’s new social order and stand with the poor and oppressed.”\textsuperscript{310} An example of a contemporary prophet would be Martin Luther King Jr. He spoke against the social injustice of racism and fought for equality of all people, regardless of skin color.

Those with the prophetic gifting help the body to stay obedient to God’s covenant with His people. As mentioned previously this includes healthy social orders and ministry to “the least of these”. Prophets primarily listen to God and speak what they hear from His Spirit. Prophets can misunderstand God’s words with their words. This is why it is the responsibility of the church to discern whether or not the words spoken are truly from God. This is a major reason the prophetic gift is discounted by many in Evangelical circles. Many false prophets have

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309 Ibid., 51.

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wrongly used this gift for self-gain. As a result, many disregard the gift entirely. However, the church can no longer neglect a leader with the ability to challenge them to live according to the Word, and to guide them with words from God.

The Evangelist’s passion is to disciple seekers into the Kingdom of God. These individuals have the unique ability to contextualize the gospel into a seeker’s language. In a leadership role, “evangelists help the congregation incarnate the Good News by being witnesses and redemptive agents, redeeming every aspect of society.” Evangelists are recruiters to the cause. They are motivational, and seek to see redemption in the lives of many. As leaders, they help the church understand the command to live out the gospel in their communities. Furthermore, they train individuals to tell their testimony to the lost.

Pastors are leaders who are concerned with holistic development of their community. “Pastors help the congregation pursue wholeness and holiness within community through cultivating a life-giving spirituality and helping them embody reconciliation.” Pastors are shepherds who deeply care about the holistic development of their community. This is what many think of when they hear the word “pastor”. Pastors are nurturers who help individuals experience belongingness in their church or groups. Like a shepherd, these individuals tend the needs of their flocks.

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311 Ibid., 227.


Finally, teachers are individuals who train people to study Scripture. “Teachers help the congregation to inhabit the sacred text by encouraging the community to immerse herself in Scripture and live faithfully in God’s story.” Furthermore, teachers “have the supernatural, God-given ability to teach the principles and doctrine of God in a life-giving way that can easily be understood and applied to everyday life.” Teachers have a unique ability to reveal the light of Scripture into the lives of the “average” church member. These individuals study the Scripture and enjoy training others to do the same.

In a fivefold leadership structure the five leaders submit themselves to Jesus. This is noted in Ephesians 4. Under His leadership, they use their gifts to unite and mature the body in their faith. One can see how this leadership structure is effective. Churches primarily take on the personality of their leader. For instance, if a leader were a gifted evangelist, the church would emulate that personality. They would become evangelistic, but the church may not be able to create an environment where holistic healing could occur. This is because the leader is not a gifted pastor, but evangelist. The five-fold leadership structure helps develop a healthy church. The apostle awakens the church to fulfill the mission, prophets challenge the church to become obedient to the Word, evangelists train the church on how to witness to the lost, pastors help create caring communities, and teachers encourage the body to engage with Scripture. Working together, they provide leadership, equip the saints, promote unity, and mature the body.


Missional Group Networks

“The early Christian church is, from the beginning, a movement.”\textsuperscript{317} The early church exploded on the scene as a sect of Judaism. On the day of Pentecost, 3,000 individuals were added to the Kingdom of God. People were being added daily, and ultimately, the church began to multiply. As a sect of Judaism, Christianity was not an officially recognized religion by Rome. This, in turn, led to extreme persecution. This is seen throughout the book of Acts and in early Christian literature. As a result, the early Christian church was forced to meet in homes. Though they met in homes in small gatherings, they fulfilled the Great Commission regardless of the consequences. Interestingly, “the early church was largely an urban movement that won the people of the Roman cities to Christ.”\textsuperscript{318}

These small gatherings in the Early Church became missional groups. They loved Jesus, fulfilled the Great Commission, and engaged in holistic community. Likewise, as noted above, the majority of churches in a Church Planting Movement are house churches. “Currently around the globe, explosive Christian conversion growth from church planting movements is characterized by the reproduction of multiplying house churches and cell groups no more than 10-30 people.”\textsuperscript{319} This is the model that will be used in this movement. The five teams launching in five cities will plant house churches. Where will they plant these house churches? Anywhere and everywhere is a viable location. Homes, cafes, neighborhoods, apartment complexes, work settings, and educational institutions should all be considered a place to plant a house church.


Another name that can be given to these groups is missional communities. What exactly is a missional community? “A missional community is a group of people who are devoted to Jesus, to one another, and to their neighbors and city! They are disciples of Jesus who are committed to making more disciple of Jesus!” These missional communities are vastly different than the traditional church that individuals know in America. “Though it contains the DNA of the movement that Jesus founded, its expression is different than the institutional church that has develop over the centuries.” Those involved in missional communities think differently than those involved with the institutional church. They do not believe they are church members. They believe they are missionaries.

Missionaries understand their calling is to immerse themselves into a culture, learn about the people group, and ultimately, contextualize the gospel into said culture. Those involved in the movement must understand they are missionaries in the world, as the world is not their home. “The life of the church is defined by a sojourn through this world toward the promised future of God, living in the world but never making the world its home.” Missional people understand they are not of this world and they are called to live as missionaries in their neighborhoods.

As these missional communities multiply, leaders must ensure a network is built. Missional communities cannot act as independent agents. Communities that act as independent groups can become prone to heretical teachings. Leaders who are not held accountable have a

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greater chance of teaching heresy than those who are held accountable. Likewise, groups who are not in a network have a greater chance of isolating themselves from biblical community.

**Missional Movement Projections**

“We certainly need to think of the church more as an exponential people movement involving all of God’s people and not an institution run by religious professionals offering different brands of religious goods and services.”\textsuperscript{323} To reach the Missional Movement level, leaders need to think in terms of exponential growth. The traditional “church playbook” American churches have been using must be discarded. The Missional Movement cannot continue to use the same playbook, because the current playbook has lead Christianity down a Christendom path. This type of paradigm has not been created or sustained in 150 years in America. The table below details the Missional Movement plan designed to reach America in approximately 15 years.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>People</th>
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<th>Groups</th>
<th>People</th>
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<td>15</td>
<td>38,263,752</td>
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</tbody>
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This Missional Movement projection is based upon exponential growth. The kind of movement that was seen in the Early Church and in China today. The eight teams will multiply

themselves by three groups by the second year. Each group will have an average of twenty
people living on mission in these missional communities. Every group launched will be
expected to launch three new groups each year. This will ensure groups stay between 15-25
people and that they remain on mission. Theoretically speaking, approximately 38 million
groups will be started with almost 765 million people involved. Practically speaking, this will
not occur. Ying Kai led a Church Planting Movement that saw 175,000 churches planted and
1.75 million individuals saved and baptized within 10 years in China. During this time, Kai
realized only twenty percent of individuals involved in a movement are fruitful for the
Kingdom. 324 If this percentage were applied to the table above this, would mean 7,652,750
groups would be started, and 153,055,008 people would be involved. This type of exponential
growth has yet to be observed in America.

Multiplication occurs quickly. To ensure multiplication occurs, individuals will be
trained in prayer and Luke 10 journeys. Prayer journeys are exactly what they sound like:
individuals will go into their communities and pray. However, these prayer journeys will seek to
break demonic strongholds. Each person will be trained on how to pray for this type of
breakthrough. The ultimate goal is for demonic strongholds to collapse and for the Gospel to
replace the darkness.

Luke 10 journeys will also be implemented in communities. People will be trained on
what the disciples did in Luke 10. Their goal is to meet people of peace. These individuals are
open to Gospel conversations. Ultimately, the aim is for people of peace to accept Jesus and
become a missional community leader in their neighborhood. These individuals will be charged
with fulfilling the Great Commission in their families, neighbors, and communities.

324 Steve Smith and Ying Kai, T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution, (Monument, CO: WIGTake Resources,
2011), 111.
Five-fold leadership will be needed to create and sustain a movement of this size. A movement of this magnitude will spread beyond the cities in which they started. As families move, young adults graduate from college, and interns accept jobs elsewhere, the movement will spread across the country and ultimately the globe. These communities will need apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to carry the mission forward in a healthy manner.

CONCLUSION

Missional Movements are movements inspired by the Holy Spirit. There is nothing man-made about these movements. For these movements to exist there must be an atmosphere of prayer, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, and biblical leadership. Within a Missional Movement are missional communities who love Jesus, fulfill the Great Commission, and engage in holistic community. A Missional Movement can be achieved in America, but it will take a radical reimaging of the church. This can be accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit. Through His leading alone, millions can rapidly come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior.
Appendix A

Missional Movement Survey

Question #1: What position do you hold in your church? (Please select all that apply)

- Pastor
- Deacon
- Small Group Leader
- Adult Sunday School Teacher
- Youth Leader
- Children’s Leader
- None
- Other (Please fill in answer)

Question #2: How many Christians are you currently discipling, helping them to become more like Jesus?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5+

Question #3: How many non-Christians are you engaging in relationships with for the goal of introducing them to Jesus?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5+

Question #4: Do the majority of events/programs you attend occur within the church building or in the community?

- Church Building
- Community

Question #5: How many community activities do you attend in a given year?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5+
Question #6: Which of the following statements is most accurate?

- Jesus determined the Mission, and the Mission determines the Church
- Jesus determined the Church, and the Church determines the Mission

Question #7: Why did you select your answer in the previous question?

- Open ended question

Question #8: Is one of the primary missions of your church or small group to make disciples?

- Yes
- No

Question #9: What type of leadership structure does your church have?

- Senior Pastor with paid support staff
- Single Pastor with volunteers filling positions such as deacons, trustees, etc.
- Multiple Elders that lead collaboratively

Question #10: Does your church or small group equip you to reach your full potential?

- Yes
- No

Question #11: Which statement best describes your church?

- We are in survival mode
- Our primary focus is on evangelism
- All of our success is measured in our programs and activities
- Success is measured by disciples made according to the Great Commission

Question #12: Are you currently involved in a small group?

- Yes
- No

Question #13: How is discipleship primary being accomplished in your church?

- From the pulpit
- Classroom driven – e.g. Sunday School
- Small groups
- Small groups that include mentorship and apprenticeship
Question #14: Do you believe discipleship is important to the future of the American Church?

- Yes
- No

Question #15: Why did you select your answer in the previous question?

- Open ended question

Question #16: Do you believe you are a missionary in and for your community?

- Yes
- No

Question #17: Why did you select your answer in the previous question?

- Open ended question
Appendix B

IRB Approval

Dear Bradley Milks,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participant research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
(i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please retain this letter for your records. Also, if you are conducting research as part of the requirements for a master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation, this approval letter should be included as an appendix to your completed thesis or dissertation.

Your IRB-approved, stamped consent form is also attached. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP  Administrative Chair of Institutional Research   The Graduate School

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