

# Ministry Focus Paper Approval Sheet

This ministry focus paper entitled

MISSIONAL SMALL GROUPS: DEVELOPING LEADERS TO REVOLUTIONIZE  
VALLEY FELLOWSHIP CHURCH OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

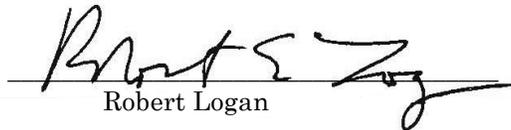
Written by

KURT KING

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upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:

  
Robert Logan

  
Kurt Fredrickson

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MISSIONAL SMALL GROUPS: DEVELOPING LEADERS TO REVOLUTIONIZE  
VALLEY FELLOWSHIP CHURCH OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

A DOCTORAL PROJECT PAPER  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE  
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BY

KURT KING  
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## ABSTRACT

### **Missional Small Groups: Developing Leaders to Revolutionize Valley Fellowship Church of Seventh-day Adventists**

Kurt King

Doctor of Ministry

School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary

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The goal of this study was to explore development and reproduction of missional small groups by concentrating on leadership. Using a template created by Dr. Robert Logan, leadership for the missional small groups will identify, recruit, and equip apprentice leaders. Through this template Valley Fellowship Church will become missional and this will lead to a revitalization of the church and the community.

Valley Fellowship is in the community of Rialto, in a section that does not reflect the church. The congregation is mostly African American while the community which surrounds it is mostly Hispanic. The challenge is how to minister in a community that does not reflect the congregation. The first part of the project deals with the context of the church and how it can minister to its community. The second part delves into the biblical foundations of what it means to be missional by studying the theology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and how the black church looks at mission. There is also a biblical study of *missio Dei*, which is incarnational in its approach. The third part shows the goals and strategies of being a missional church.

Changing Valley Fellowship to a missional outlook will be time consuming. To change the culture from its current attractional mode will involve recruiting people who believe in being incarnational. These will also be people who have influence with individuals in their communities. After identifying people to lead the missional small groups, next will be to show them the benefits of leading and how to proceed, and how to find apprentices who can walk along with them in this process. Reproduction will occur when there is multiplication of the groups.

Content Reader: Robert Logan, PhD

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PART ONE  
MINISTRY CONTEXT

## INTRODUCTION

“It’s not about you.”<sup>1</sup> This is the beginning of Rick Warren’s book, *The Purpose Driven Life*. I grew up listening to many sermons that dealt with my purpose in life and the purpose of the church. The purpose of life is to be servants, to minister to society. What Christians proclaim does not always align with how they act. Living out the Great Commission can be hard.

Many churches are dying, because members’ schedules are packed with activities that do not focus on making disciples. Warren notes, “The purpose of your life is far greater than your own personal fulfillment, your peace of mind, or even your happiness. It’s far greater than your family, your career, or even your wildest dreams and ambitions. If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must begin with God. You were born by his purpose for his purpose.”<sup>2</sup> Our purpose begins with God and his mission, but the American dream does not always reconcile with God’s dream for us. Part of being a Christian is reconciling God’s dream for us with doing our own will.

Since people have families and need to work to provide for their families, church often gets pushed to the side. Based upon her research, Jean Twenge, in her book, *Generation Me*, points out, “Church attendance across all faiths has declined 30% since the 1950s, and about half the decline occurred since the 1980s.”<sup>3</sup> In his book, *Exponential*, Dave Ferguson writes, “Today, fewer than 20 percent of Americans attend

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<sup>1</sup> Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life: What On Earth Am I Here For?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 17.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Jean M. Twenge, *Generation Me: Why Today’s Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled and More Miserable Than Ever Before* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 34.

church regularly, and only 22 percent have a positive view of church.”<sup>4</sup> The Church needs to do something to be revitalized.

This revitalization occurs when Christians’ lives are focused on mission. Christians are called to be missional. In the book, *Thin Places*, John Huckins notes, “‘Missional’ is simply a description of a people or movement committed to advancing and participating in the *missio Dei*. It is a people choosing to extend, engage, and invite others into the story of God.”<sup>5</sup> *Missio Dei* is a Latin theological term that means the mission of God. The difficulty is how to make disciples missional, when most parishioners are busy trying to keep up with their schedules.

Even though Jesus had a very busy life, he did not want his disciples to burn out. He taught them that ministry was their life’s work. He has laid upon Christians today the same mandate he gave his disciples. Christians are disciples whose life work is the mission of God. Reggie McNeal makes the point, “Missional is a way of living, not an affiliation or activity.”<sup>6</sup> The conundrum for Christians is how to live their lives and still participate in the mission of God. Christians should center their lives on God’s mission. No matter what one’s occupation, every Christian is a minister. Every Christian is to be disciplined while also discipling others, and all are called to be disciple makers within the daily rhythms of life.

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<sup>4</sup> Dave Ferguson and Jon Ferguson, *Exponential: How to Accomplish the Jesus Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 143.

<sup>5</sup> John Huckins, *Thin Places: Six Postures For Creating and Practicing Missional Community* (Kansas City: The House Studio, 2012), 18.

<sup>6</sup> Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scoreboard for the Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), xiv.

Small groups are an asset, but can also be considered just another activity on the schedule. Individuals make decisions as to whether small groups can help them in their spiritual lives. The usual small group meeting consists of prayer, Bible study, and building relationships, based on developing a relationship with God and each other. From time to time, there may be an outreach activity the small group will do together. The weakness of small groups is that they compete with other activities. With small groups competing, the goal of many small group leaders becomes attracting members by appealing to their preferences.

Small groups focus on bringing people together to be encouraged and supported. These groups are helpful in forming relationships within the church. But the Great Commission says, “Go make disciples” (Mt 28:19–20).<sup>7</sup> In Christian’s lives, making disciples and centering their lives on mission is imperative.

This project is about missional small groups. These may resemble traditional small groups, but they are oriented differently. In the book, *Missional Small Groups*, M. Scott Boren states that missional small groups are about more than a “huddle and cuddle Bible study that is part of my church experience.”<sup>8</sup> Traditional small groups are oriented toward members growing together to encourage one another to live out the mission of God in their daily lives and context.

Missional small groups are about focusing the attention of members on the rhythms in their lives, as people seek to be disciple makers. The true mission of the Christian Church is to be a people who are sent by God to the world. As a result of being

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<sup>7</sup> All Scripture quoted is from the New International Version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>8</sup> M. Scott Boren, *Missional Small Groups: Becoming a Community That Makes a Difference in the World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010), 11.

sent, Christians are to transform the community they are a part of through the power of the Holy Spirit. Even though missional small groups may mirror some of the activities of traditional small groups, they are about orienting the Christian's life around mission.

Missional small groups equip the saints for ministry, by keeping the focus on touching the lives of the people around them. They are operating within the culture, and mission is front and center. The group keeps each other accountable, as the Bible describes "iron sharpening iron" (Prv 27:17).

### **Valley Fellowship Church of Seventh-day Adventists**

The Valley Fellowship Church of Seventh-day Adventists (hereafter Valley Fellowship) is located in Rialto, California. It originated in San Bernardino and moved to its present location in 1990. The church was officially organized in 1972, as a church plant of the Campus Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church in Loma Linda, California. The church experienced enormous growth, which precipitated the move to Rialto. At one time, the attendance was over 700, but now attendance averages 105. Since I became the pastor in 2008, the congregation has dropped from 150 people on a given Sabbath to around 105. This meager attendance is upsetting to members, since the seating capacity of the building is around 400.

Valley Fellowship has become inwardly focused. It grew because it attracted people to its worship and ministries which were different from other Adventist churches in the area. What attracted people from all over Southern California and the country is not occurring now, which leaves the church looking for new ways to set their ministry apart from other churches in the area.

Members attend Sabbath services on Saturday because of the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, believing that the fourth commandment refers to Saturday. Due to the commute members make to Rialto and their schedules, there is little time for extra activities. Participating in the nominating committee, the group that names and votes the lay officers for the year, can be very frustrating because it is difficult to get people to participate in the life of the church. In my experience, if I have to cajole people into serving they do not approach their responsibility willingly.

Missional small groups are a way to focus the members of Valley Fellowship on doing ministry in the community, instead of doing programs to attract people. The goal is to have them focus on being missional in the communities where they live, and in the city of Rialto. Members will be part of a group that flows according to the rhythms of their lives, making disciples with people they meet in daily life. This may dissipate some of the complexity of trying to serve on many church committees.

For a shift to take place in any organization, there need to be leaders. Through the years, the church has gone through many changes. Some changes are easier to adopt than others. The health of a church is tested when a church goes through the process of change. The *Oxford American Dictionary* defines change as “to make or become different.”<sup>9</sup> It helps when the pastor is knowledgeable in how to lead a congregation through change, because the ability to accomplish change will determine the difference the church will make in the community.

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<sup>9</sup> *Oxford American Dictionary* (New York: Avon Books, 1980), s.v. “Change.”

To move Valley Fellowship from an event-driven church to a missionally oriented church, leadership is important. This means focusing on those who will lead the missional small groups. Developing leaders is challenging. In the book *From Followers to Leaders*, Robert Logan states,

The need is not simply for more leaders, but also for better leaders: for leaders who are developed out of holistic life change, leaders who are connected with God, growing in intimacy, living out their calling, using their God-given gifts, investing in healthy relationships with others. Leaders who are deeply impacted by God are able to facilitate holistic, meaningful life change in others.<sup>10</sup>

Leadership is an integral part of moving the mission of the church forward. These are the people who will embody what it is to be missional as the members seek to make disciples.

For Valley Fellowship to move to missional small groups, the leaders have to be equipped. Jesus equipped his disciples by taking them along with him on his journeys, so they could see how he operated, and they ministered by his side. The disciples made mistakes but it helped in their development.

To develop leaders, they have to be identified, recruited, and equipped for leadership. The temptation most leaders face in recruiting leaders is to look among the crowd in the church. One way to identify people for missional small groups is to find people who are not tied to what was done in the past. Those who have influence with people outside the church can also be recruited. For those who are identified as possible leaders of missional small groups, clarity about vision and expectations is necessary.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Once people have signed up to be leaders, they are to be equipped (Eph 4:11). Most of the time when I was trained, it was in a classroom setting, sometimes with role playing for different scenarios. However, the most valuable training occurs when a person gets to actually *do* what he or she is training for. My father who is a pastor took me on hospital visits to visit members when I was in college. I was able to ask questions later and take the lead on some of the visits. It was valuable experience. The best training to be a leader is practice with an experienced person.

The purpose of this doctoral project is to examine factors that will help to develop reproducing missional small groups, by identifying, recruiting, and equipping new leaders for the revitalization of Valley Fellowship. Missional small groups are a way for members to share life together, but the groups are geared toward making disciples. To grow as disciples is not just about studying together, but doing life and mission together, encouraging each other along life's journey, and having a group of committed people who are supportive along the way. Instead of hiring people to conduct Bible studies to get people into the church, it is important that everyone be involved so unchurched people can get a close up view of what Christians look like.

For missional small groups to be successful at Valley Fellowship, it is important to have the right leaders in place. Development of these leaders needs to be intentional. Valley Fellowship should focus on people reaching others within their own sphere of influence: their neighbors, friends, and acquaintances around town.

For missional small groups to spread, reproduction is key. To reproduce small groups, the leaders need to coach other people in starting new groups. Revitalizing Valley

Fellowship is not only about more people attending worship services, but growing people who are excited about the mission of making disciples throughout Rialto and the world.

The first chapter of this project deals with the context in which Valley Fellowship exists. As a predominantly black church, in a city where the majority are Hispanic, it is important not only to reach those who are black, but also to reach those who live in the area surrounding the church. The church needs to learn how to understand different cultures and how to reach them with the gospel. This chapter deals with how the church can minister to a city whose demographics it does not reflect.

The next chapter is a literature review of books that deal with being missional within the context of being Seventh-day Adventist and African American. The subjects that will be dealt with include the black and Adventist churches and how they shape mission. Followed by the theology of mission in the Adventist Church, a study of its foundations will be made. The literature review tackles how African American churches should address personal piety and social justice. African American churches view mission through different lenses, as they seek justice for those who are less fortunate. Finally, there is a review of a book that deals with a theological understanding of how culture is shaped and informs the missional movement.

The theology chapter delves into the theological foundations of missional leadership and church and of the *missio Dei*. This chapter examines the Bible to discover how Jesus ministered to the people of his day, through looking at stories of his time on earth. This chapter also develops a theology of mission and what it means to be missional for Christianity in general and the North American Seventh-day Adventist Church more specifically.

Chapter 4 describes the practice of creating missional small groups at Valley Fellowship. A ministry plan lays out goals and strategies that target the church and the surrounding area. A process based on practical training is formulated for developing leaders within the context of missional groups.

Chapter 5 deals with how to create a missional leadership team that is reproducible. For that to happen, the process needs to be intentional. Through the identification, recruitment, and equipping of leaders, these groups will spread throughout the church and community of Rialto to change society. A description of the pilot project is given in summary form to show an overarching view of the project. Then the chapter gives a timeline, and a plan to develop the leaders and resources needed to accomplish the project.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO VALLEY FELLOWSHIP CHURCH IN RIALTO

Churches usually approach ministry based on where they are located. For churches to be able to make a difference, they must be aware of the values of the surrounding community. Jesus ministered to those in Galilee based on their needs, and approached Samaritans differently than Jews. This chapter focuses on the ministry context of Valley Fellowship, and how its location affects its ministry to those around them.

Valley Fellowship first started in San Bernardino, but in 1991 moved to Rialto, which is nestled between Fontana and San Bernardino, California. It is sixty miles east of Los Angeles, and about one hundred miles north of San Diego. It lies at the foot of the San Bernardino Mountains.

Rialto sits along the 10 Freeway, which connects the west and east coasts. It makes the transportation of goods accessible to major ports in the Long Beach area. Gasoline and distribution centers such as FedEx are located just south of the 10 Freeway. The town is four miles wide and eight and a half miles long. There is not much space to expand, and people often commute to work.

## Population

The population of Rialto has grown despite the landmass of the city being limited. Here families can raise their children and be relatively safe. The city of over 100,000 inhabitants is predominantly Hispanic, at 69.7 percent.<sup>1</sup> According to research done by the Precept Group, the projection is for the Hispanic population in Rialto to grow to 75.9 percent by 2017, while other racial categories decline.<sup>2</sup> The city's African American makeup is 14.6 percent. The percentage of white residents is 11.3 percent and the percentage of Asian/other residents is 4.4 percent.<sup>3</sup>

Valley Fellowship is a predominantly African American church with a small Hispanic group that speaks mostly Spanish. Even though African Americans in Rialto make up the second largest racial category, according to estimates the African American population may decline to 11.8 percent by 2017, and is to go down to 8.3 percent for white residents and Asian/other to 4 percent.<sup>4</sup>

Rialto does not appear to be a city where people retire. Growing families make up 56.9 percent of the residents of Rialto.<sup>5</sup> There is a population that speaks Spanish in their homes and is not fluent in English. Churches that connect with the community must deal with that language barrier. Since Valley Fellowship exists among a predominantly

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Census for Rialto, Ca.*, accessed November 22, 2015, <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045214/0660466,00>.

<sup>2</sup> Precept Group, *Ministry Area Profile 2012: Prepared for Valley Fellowship SDA Church* (Rancho Santa Margarita, CA: Precept Group, 2012), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 9.

Hispanic population, the church can minister to this group using small groups to develop relationships with those who speak Spanish.

Rialto is known as a middle-class city. Rialto's neighbor San Bernardino is one of the cities that have filed for bankruptcy in the state of California, but Rialto is running at a surplus. It has kept its financial house in order, but issues that face the city of San Bernardino spill over into Rialto, so at times homeless people find places to sleep on the property of Valley Fellowship. Copper was stolen from the air conditioning units at the church, and since 2008 it has been broken into twice.

The best predictor for income is what people have accomplished in their educational pursuits. For people age twenty-five and over 16 percent did less than nine years of school. The report says 17.4 percent did some high school and 28.8 percent graduated from high school. Also, 22.3 percent attended some college. Statistics show that 6.3 percent completed their associate degree, 6.5 percent finished their bachelor's degree, and only 2.7 percent finished a graduate degree.<sup>6</sup> Many living in Rialto do not have college degrees.

At Valley Fellowship over 30 percent have graduate degrees. When combined with those who have graduated with their bachelor degrees the percentages are over 60 percent. If members have not attained a bachelor's degree they are often in school to complete their degrees. These statistics color how a church with educated people can build relationships in a community that does not match its educational pursuits.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 8.

The better and more established jobs are in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Many have made the decision to raise their families in the Inland Empire and drive into Los Angeles to work. Getting to businesses and jobs in the Inland Empire requires a lot of driving, making it more difficult for sharing one's faith. Missional living is people living out their mission in the rhythms of life.<sup>7</sup> Churches have had programs that cater to different aspects of Christian life, and in the recent past many church members spent much of their free time at church, but the days of spending free time at church are fading. Since people are traveling a lot, missional ministry has to take place in the community.

Most people living in Rialto have a fifteen- to forty-minute commute.<sup>8</sup> Over 75 percent of those driving are doing it alone. Since the city does not have a large landmass, most people work outside the city of Rialto. Most men living in Rialto work in transportation and warehousing, followed by the retail trade; third and fourth is manufacturing and construction.<sup>9</sup> Many women who live in Rialto work in the health care and social assistance industries, followed by retail trades; third and fourth are educational services and accommodations and food services.<sup>10</sup>

A few members of the Valley Fellowship Church work in Orange County. Most of the members who live within Rialto work in neighboring cities. There are a lot of Seventh-day Adventists who work for the university and hospital in the Loma Linda area.

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<sup>7</sup> Boren, *Missional Small Groups*, 28.

<sup>8</sup> *Rialto, Ca.*, City Data, accessed October 11, 2015, <http://www.city-data.com/city/Rialto-California.html>.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

Loma Linda University is a medical educational institution; it also has a hospital that leads the area in medical care. Within the Adventist community, many people who attend churches in the area work in Loma Linda, which puts the focus of activity outside of Rialto.

### **Valley Fellowship Church of Seventh-day Adventists**

Valley Fellowship started in San Bernardino in the early 1970s. The Campus Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church, located on the campus of Loma Linda University, wanted to start a church in San Bernardino. Campus Hill is a predominantly Caucasian church, and the church sent one of its pastors into the San Bernardino area to start a church. Valley Fellowship was started with a Caucasian pastor and some African American families who were worshipping in one of their homes.

Some of these families were members of the K Street Church which is now the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Seventh-day Adventist Church in San Bernardino. In 1972, these families, along with a few others, became the Valley Fellowship Church. According to the history of the church, they ministered to the needs of “the community by providing childcare, legal aide, a medical clinic, a community garden, and a flourishing spiritual family of community members and Loma Linda students.”<sup>11</sup> Valley Fellowship was known as a church where relationships were important.

In the late 1980s a young man became pastor of the church. He listened to some of his younger members, who were of the same mindset when it came to worship. Through powerful preaching and worship the church grew twofold. Before the arrival of

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<sup>11</sup> Valley Fellowship Church. “*History of Valley Fellowship.*” <http://valleyfellowship.com/about.aspx> (accessed November 22, 2015).

this pastor, the church was in the middle of a building program, and now the need for a bigger facility became urgent. After much prayer and searching, a property was identified in the heart of Rialto. That meant the church would be moving from San Bernardino where it had been operating since the 1970s. Valley Fellowship bought the former Sunrise Church in 1991. The church had room for a school, and the sanctuary seated around seven hundred. Most of the congregation was excited to see what the Lord was doing, but there were a few that felt called to continue ministry in San Bernardino. This first split was the genesis of the San Bernardino Community Church of Seventh-day Adventists.

Valley Fellowship was growing in a way that was familiar to those within Adventist circles. The pastor was serious about baptisms but most of the people who joined Valley Fellowship were transferring from other churches. The normal Sabbath attendance was 700 to 800 people. When the pastor took a call to another church, little by little people started to move on to other churches.

Various groups have left to start new ministries. Besides the original split from a group of members staying in San Bernardino, one of the associate pastors wanted to start a church and took a few people with him, then one of the senior pastors took forty to fifty members to start another church elsewhere. Even though these can be seen as church planting, the majority of the membership looked at these as church splits which hurt the morale of the church. These events had a negative effect on the church culture for years to come.

Culture of any church is important to its life and vitality. Organizational culture is considered the personality of the church.<sup>12</sup> Culture is like gravity: it cannot be seen, but the effects are seen. Samuel Chand in *Cracking Your Church's Culture Code* says, "Culture, not vision or strategy is the most powerful factor in any organization. It determines the receptivity of staff and volunteers to new ideas, unleashes or dampens creativity, builds or erodes enthusiasm, and creates a sense of pride or deep discouragement about working or being involved there."<sup>13</sup>

The most valuable asset in any organization is the people. People make the church run. If they are not unified in purpose and mission, it is difficult for the church to accomplish the work of Christ. The culture of the church determines how people work together within the church. For change to take place, there needs to be a healthy culture where people respect one another and are willing to work in an atmosphere of trust. To be a community that trusts one another there must be honesty among the people.<sup>14</sup> To have the momentum and success necessary to move the church forward, the culture needs to be analyzed and addressed.

Achieving a healthy culture does not happen quickly. At Valley Fellowship the leadership seeks to be unified in purpose. Valley has been effective at hosting events for the church and community. There is an annual Black History Celebration every February at the church, where the African American, Caribbean, and African cultures are

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<sup>12</sup> Samuel R. Chand, *Cracking Your Church's Culture Code: Seven Keys to Unleashing Vision and Inspiration* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011), Kindle e-book: chap. 1, loc. 206.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., loc. 185.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., loc. 253.

celebrated. Members invite their friends and coworkers to the church to enjoy the music, history, preaching, and food.

There are also events for the community like the Back to School Bash, where the community services department joins forces with the California First Five Program, to provide supplies for the children in the neighborhood. The church has also held Harvest Festivals around the weekend of Halloween. People have enjoyed these initiatives over the years, and the church membership is gifted in executing these events.

One of the weaknesses of the congregation is the sense of community within the church body. Some of the members live a distance from the church, and everyone's work schedule varies from working days to working nights. Many people do not gather together during the week at the church. For the first few years of my tenure as pastor, there was a prayer meeting every Wednesday evening, but usually no more than ten people attended. For the past two years, the church has done a program called First Wednesday, when the church meets on the first Wednesday of every month, and the attendance has grown slightly.

People are close with their friends, but it is hard for new people to become connected, partly because most of the church only meets on Saturday mornings. Consistent community can be addressed through missional small groups, as people gather together to live out the mission of Jesus Christ. In Luke, the Bible refers to sending the seventy-two out to minister and sending everyone two by two. That example shows us that the principle of community is important in carrying out the mission of God.

Bold leadership is needed to change the paradigm from a program model to becoming a missional church. Based on the program model, attendance on Sabbath

morning has been in decline for over thirteen years. Research demonstrates that it takes five to seven years to turn a trajectory around.<sup>15</sup> For this to take place the members would need to be unified on how they were going to proceed.

There is agreement among the members that there needs to be change. Getting the cooperation of the membership was discussed at the board meeting and with the church. In 2015 efforts were focused on making the church a friendlier place. A consistent welcoming process has been attempted, but has not yet become entrenched. There may be church dinners, and a couple of small groups, but there are no church socials.

Another focus the church determined was its children's ministry. It is difficult to find enough committed people, so the burden will not rest on only a few. The children's ministry also lacks consistency. The problem with both initiatives is the lack of leadership development. There are few new families attending the church, so recruitment is not taking place. The church needs to create a culture and process where new people become an integral part of the church. The church also needs to move from a self-preservation mindset to one that seeks to be missional.

In San Bernardino County, there are a lot of needs. People who are in trouble, transition, and tension, are often open to discipling relationships.<sup>16</sup> There are people struggling to make ends meet, and even though the church cannot just give away money to feed people and pay for rent, there are many opportunities to help people. To take advantage of these opportunities there must be consistency and communication with

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<sup>15</sup> Gary L. McIntosh and Charles Arn, *What Every Pastor Should Know: 101 Indispensable Rules of Thumb for Leading Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 234.

<sup>16</sup> Nelson Searcy and Jennifer Dykes Henson, *Ignite: How to Spark Immediate Growth in Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), Nook e-book: chap. 9, loc. 81.

people and entities in the community so authentic relationships can be formed. Jesus genuinely cared for those who followed him, and that is a model that can be emulated in the community of Rialto.

There are many activities that can bring people together. Church is a place to bring people into relationship with God and with others. Luke 10:27 says, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” You start with developing a relationship with God and then extend it to others. People can gather around common interests as they discuss the things of God.

To start missional groups the goal must be clear. Many people think missional groups are to minister to the needs of society and meet people’s needs. That is part of it, but not the main goal. The main goal of missional communities is found in Matthew 28:19 and 20, the Great Commission, where the church is called to make disciples.

Discipling people is best done in the harvest.<sup>17</sup> The harvest is defined as people who are new in following Jesus. Matthew 19:24 talks about those who are rich and how hard it is for them to enter into the kingdom of God. People who are in need are often more open to the gospel, and as they experience Jesus’ love they will begin to want to serve others as he did.

The vision for Valley Fellowship is to use missional groups to create disciple makers. Church members live in various cities of the Inland Empire. Since discipleship is best done in the rhythms of life, trying to force people to travel to connect with people in

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<sup>17</sup> Robert E. Logan and Tara Miller, *From Followers to Leaders: The Path of Leadership Development in the Local Church*. (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources), 2007, 75.

Rialto can be difficult. Discipleship is best done when people can communicate often to form authentic relationships. When people are trying to fit others into their strained lives, discipleship cannot take place.

The goal of this project is to develop missional groups inside and outside of Rialto. The goal will be finding ways to discover and train apprentices who can reproduce missional small groups. These groups will have characteristics in common, like identifying who to pour their lives into, and finding time to teach them the ways of Christ. Each group will be doing different activities, based on the leader and the demographic they are trying to reach. Christian leaders need to know how to serve. That is why Jesus sent out his disciples to make disciples, so they can serve—and thus change—the world around them.

PART TWO  
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW OF MISSION AND THE CHURCH

Theology is the study of God, and people come from different angles as they try to understand a God who is an infinite being. Life experiences shape how people approach the gospel. The missional small groups that are to be formed at Valley Fellowship have a certain foundation that has shaped the church. Valley Fellowship is not only a church that is predominantly minority, but the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a minority denomination in the United States. These two identifiers of Valley Fellowship shape how the missional movement is viewed there.

This review first deals with works related to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, how it looks at mission and how its mission was developed. The common understanding of mission is going to another country to spread the gospel, but mission can take place in people's home country. There is a review of the church's mission to urban centers. Also there is a review of how the black Church looks at mission. After reviewing works that deal with Adventists and African American churches and mission, there is a review of books that deal with small groups and missional community culture.

### *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*

The only creed Seventh-day Adventists hold to is “the Bible, and the Bible alone.”<sup>1</sup> They choose not to have official creeds, but the Church does hold to beliefs found in the Bible. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* is an exposition of major beliefs showing how the Church perceives God.<sup>2</sup> As the Church discusses its doctrinal blueprint, biblical doctrines reveal the character of God and how he chooses to move in human history. Even though humankind cannot comprehend everything about the Godhead, the Church holds the tenets found in the Bible to be true. The Seventh-day Adventist Church continues to study to more fully understand who God is and how he works in our world.

The theme of *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* must be viewed from a prophecy standpoint, because prophecy is the foundational reason the Church exists. The Adventist Church sees itself as the church that keeps the commandments of God and has the testimony of Jesus Christ as stated in the book of Revelation. It believes itself to be the remnant church that has been given the mission found in the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6–12. This doctrinal statement reads,

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His Second Advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> General Conference Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: An Exposition of the Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Boise: Pacific Press, 2005), viii.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., xi.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 181.

The remnant church preaches a message that is to call people out of apostasy to a true worship of God and to prepare everyone for the Second Coming of Jesus. Persecution comes upon the Christian church due to apostasy within the church's ranks. This apostasy is a precursor to Christ's return (2 Thes 2:3–4). The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to warn Christians about this apostasy.

The term “remnant” comes out of Revelation 12:17 and means “remaining ones.”<sup>4</sup> *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* states, “The Bible portrays the remnant as a small group of God's people who, through calamities, wars, and apostasy, remain loyal to God.”<sup>5</sup> The remnant is commissioned by God to speak about his glory and to lead the faithful who are scattered throughout the world to worship him. The editors state, “The prophecies of the book of Revelation clearly outline the mission of the remnant.”<sup>6</sup> Through the proclamation of the three angels' messages found in Revelation 14, the gospel truth will be fully restored.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church's view of prophecy and its role means that every individual believer has a role in carrying out the mission. Robert Logan states in the *Missional Journey*, “The church is to be a place of both gathering and outreach—a place for our own culture and a place for the reaching of other cultures.”<sup>7</sup> The Adventist Church also believes it is a gathering of people that are vital to the spreading of the three

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Logan, *The Missional Journey: Multiplying Disciples and Churches that Transform the World*, (St. Charles, IL: Church Smart Resources, 2013), 57.

angels' messages; Seventh-day Adventists cannot ignore the mandate to reach the world with this message.

The first angel, found in Revelation 14:6-7, signifies the remnant carrying the gospel to the world. The second angel, found in Revelation 14:8, deals with the false teachings of a religious system that it pressures the state to enforce near the end of days.<sup>8</sup> The third angel, found in Revelation 14:9–12, “proclaims God’s most solemn warning against worshiping the beast and his image—which all who reject the gospel of righteousness by faith ultimately will do.”<sup>9</sup> Each member is to warn others against the faulty error being advanced, letting everyone know we can communicate with God without any human intermediary.<sup>10</sup>

The editors go on to state, “God endows the church community with gifts to prepare it to fulfill the mission to the world He has assigned it.”<sup>11</sup> The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts—these cannot be earned, and there are no levels when it comes to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are for spreading the gospel throughout the whole world.

*Seventh-day Adventists Believe* is the theological work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and is very comprehensive. The mission of the church is viewed in light of being the remnant. The editors state, “God had commissioned them to continue

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<sup>8</sup> *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 195.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

the Reformation that had brought so much joy and power to the church.”<sup>12</sup> The foundation of the church has been to preach the three angels’ messages.<sup>13</sup>

*Seventh-day Adventists Believe* is a thorough theological work. It does not address how mission is to be carried out in light of culture, but lays out an approach by which the church looks at mission. This book particularly deals with Christians who are caught up in apostasy, and does not fully address persons who have not yet embraced the gospel. The church does try to engage the unchurched, but the book deals more with people who are living in deception and must be reached.

### ***From the End of the World to the Ends of the Earth***

Christian denominations have Christ as the center, but there are certain differences among them, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church has its differences. In this book, *From the End of the World to the Ends of the Earth*, Stefan Höschele deals with the development of mission within the denomination. The Seventh-day Adventist Church came out of the American Millerite Revival in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup> Its beginning is foundational to who Seventh-day Adventists are, and the development of the Church’s mission. The purpose of this book is to show the development of Seventh-day Adventist missiology. As the church grew, differences in missiological thinking emerged, but throughout history there have been ideas and practices agreed to by the church’s

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Stefan Höschele, *From the End of the World to the Ends of the Earth: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Missiology* (Nurnberg, Germany: Verlag fur theologie und religionswissenschaft, 2004), 9.

thinkers. This book shows how missiological thought has developed throughout the history of the church.<sup>15</sup>

The Seventh-day Adventist Church comes from a particular perspective. Since it started with the Millerite movement, which sought to warn Christians about the Second Coming of Jesus, its mission was unique. Höschele states, “The mission of Millerism was not to preach the gospel to the world but to prepare people for the end.”<sup>16</sup> Miller believed that Jesus would return on October 22, 1844 based on the study of Daniel 8:14. Since the Great Disappointment the mission of the church has adapted to what has happened in the world around it.

The church has tried to balance between the historical theological view of Adventism, and the evangelical view of Adventism. The historical view concentrates on the unique tenants of the faith, and the evangelical view emphasizes the centrality of the cross. Höschele states, “Whatever theological currents one may favour: if the Seventh-day Adventist Church continues to stress its unique theological tenets while being in constant and close contact with the various worlds around it, I believe that it can avoid the dangers of both narrow fundamentalism and loss of identity.”<sup>17</sup> To bring the two sides to a mutual understanding, the church will honor the history of how and why the Seventh-day Adventist Church came into being, with new initiatives to reach the world. The Christian mindset is not a common worldview in today’s society. More than just saying

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 51.

that Jesus is coming, the church must be a part of proclaiming the gospel to those who do not yet know about him.

The major argument of this book is that the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has changed, but that it tries to remain faithful to its past and the counsel of the church's prophet, Ellen G. White. At the beginning, there was no mission of the church because it had a shut door theology. The people of the church believed the door had closed for all who were non-Millerites. This theological stance has changed to the point where the Church now has agencies established by its top administrative body that serve the whole world.

The church has not been keen on the ecumenical movement. Höschele argues the church agrees with most of the Lausanne movement, "that organizational unity may take forms and does not necessarily forward evangelism,"<sup>18</sup> but the Adventist Church does not believe that working closer with other churches will bring forth the accomplishment of worldwide evangelization.<sup>19</sup> Adventists have been uneasy working with churches that do not share their theological views. There are churches that resemble Adventism in Christian lifestyle, but the church is uncomfortable with officially cooperating with other denominations, based on the writings of its early leaders. Due to its eschatological stance that governments will persecute the church, it does not cooperate in most official capacities. All over the world there are hospitals and educational centers that minister to their communities because the Adventist Church has made it a priority to live out their mission separately from other Christian churches.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

The author deals with what the Adventist Church has done as a whole in the advancement of missional understanding. The General Conference, which is the worldwide administrative body of the church, does not limit different regions of the church from developing their own missional understanding for reaching their own constituents. Adventism is global in its reach, but must be able to minister in its local context. The author does not deal with how the mission of the Adventist Church can exhibit unity without showing uniformity, or how the church deals with differing missional understandings that do not conform to established thought within the Adventist Church.

### ***The Divided Mind of the Black Church***

*The Divided Mind of the Black Church* by Raphael G. Warnock looks at the mission of the Church through the eyes of black theology. The black church's mission has been colored by the experience of slavery, Jim Crow, and prejudice. Warnock seeks to clarify what the black church's mission should look like, because there are so many different views of what the black church is and what its mission should be. Theologians, black pastors, and womanist<sup>20</sup> theologians all come from different angles as they encourage the black church to go forward. The reason why the author differentiates womanist theologians from black theologians is because of the difference in their experience. Womanist theology gives emphasis to the black woman's experience,

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<sup>20</sup> "Womanist" is a term Raphael G. Warnock uses to describe a type of theology that focuses on black women's experience.

highlighting new challenges in what the Bible says and how the Christian church operates.

The black church, which rose out of the time of slavery, distinguishes itself from the rest of Christianity with its emphasis on liberation theology.<sup>21</sup> The church has traditionally promoted the individual salvation of souls, but the black church has risen to deal with a social order that skews against the black population. Does the black church emphasize personal salvation or should it deal with the injustices of society? The father of liberation theology, James Cone, identifies liberation as the central message of the Christian church.<sup>22</sup> With black theologians believing liberation is the central message of the church, Warnock deals with the debate between piety and liberation. This analysis cannot be done outside the context of the white evangelical church, which focuses more on piety than political action. The black church sees two sins, the slavery of sin, but also the sin of slavery. The question is, can the church deal with both, or can it only deal with one or the other? The black church pendulum has swung back and forth based on the prevailing needs of the black community.

The author calls for the black church to embrace its unique role in Christendom, which is seen through the eyes of the past and what African American ancestors went through. The church has been operating for far too long with a divided mind, not being clear on the mission of the black church.<sup>23</sup> Black pastors focus in on the piety aspect, the

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<sup>21</sup> Raphael G. Warnock, *The Divided Mind of the Black Church: Theology, Piety and Public Witness* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 75.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

salvation and nurturing of one's soul,<sup>24</sup> while the focus of black theologians is not only on the liberation from sin in an individual's life, but freedom from the ills of a racially and economically unjust society<sup>25</sup> that our society so desperately needs. The author calls for the church to be united in purpose and mission. Warnock points out, "That is why it must be rigorously and lovingly challenged by both its theologians and its pastors to more fully integrate its pietistic and protest dimensions into a more holistic understanding of what it means to truly be a prophetic church and a liberationist community."<sup>26</sup> The church must embrace its role in society to speak for those who do not have a voice. James Cone states that the church has lost its clear voice in society, as the black church has become more political in its social justice.<sup>27</sup> The black church has been called to not only proclaim freedom for those without a voice, but to fight for those with no voice.

The black church has a different lens from the white church. There are institutions that emerged from the white church to racially divide the church. Should black people abandon the call of the black church, or make sure those who do not have a voice have one through the church? Also, many preachers have embraced the theological position of personal prosperity<sup>28</sup> being their right. The black church has lost its way from where it once stood in the community; and it has been looking for ways to recapture what it had been doing, and searching for new ways to make a difference. In the urban centers of the

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 188–89.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 151.

cities, there are those who are still floundering in the land of freedom and opportunity. The black church must continue to move toward the liberation of people from a mindset of poverty.

The scope of this work is to show the dialogue between the theologians and the church when it comes to a balance of piety and liberation. Theologians come from different perspectives than people who are in the trenches. Warnock states, “The more the traditions lean toward conservative and evangelical perspectives, the more the missional emphasis is on evangelism. The more the traditions lean toward mainline and liberal perspectives, the more the emphasis is on justice and the betterment of society.”<sup>29</sup> The reconciliation of the two ideologies can be difficult to bring together. Due to the theological foundations of black theologians, embracing a different perspective needs to be fleshed out for the balance the author proposes to take place. A proper dialogue cannot take place for mission to move forward if people do not understand each other’s perspective.

### ***The Post-Black and Post-White Church***

Efrem Smith, in the book *The Post-Black and Post-White Church*, deals with the mission of the church in a multi-ethnic society. The standard for a multiracial congregation is that no one racial group should account for more than 80 percent of the membership.<sup>30</sup> With this low threshold, the number of multiracial churches in America

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<sup>29</sup> Rick Richardson, “Emerging Missional Movements: An Overview and Assessment of Some Implications for Mission(s),” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 37.3 (July 2013): 132.

<sup>30</sup> Efrem Smith, *The Post-Black and Post-White Church: Becoming the Beloved Community in a Multi-Ethnic World* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2012), xx.

has not risen. Work and educational environments may have diversified, but the American church has remained divided. It would seem the church is more focused on preferences than the purpose God has given it.

The focus in this book is for churches to become places where all races and cultures can disciple themselves and others. Throughout the book a biblical foundation is established for the revitalization of multi-ethnic missional churches.<sup>31</sup> The author draws from the mandate made by Martin Luther King, Jr. that there be “beloved communities,” places where there is an intimate relationship with Christ and one another, and the church has the ability to advance the kingdom of God.<sup>32</sup> Smith makes a case for the church to tackle the difficult subject of race in America as they seek to become missional. For the church to reflect the kingdom of God, it must deal with the sin of slavery that has cast a shadow over American society. For too long the church has remained timid about addressing race; both black and white leadership are not being prophetic in calling the church to a higher standard.

To create a post-black and post-white church, the argument has always been that one or the other has to give up who they are in order to mix well. Since African Americans are a minority race in America, in a multi-ethnic church other groups assimilate to the dominant group.<sup>33</sup> This causes disappointment in the African American community since the dominant culture may not even be aware of it, but in a multi-ethnic

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 21.

experience, the issue is not about assimilating. All members bring their unique ethnic and cultural gifts and experiences to share with each other for the glory of God.<sup>34</sup> In a culture that is intentional, authentic relationships must not be an accident, but there must be planning to bring about and nurture these important relationships.<sup>35</sup>

For the church to move to a post-white church, the pastor must start the uncomfortable dialogue about race and embracing of all cultures within the church. My experience has been that most white pastors are willing to have the conversation but do not know where to start. They are waiting for direction on how to start the conversation without offending their African American colleagues.

Within the Adventist context, I have witnessed black leaders who want their white counterparts to talk about what the white church has done wrong. Most African American leaders have made the point that they did not choose to be divided; they were not welcomed in the church and were told to start a new one. A good step to help the white church move forward would be to look at their past as immigrants to this country. When their parents or grandparents entered the country, they were looked down on by other nationalities and had to fight to find significance and acceptance.

Even though there is no black Adventist denomination, there are administrative wings within the church that are predominantly African American. The reason why they exist was the discrimination that the members faced.<sup>36</sup> The historical accounts show a

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>36</sup> Delbert Baker, "Regional Conferences: 50 Years of Progress," *Adventist Review* (November 1995), 12.

discussion that involved total integration, the status quo, or black conferences. The Adventist denomination decided it was best to start black conferences, so it could further the work among the black demographic.<sup>37</sup>

To lead a multi-ethnic and missional church, spiritual health and leadership development are important.<sup>38</sup> Leadership has often been timid in tackling this subject due to blind spots or the dark side leaders have within themselves.<sup>39</sup> By being too busy there is no time for reflection to deal with the hurts and pains that have shaped people. To move the church to a multi-ethnic missional church, the issue of what lies in leaders' souls should be addressed.

It does not take much to be considered a multi-ethnic church, as the author states. He does a good job of defining the objective. Racial diversification cannot be relegated to static definitions but needs to move to dynamic processes.<sup>40</sup> An example of a dynamic process is dealing with issues of power and authority. When one is the founder of a church, that person is the accepted leader. In the Adventist context, the leader is assigned to the church. To move the church into a multi-ethnic missional movement, decision-making power is with the point leader in a process where input from different leaders within the system is accepted. The progression to a multi-ethnic church is easier when the

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>38</sup> Smith, *The Post-Black and the Post-White Church*, 148.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>40</sup> Gerardo Marti, "Conceptual Pathways to Ethnic Transcendence in Diverse Churches: Theoretical Reflections on the Achievement of Successfully Integrated Congregations," *Religions* 6.3 (2015), 1048.

point person is the one who brought the leadership together because they embody the vision. It does not work when the leader has not earned the trust of the people.

***Reaching the City: Reflections on Urban Mission for the Twenty-First Century***

In *Reaching the City: Reflections on Urban Mission for the Twenty-First Century*, several authors express how to accomplish the mission in a world that is rapidly becoming urbanized and globalized. In July of 2007, the United Nations Population Fund reported that more than half of the world's 6.6 billion souls live in cities.<sup>41</sup> People are living in urban centers all around the world, where they are looking for jobs and upward mobility in lifestyle. What they encounter is social issues and the question of how to make ends meet. How to disciple these people is the challenge that has come to the forefront for all of Christianity.

This book discusses how to reach cities all over the world for Christ. There are missiological and practical insights for engaging the twenty-first century city. A disconnect exists between Christians and the culture of the people who live in cities. Most Christians look for opportunities to get out of the cities, but if the church is to be missional, it needs to engage on a practical level with how to reach people right where they are.

The position of Alan McMahan is that for too long the focus of the gospel has been more suited for rural and suburban people groups, instead of the urban centers of North America and the world.<sup>42</sup> For too long mission leadership has trained people to

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<sup>41</sup> Gary Fujino, Timothy R. Sisk, and Tereso C. Casiño, *Reaching the City: Reflecting on Urban Mission for the Twenty-first Century* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2012), xii.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

minister overseas, while many people in the cities do not know Jesus. The landscape of the North American city is changing due to people groups that do not know Christ moving into them.

Cities are growing faster than Christian leadership realizes.<sup>43</sup> Seminaries are not dealing with the realities that ministers and ministries need in order to deal with the social aspects of the city.<sup>44</sup> In American seminaries, most Christians are part of the suburb class. Even though the suburbs are close in proximity to the cities, the way people live is different. In the suburbs people drive cars, in the big cities people use public transportation. Seminaries are not instructing their students on how to reach those who live in a different reality. Missional people need to identify and connect with people living in the cities, so relationships can be formed, their behavior understood, and practical ways devised to reach them.

Missional communities are very relational in nature. At the foundation of Christianity is a relational God who works with relational people. In missional communities, everything is about reaching people where they are. The black church has always been called to minister to those who are disadvantaged by living in the cities. Reaching people who are suffering from problems in the cities can yield great results in the proclamation of the gospel.

Missiology has changed for those who live in the cities. There is traditional missiology and diaspora missiology. The editors point out, “Diaspora missiology is a missiological framework for understanding and participating in God’s redemptive

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 54.

mission among diasporic groups.”<sup>45</sup> It has been a long held view in missions that people are able to reach others who look like them, or have the same worldview. People are moving from other places to live in cities; three percent of the world’s population lives in cities or countries where they were not born.<sup>46</sup>

There are three types of diaspora missions. Missions reach the diaspora through pre-evangelical, social services, or evangelism, and then disciple them to become a community. Mission uses people from the diaspora who have been reached to network in groups to win people to Christ. Mission beyond the diaspora organizes converts to engage in cross-cultural missions to the natives where they came from.<sup>47</sup>

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has made a renewed effort to reach the cities through the proclamation of the gospel. In the writings of one of the founders of the church, Ellen White talks about the many unsaved living in the cities and the importance of reaching the cities.<sup>48</sup> If it was a focus back then, it should be of even more importance now. The approach must always be carefully examined; there should be no assumption that one technique will work in every city. Differing approaches to missions need to be tried.

The limitation of this book is that it promotes instructing those who are in seminary with the mindset of missions to reach the cities. This is needed and a great start, but there needs to be simultaneous teaching of clergy and laity. The Bible talks about the

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 109–10.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>48</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1946), 36.

concept of the priesthood of all believers, but it is difficult to move people away from what they have traditionally believed. For change to move faster, leaders and members need training to understand how God wants to work in their situation. Missional people need to live close to those who are in need of the gospel, sometimes even moving from their comfort in the suburbs to the cities.

### ***Missional Small Groups***

*Missional Small Groups: Becoming a Community That Makes a Difference in the World*, by M. Scott Boren is an important work with regards to this project. Small groups have been used in churches for some time, and have been good in forming community among members. But God has not called his people just to form community, but to a specific mission. The vision paints the mission of God on the hearts of his people. The thesis of the book is to reframe how small groups are thought of, and to excite imagination so the church can have a life together that makes a difference, and re-engages the neighborhood.<sup>49</sup> While well-intentioned, small groups have been another form that can contribute to a country club mentality. People who are hungry for relationship with God and others have taken the opportunity of being part of small groups to help shape their faith and Christian lifestyle. However, these groups generally have not been intentionally moving people towards mission.

Missional groups are about listening and understanding the rhythms that are taking place in life. People's lives are full of activities. Missional groups are when people

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<sup>49</sup> Boren, *Missional Small Groups: Becoming a Community that Makes a Difference in the World*, 13.

establish discipling relationships with those they come in contact with, turning the focus of the church from an inward focus to an outward one. Boren believes Christians develop deeper relationships with people<sup>50</sup> as they exemplify the love of Jesus in the lives of hurting people. Living missionally is about developing relationships where people can pour what they have found in Christ into others. It is a reprioritizing of life. Boren states, “The church has nothing to offer the world if it does not embody the message of Good News that it aims to share.”<sup>51</sup>

Missional living is not about a list of activities that one does; it is the fact that Christian’s lives are focused around mission. The gospel must be the center of people’s lives, and most Christians probably think that’s how they live, but when their lives are examined they find they are far from it, with their jobs, taking their kids to school and practice, and many other activities. In missional living these things are still done, but the focus becomes different. People are looking for ways to live out their lives in the context of God’s mission.

Missional living is about creating space for the Lord to work in the communal lives of people. It is not a list of activities that one can scratch off a list. Western society has become so individualistic and all about self-promotion that people need an orientation to what living missionally is about before they can become ready to move from the usual small group practice to missional small groups.

People do not have time in their schedules to build relationships based on serving. This is the mindset that is stumping the church. The services that took place at church are

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 35.

no longer happening because the people are genuinely too busy handling other issues. So the church has tried to be creative in hopes of people coming back to prayer meeting or even worship gatherings. It is the same fate that awaits small groups if the mindset of the people and engaging of the imagination for mission does not take place. People's schedules are crowding out the disciplines that grow disciples in Christ.

There is the practice of missional communion, where the people engage in the practice of the presence of God. Missional relating happens when people engage with their neighbors through practices of agape and missional engagement.<sup>52</sup> It is about who the church is in Christ Jesus, not about what people do. The practice must flow from a place of being in Christ.

The issue is how to communicate with people about the church *being* missional instead of just doing missional things. Looking for patterns is important to understanding where people are living and operating from. What the church needs is a blueprint for how to speak to these needs. There needs to be concrete direction, and with the warning of the author people can figure how to apply it to their context.

### ***Creating a Missional Culture***

*Creating a Missional Culture: Equipping the Church for the Sake of the World* by J. R. Woodward, deals with how to create a culture that is different from the way things are done now. The culture of a church must be contemplated if the church is going to be successful in its mission. Woodward points out, "More than a strategy, vision or plan, the

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 63.

unseen culture of a church powerfully shapes her ability to grow, mature and live missionally.”<sup>53</sup> To make a church missional, there needs to be understanding and a way to shape culture. The thrust of this book lies in the last half of Ephesians 4. There it talks about equipping the saints for the work of ministry. Woodward says, “As the equippers incarnate their lives and ministries within the body, the whole body will be aroused and awakened to live in the world, for the sake of the world, in the way of Christ.”<sup>54</sup>

To move from where the church has been operating to more of a missional approach, the church must shift. Society is in constant flux and informs how the church approaches mission. The population is moving from rural to urban living, and it takes a team of leaders to help the church make that shift. Due to postmodern thinking people look at life differently from in the past, and are open to different experiences. The gospel must be holistic, to meet the needs of this generation.

A major point presented is that leaders need to be cultural architects. Ephesians 4 shows how the church should operate. The church has used a centralized focus when it comes to leadership. There is usually a senior pastor, then depending on size, there are additional pastors. If there is one pastor the formal authority lies with that one person. The Ephesians 4 model says that leadership must be polycentric, meaning people with different callings on their lives coming together to lead. In 1 Peter 2:9 the Bible talks about the priesthood of all believers; and in 1 Corinthians 12 the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to all in the body of Christ. Woodward presents “a polycentric structure,

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<sup>53</sup> J. R. Woodward, *Creating a Missional Culture: Equipping the Church for the Sake of the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 19.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

where leaders interrelate and incarnate the various purposes of Christ in such a way that the entire body is activated to service and matures in love.”<sup>55</sup> It is not about one person being the leader, but having apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, and pastors to equip the saints.

Discussion of the five equippers is a major contribution by Woodward; it is evident that mission is central to the church. Control seems to be the rule of the day and is making the church immature. People talk about operating in one’s lane for the smooth working of an organization. Control has led to people wanting to be higher than others, and not working in their giftedness for the benefit of the whole. When control is a higher priority than mission, there is a weakness in that body, because the true gifts of all the leaders are not being utilized.

Questions arise when this leadership model is proposed. The questions of how it can work, and who makes the decisions, are practical questions that must be addressed. Polycentric leadership is not about just a few equippers making the decisions; it really lets the Holy Spirit be in charge. When the Holy Spirit is moving, the body can learn to recognize it and act upon what the Spirit is doing no matter who it is coming from.<sup>56</sup> For this model to take root and flourish takes cooperation with the team and buy-in from the body. In this model, Jesus truly must be the head, and pride is nowhere on the premises. There must be trust in a decentralized system of people operating within their ministries for the betterment of the church.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 213.

The limitation of this work is that it may seem too idealistic for people who want to move their culture in a more missional direction. When painting the vision, laying out intermediary steps will help movement from a hierarchical or flat leadership system to a polycentric leadership system. There is always danger of losing people as they go through change and transition. This system will take years and must be modeled by leadership who have been in place for years. Cultural architects must be persistent, because the transition may be slow and difficult.

Both books, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, and *From the End of the World to the Ends of the Earth*, lay the foundation of how Seventh-day Adventists view mission. This serves as a starting point in how Seventh-day Adventist believers think when it comes to mission. Most Adventists have been indoctrinated to think the church needs to reach those in other denominations. These books show how Valley Fellowship members' thoughts may be different from those of members of other churches in the area.

In *The Divided Mind of the Black Church*, Warnock shows how black theologians look at mission. This book shows that for black churches social justice is combined with being a missional movement. For missional small groups to succeed, there needs to be a component that helps the less fortunate. For the black church, the balance between liberation and piety may differ from other ethnic groups. Valley Fellowship is a church that would focus more on social justice projects.

Smith's book, *The Post-Black and Post-White Church*, shows how different racial groups can worship and work together for the kingdom. Even though Smith does not talk about bringing Hispanic people together, there are principles that can help guide the

missional movement at Valley Fellowship. The book deals with of how racial groups can come together to worship and still maintain their cultural identity.

### ***Reaching the City***

*Reaching the City: Reflections on Urban Mission for the Twenty-First Century*, continues to make the point of reaching other people groups beyond their homogenous groups. To be missional requires different practices among urban, suburban, or rural areas. As stated in the book, the church can reach those in the rural and suburban areas better than those in urban areas. More people are moving to urban areas. This book helps one's understanding that to be missional in America is more than touching different ethnicities, but being where people live.

*Missional Small Groups* is a book that shows how missional groups work and how they are beneficial. The author's main purpose is to excite the imagination to help the church make a difference. Boren notes how to build a culture where people are sharing within the daily rhythms of life. This principle is foundational for building Valley Fellowship's missional small group movement.

Woodard's book *Creating A Missional Culture* is a good book. It paints a picture of what a missional culture should look like. It is helpful in promoting the idea that leaders do not have to be all things to all people. People are called to different offices within the Body of Christ. It is difficult to transition Valley Fellowship to this form of leadership, but this is something that needs to be done eventually.

The material covered in this literature review reveals how scholarship looks at the mission of the church. Materials from different perspectives have dealt with how

Seventh-day Adventist, and African American theologians view and handle mission in the twenty-first century. The next chapter delves into the theology of the *missio Dei* and missional leadership. Missional leadership should develop leaders and disciples who will reproduce themselves. The following chapter builds a theological foundation to produce missional small groups at Valley Fellowship.

## CHAPTER 3

### A THEOLOGY OF FORMING MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership is needed to move a church from a programmatic model to becoming a missional movement. Leadership's foundations must be rooted in the Bible; without that, missional small groups cannot exist in the church. The foundation of missional leadership comes from Scripture, but it must be interpreted in a manner that it is true to the text. To be faithful to the Bible is important in scholarship, but it must also make an impact in today's culture. This chapter deals with forming missional leadership. The main focus is to show that missional leadership is the best approach to move the Church to reproduce in an unchurched society.

This chapter studies the concept of the *missio Dei* within the church, and there will be a discussion of the model Jesus used to minister in his context. The Bible says in Matthew 1 that Jesus was called Immanuel, meaning "God with us." Jesus lived an incarnational life in the presence of his disciples and they were able to grasp the concepts he was modeling and use them to continue to fulfill the *missio Dei*.

The ecclesiology of the church in light of its mission will be examined. The historical foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will also be discussed in light

of the missional church and leadership formation. The early church multiplied the number of adherents; this concept of multiplication took place with people who accepted the gospel and then reproduced their beliefs in other people. A theological understanding of this reproduction will be examined in the light of Scripture.

Theology is often misunderstood by people, but it is something everyone practices in their daily lives.<sup>1</sup> Everyone has a beginning and faces an end. When dealing with questions of life, people enter the realm of theology consciously or unconsciously. Stanley Grenz and Roger Olson note, “Theology comes from a combination of two Greek words: *theos*, which means “God,” and *logos*, which means “reason,” “wisdom” or “thought.” Therefore, theology literally means “God-thought” or reasoning about God.”<sup>2</sup>

Theology is about struggling to better understand God in relation to human beings. Humans seek understanding about what is happening around them, and theology helps them in this quest. Grenz says, “Theology seeks to discover answers to ultimate questions by exploring the uniquely Christian belief system.”<sup>3</sup> Through Christian theology we gain an understanding of God through the life of Jesus Christ.

### **Foundations of the Missional Church**

When Jesus established the church, he had a purpose in mind. As imperfect as it is, it exists for a reason that is found in Scripture. The way the church operates has

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<sup>1</sup> Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *Who Needs Theology: An Invitation to the Study of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

changed. At first Christians assembled in groups in individual homes and evangelized in the temple. Now members assemble in the church and evangelize in their neighborhoods. The church may look different from when it was established, but it still has the same reason for existing.

Becoming missional is not a type of church, but rather reorienting everything around the mission of God. Huckins notes, “Missional is simply a description of a people or movement committed to advancing and participating in the *missio Dei*.”<sup>4</sup> Jesus created humans with a purpose. Matthew recorded Jesus’ words, “Go and make disciples of all nations.” This text is an imperative for every Christian to accomplish the mission set before them. Through the agency of the church the people of God are called to participate in the mission of God.

The church was set up by Jesus to accomplish his mission and must follow through on this mandate. It was not set up to be a social club where people meet to encourage themselves; it exists to be dangerous to the kingdom of darkness under the direction of the Holy Spirit. For this to happen people must clearly understand what Jesus has called them to do.

The *missio Dei* has become an important concept in the Christian church. It is Latin for “mission of God” or the “sending of God.”<sup>5</sup> The *missio Dei* gives God his rightful place at the center of mission activity rather than the church. Johann Beukes

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<sup>4</sup> Huckins and Yackley, *Thin Places: Six Postures for Creating and Practicing Missional Community*, 18.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

states that mission has been reframed from church centric to theocentric.<sup>6</sup> Mission comes from God—not from the church. David Bosch argues, “Mission is more and different from recruitment to our brand of religion; it is alerting people to the universal reign of God through Christ.”<sup>7</sup> The church is called to let people know about the kingdom of God, and how Christ came to set the world free.

The church has a history of trying to make the world Christian. At the beginning, the Christian church was not about forcing people to accept the death, sacrifice, and resurrection of Christ in their behalf. Jesus was sent to reconcile the world back to God. For by Adam we all sinned, but by the second Adam, Jesus Christ, we have all been reconciled. A real and trusting relationship cannot be formed through force, but must be based on respect. The Bible says in Matthew 20:28, “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” In service, people are not forced; to serve is to assume a lesser role. One of the definitions of service is to work for, or perform a spell of duty.<sup>8</sup> Jesus became the way by which the human race could be restored. He came to this earth with a specific mission to seek for and save the lost. In the book, *Witness to the World*, Bosch says, “Mission takes place where the church, in its total involvement with the world, bears its testimony in the form of a servant, with reference to unbelief, exploitation, discrimination and violence, but also

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<sup>6</sup> Johann Beukes, “Trends in Missional Ecclesiology,” *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 68.1 (2012): 2.

<sup>7</sup> David Bosch, *Believing in the Future: Toward a Missiology of Western Culture* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1995), 33.

<sup>8</sup> *Oxford American Dictionary*, s.v. “Service.”

with reference to salvation, healing, liberation, reconciliation, and righteousness.”<sup>9</sup> The church is called to be about the mission of God by serving mankind.

In 2 Corinthians Paul talks about the *missio Dei*: “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed the message of reconciliation to us. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:18–21). In verse 17, Paul talks about being new creatures in Christ Jesus. The old self that was locked in sin and sinful tendencies is dead. Verse 18 starts with this new life being from God. That is God’s mission—for everyone to be made new.

The main concept in this passage is reconciliation. The basic meaning of reconcile is “to change thoroughly.”<sup>10</sup> The relationship between God and the world has changed, meaning that the world was the enemy, but now through the ministry of Jesus Christ there is reconciliation, not God being reconciled to man, but man being reconciled to God. Through Christ’s sacrifice, there is now a way for man to be with God. Those who belong to Christ Jesus are sent by God to take the good news of reconciliation to others.

Reading verse 19, another concept outlined in this passage is imputation. The Bible says, “not counting people’s sins against them.” This is foreign to our concept of justice. Societal law says that to maintain justice in the land, punishment must be meted

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<sup>9</sup> David Bosch, *Witness to the World: The Christian Mission in Theological Perspective* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980), 18.

<sup>10</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Commission of Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:18–21*, The Bible Exposition Commentary (Colorado Springs: Cook Communications Ministries, 2002), 649, Logos.

out for offenses that are committed. The Bible says sin is the transgression of the law (1 Jn 3:4); but it is deeper than a mere breaking of the Ten Commandments. In this passage the word imputation comes from banking, and means, “to put on one’s account.”<sup>11</sup> As Jesus died on the cross, all of the sins of the world were put on his account. This means that all sins have been paid for and God does not hold them against people, because Christ has become the Savior of the human race.<sup>12</sup> The demands of the law have been fully met because of the cross.

According to Paul, reconciliation is good news, and should be shared with everyone, which is why those saved by grace in Christ Jesus are called ambassadors. As an ambassador is called to represent their government, Christians are called to represent the kingdom of God. This can involve many things. It can be sharing the good news of Jesus through an evangelistic campaign, or making a difference in society through social justice. Being called to be an ambassador does not come from the church, but from God himself. In *Transforming Mission*, Bosch states, “Mission is not competition with other religions, not a conversion activity, not expanding the faith, not building up the kingdom of God; neither is it social, economic, or political activity. And yet, there is merit in all these projects. So the church’s concern is conversion, church growth, the reign of God, economy, society and politics—but in a different manner!”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 519.

No matter what takes place on the earth, the reign of God still exists. In *The Road to Missional*, Michael Frost says, “His reign is full and complete, an eternal and nonnegotiable reality, not enlarged nor diminished by the number of people who believe it and yield to it. Our mission, then, is to alert people to this irrefutable reality, by both announcement and demonstration.”<sup>14</sup> God is moving within human history and it is part of the ambassadors’ job to alert the world to his movements. Isaiah 52:7 says, “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!” In both the Old and New Testaments Christians are called by God to participate in his mission.

Since the fall of humankind and the promise given in Genesis 3:15 it has been God’s mission to set things right in this messed up world. Woodward asserts, “God’s mission is to redeem the world and restore it to its intended purpose. The church exists to fulfill God’s mission, and when we participate in God’s mission we become living signs of God’s intended future for the world, bringing glory to God.”<sup>15</sup> In Adventist thought, there is a great cosmic battle, called the Great Controversy, going on between God and Satan. God’s task is rescuing his creation and reconciling them to himself. The church’s task is to work with him in his mission.

Churches sometimes have the misunderstanding that doing programs accomplishes God’s mission. Political and religious activity do not establish the kingdom

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<sup>14</sup> Michael Frost, *The Road to Missional: Journey to the Center of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 25.

<sup>15</sup> JR Woodward, *Creating a Missional Culture*, 28.

of God. Rather, a belief in the *missio Dei*, the coming reign of God, is the framework for all missionary practice.<sup>16</sup> For the church to operate as intended by Jesus Christ, it must be led by the Holy Spirit in carrying out the mission of God in that particular context.

Motive is important in spiritual matters. Doing spiritual things for selfish gain causes loss of the power of God to operate in the midst of disorder. Lois Barrett, in *Treasure in Clay Jars*, defines the missional church like this:

A church that is shaped by participating in God's mission, which is to set things right in a broken, sinful world, to redeem it, and restore it to what God has always intended for the world. Missional churches see themselves not so much sending, as being sent. A missional congregation lets God's mission permeate everything that the congregation does—from worship to witness to training members for discipleship. It bridges the gap between outreach and congregational life, since, in its life together, the church is to embody God's mission.<sup>17</sup>

Human nature likes neat categories, but when it comes to the mission of God, all aspects are organic in that they rise out of the mission of God.

### **Incarnational**

Jesus Christ coming to this earth was prophesied in Isaiah 7:14 where it says, “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” In his prophecy, Isaiah talks about a sign, a son being born to a virgin, and he uses the name Immanuel. This prophecy was fulfilled in Matthew 1:23, “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”). For the mission of God to be accomplished it

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>17</sup> Lois Barrett, ed., *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), x.

was important that Jesus live on this planet among us. These are extraordinary lengths taken by the deity to redeem the earth. Frost notes, “When we talk of the Incarnation with a capital I we refer to that act of sublime love and humility whereby God took it upon himself to enter into the depths of our world, our life, and our reality in order that reconciliation and consequent union between God and humanity may be brought about.”<sup>18</sup> To reconcile the world back to Jesus, he had to be among us, not only to point to the reign of God, but also to accomplish the task of redeeming us by dying on the cross. Jesus fulfilled God’s requirements for humanity by being inside the human experience.<sup>19</sup> God worked within the requirements he had set to redeem the human race. It was important that Jesus be able to identify with us, that he know suffering in an intimate way, from a different perspective than before. One of the characteristics of God is that he knows everything. He knows the human experience because he created human beings, but the Father sent his Son to learn by living within the human experience, and experiencing it directly. His identification with us is complete.

For the church to be missional it must identify with the people group they are reaching out to. This calls for the church to know and relate to those who are in need of the gospel. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:19–20, “Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.” This shows the

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<sup>18</sup> Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Thing to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 35.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

method Paul used to share the gospel with those he wanted to reach. When Christians identify with people groups, it helps them sense that they are understood. Humanity has a need to be in control, and some groups constantly try to dominate others. That is why there was Roman rule throughout the land of Israel at the time of Jesus' birth, because the Romans had captured them. When there is an effort to identify with a culture, and people know they are understood, barriers of opposition are lowered.

In the past, the church lived out its mission through cultural imperialism.<sup>20</sup> Instead of identifying with the people, the church forced its culture upon the indigenous culture. That is a danger the church faces when it does not follow the biblical example of being incarnational. Dominating a group of people makes the church an invader, instead of a source of hope.

Jesus' incarnation was necessary for him to accomplish his mission. Witnessing what Jesus did for humanity should impel the church to be incarnational. For a virus to spread it cannot stay with one person, but needs to spread from person to person. Jesus' ministry spread by healing people and then sending them out to spread the word.

The church is an incarnational movement sent to engage its context.<sup>21</sup> This involves listening before speaking, to become familiar with the context that surrounds us. To make an impact, the church needs to understand what is most important to the culture and start there. Leonard Sweet states, "The church as body of Christ is less an aggregate of persons than an aggregate of cultures; the body of Christ is an ark of cultural

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>21</sup> Johann Beukes, *Trends in Missional Ecclesiology*, 4.

organisms, each one contributing something unique and indispensable to the body.”<sup>22</sup>

This conveys the sense that all missional communities should not be uniform. Even though the church’s foundation is Jesus Christ, churches need to reflect where they exist.

In *The Forgotten Ways*, Alan Hirsch lays out practices that Jesus modeled. For the church to follow the example of Christ in being incarnational, individuals who make up the church should model presence, proximity, powerlessness, and proclamation. Presence deals with being a part of the community; to be considered so by those who make up the community. Proximity is associated with presence in being available, truly being there not only for those in need, but also if they happen to look up. Powerlessness is to be humble and to be a servant to the community, not to control or manipulate them, but to look out for their best good. Finally, proclamation is being willing to share the gospel story with those in the community.<sup>23</sup>

## **Community**

From the time humanity was created, God said it was not good for man to be alone (Gn 2:18). Leonardo Boff writes, “Community is the deepest and most foundational reality that exists.”<sup>24</sup> As Jesus started his public ministry he surrounded himself with community and called twelve disciples to work with him. For the most part these disciples did everything with Jesus. Jesus took the time to teach them, because he knew

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<sup>22</sup> Leonard Sweet, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2009), 165.

<sup>23</sup> Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006), 133–34.

<sup>24</sup> Leonardo Boff, *Holy Trinity, Perfect Community* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000), 4.

his time with them was limited. An example of Jesus' tutelage is found in Matthew 6, when the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray.

An American philosopher from the 20th century named Josiah Royce said, "My life means nothing, either theoretically or practically, unless I am a member of a community."<sup>25</sup> People in a family communicate with each other. The Bible says in John 13:34–35, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Community is the space where this command can be carried out. Next is an imperative to love one another. The way people love is by following the example of Christ. He gave us the example and identifying marks of being disciples. Part of the mission is to create disciples, and disciples cannot be identified if they are not showing love to those they are trying to reach.

Within the community the gifts the Spirit gives are identified. Logan says that there are two ways for gifts to be identified, first by people who know the person well identifying where they see their giftedness, and by trying to do different things within the community.<sup>26</sup> Community helps to form the character of the disciple. The disciples did not know what leadership was about, and approached Jesus about who was going to be on his right side. Jesus was able to teach them about true leadership by making their question into a teachable moment.

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<sup>25</sup> Josiah Royce, *The Problem of Christianity*, Vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan, 1913), 313.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Logan and Tara Miller, *The Missional Journey* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 2013), 96.

There is a relational aspect in community. When Jesus was walking the earth, he was not about programs or making a point; he was touching lives. Jesus impacted the lives of his disciples and those he healed along the way. Buekes states, “One of the unique contributions of Christianity is the understanding of truth as a person, not a principle.”<sup>27</sup>

Community comes together so that mission can be accomplished. With Jesus there was authentic relationship and spiritual transformation, but he did not come just to make his disciples better; he came to reconcile the world back to himself. Community binds people to the reign of God and each other, for the great commandment is to love the Lord your God and to love your neighbor as yourself.

### **Exegesis of John 17**

John is the fourth gospel in the New Testament. According to tradition John of Zebedee was the author. People of the way believed that there would be a disciple alive when Jesus would return. John’s audience was the second generation of Christian believers and he taught the people how to transition the message from those who knew Jesus personally, to those who had not witnessed his life. The audience John is writing to can be seen through our passage in John 17, where Jesus prays for his disciples, but then moves on to pray for the world.

In chapter 17 Jesus and his disciples are in the upper room when Jesus prays an intercessory prayer. In verses 1 to 5 Jesus prays for himself, in verses 6 to 19 he prays for his disciples, and in the last part of the chapter, verses 20 to 26, he prays for all believers.

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<sup>27</sup> Johann Buekes, *Trends in Missional Ecclesiology*, 4.

Chapter 16 deals with the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ who has overcome the world. After the prayer, it moves to Jesus being betrayed by Judas.

The passage talks about the Word of God that gives the disciples security. Through the Word they have joy and love, though the world hates them, and through the Word they are sanctified. John 17:18 says “As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.” The *missio Dei* deals with mission that is centered on God rather than the church. God is the one who sends humans out. This verse deals with God sending Jesus out into the world, and then Jesus sending the disciples to the world. The word “sent” is from the Greek word *πέστειλα* (*apesteila*). This word is a verb, aorist, and indicative. The basic meaning of the word is “to send forth.”<sup>28</sup> Aorist means, “action completed in past time—considered as a whole or as a single fact.”<sup>29</sup> This means that from the beginning it has been the mission of the Father to send the Son. Jesus not only came to redeem the world, but to send out those who accepted him as the Christ. The word “sent” occurs most often in the gospels and is used most by John, a total of 33 times.<sup>30</sup> The root word also carries the meaning of causing someone to depart for a particular purpose.<sup>31</sup> In the gospel of John, Jesus uses the word *apesteilein*, when he

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<sup>28</sup> Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 1.398.

<sup>29</sup> J. Harold Greenlee, *A Concise Exegetical Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 49.

<sup>30</sup> Kittel and Friedrich, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1.403.

<sup>31</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 15.66.

wants to ground his authority in God who is the one responsible for his words and works.<sup>32</sup>

Jesus presents the word of God as divine revelation, essential for survival in the world. *The NIV Application Commentary* states, “The mission of the church, the task of Jesus’ followers, is to challenge this world.”<sup>33</sup> A mission may not be easy. As seen in this passage, to go on a mission means to be confronted with obstacles and dangers. The world is not going to like the mission that Jesus is sending his disciples on, but they still must go. While they are on this dangerous mission, Jesus will give the provisions and protection to be successful.

Jesus also deals with sanctification. In verse 17 it says, “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.” To sanctify is *ἁγιάζω* (*hagiazō*), the Greek referring to something made holy, but to achieve this holiness there must be separation.<sup>34</sup> When Jesus talks about the world he is not referring to a place on the map but a spiritual domain. The disciples and those who are believers are set apart from common use. The commentator says, “To be holy, then, is not in the first instance a description of perfection (though this is included). It refers to a life that is so aligned with God that it reflects God’s passions completely (for good, against evil).”<sup>35</sup> The people of God are sanctified not for the sake of being called good or righteous, but they become righteous for the divine mission. The

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 1.405.

<sup>33</sup> Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 466.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 467.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

mission Jesus lived out is the same one his disciples are to perform. God's people are not to live for their own purposes, but for the mission that shapes their lives.

### **Seventh-day Adventist Missiology**

Throughout the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church its leanings have been eschatological in nature. In the early years of the church, a theology of mission was formed from the theological understandings of what Adventists believed. The three angels' messages found in Revelation 14:6–12 formed our unique mission to the world.<sup>36</sup> Adventists believe their reason for existence and calling stems from God, to tell the world of the soon coming of Jesus Christ. P. Gerard Damsteegt says, "After years of contemplation and refinement the three angels' messages have been interpreted as a proclamation of restoration consisting of three progressive and interrelated phases of warning in the context of Christ's final mission in heaven and earth."<sup>37</sup> In preparation for the Second Coming of Jesus, Adventists are to spread the message of Jesus Christ to all the earth, proclaiming the truth in the midst of widespread erroneous beliefs.

With God entrusting the Adventist Church with a message and mission, it is up to the church to deliver this message. Ellen White had a twofold paradigm for missions: "First meet the temporal needs of the people, and relieve their physical wants and

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<sup>36</sup> P. Gerard Damsteegt, "Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission," *Missiology: An International Review*, vol. VIII, No. 1 (January 1980), 79.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

sufferings, and you will find an open avenue to the heart, where you may plant the good seed of virtue and religion.”<sup>38</sup> Monte Sahlin references Ellen White:

She did not favor an approach which focuses exclusively on proclamation. In fact, she wrote that “preaching is a small part of the work to be done for the salvation of souls” (*Review & Herald*, August 22, 1899). Appealing to the example of Christ’s incarnational approach to ministry, which brings Christian witness in the secular areas of life, Ellen White states that “the followers of Christ are to labor as he did. We are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and comfort the suffering and afflicted. We are to minister to the despairing and inspire hope in the hopeless.” In another place in *Desire of Ages*, a biography of Jesus Christ, she makes the point that the *Christian mission is to focus on the life and needs of the unreached*. “When we love the world as He loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished” (350 and 641). Ministries of compassion are just as central to her conception of Christian mission as are ministries of evangelism. The role of social concern and public service in the mission of the church is no more clearly stated than in Ellen White’s most paradigmatic passage on mission strategy, first published in *Ministry of Healing* 143, and reprinted in many other places. “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then he bade them, “Follow me.” (italics supplied)<sup>39</sup>

The theology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as laid out by Ellen G. White is a thoroughgoing incarnational model.

From the early beginnings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it believed that mission was the work of God. Damsteegt goes on to elaborate, “Especially in an eschatological setting of God gathering his remnant together before the parousia, *missio Dei* was associated with God’s providences and appeals were made to believers to keep up with the opening providence of God for missionary outreach.”<sup>40</sup> The Adventist Church

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<sup>38</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4 (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1948), 227.

<sup>39</sup> Monte Sahlin, *Adventist Congregations Today: New Evidence for Equipping Healthy Churches* (Lincoln: Center for Creative Ministry, 2003), 20–21.

<sup>40</sup> Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*, 80.

rests on Revelation 14:12 which says, “This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus.” As methods continue to grow out of theology the Seventh-day Adventist Church waits in anticipation for the soon return of Jesus Christ.

### **Missional Leadership**

Leadership thought from business and government is prevalent in the church today. However, leadership practices need to be built upon firm theological understandings. The goals of leadership should reflect a missional understanding of what God expects. Since God is the one who sends his people into mission, leadership should resemble a more biblical than business model. Business models may reflect what is going on in the world today, but being missional is about transforming the culture.

The purpose of leadership is to add stability, cohesion, and unity to the whole.<sup>41</sup> For leadership to be effective, it has to be put in proper context. Most churches have traditionally maintained a hierarchical leadership structure, but the Bible shows a more communal structure. As one studies the Trinity, this example of leadership is exemplified. God said, “let us make man in our image, after our own likeness” (Gn 1:26). In the context of the Trinity, JR Woodward states, “Finally, in our context, where individualism reigns, we ought to focus on the social Trinity, look at the rich, mutually encouraging and mutually dependent relationship between the Father, Son and Spirit.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Woodward, *Creating a Missional Culture*, 90.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

The Trinity is a model of how leadership should operate in the church. Leadership has often been more concerned with power, but as shown in the Trinity, leadership is cooperative. Leonardo Boff states, “The Trinitarian vision produces a vision of a church that is more communion than hierarchy, more service than power, more circular than pyramidal, more loving embrace than bending the knee before authority.”<sup>43</sup> Leadership in the church often seems to try to differentiate each person’s role, and some members of the church see their roles as less important than others. The members of the Trinity share many divine attributes, but they differ in function. With the understanding that all roles are important to the body, church leadership models can imitate the Trinity in terms of unity through diversity.

Understanding of the social Trinity stems from a theological understanding of *perichoresis*, a Greek term describing the triune relationship between each person of the Godhead, which is defined as “mutual indwelling without loss of personal identity.”<sup>44</sup> This term stems from John 10:38 which says, “The Father is in me, and I in the Father.” Woodward says, “It can be roughly understood as interpenetration, where each divine person permeates and is permeated by the others without confusion.”<sup>45</sup> Perichoresis is about the love each has for the other, sharing in the work of each other, creating a unifying bond to complete the mission. Boff goes on to say, “When the church models itself after the perichoresis of the Trinity, there will be an emphasis on interdependency,

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<sup>43</sup> Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), 154.

<sup>44</sup> C. Baxter Kruger, “*Perichoresis—What’s That?*” at Perichoresis website under C. Baxter Kruger. <https://www.gci.org/God/perichoresis> (accessed August 19, 2016).

<sup>45</sup> Woodward, *Creating a Missional Culture*, 90.

mutual care, intimate sharing and mutual self-giving. Boff reminds us that all in the church are born from a response of faith, and that all Christians are to be students of Christ, and the entire church is called to make disciples.<sup>46</sup> Missional leadership should reflect this concept of perichoresis, in that being brothers and sisters of Christ is more important than hierarchy. When community is formed, a hierarchy rooted in the concept of the priesthood of all believers (1 Pt 2:5) is established. Ephesians 4:11 gives the leadership model for the church. This is a community of leaders in which no one person possesses all the power, and all the people contribute to the leadership of the church.

Forming community is the foundation of missional leadership. Tertullian had an understanding of how leaders should form community and what it should look like. In his era, to become a part of the church there was a period of rigorous training focused on how one was to live their daily life.<sup>47</sup> Christians began to look toward the church as being the kingdom of God. Tertullian's concern was that people should form a specific set of habits and practices developed from the study of Scriptures.<sup>48</sup> The church should be an alternate community from the world. The leadership of the church is to form it into an entity that transforms the society around it.

Modern leadership has lowered the bar, in that the church often reflects society. Changes are more inward, and often do not reflect in outward behavior. The present-day body of believers has long discouraged an outward appearance without an inward change,

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 90–91.

<sup>47</sup> Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 119.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

so balance has not been kept, since the church talks about inward change with little outward behavioral manifestation.

Jesus did not come to reaffirm society; he came to transition the community into understanding and living out the kingdom of God. In the beatitudes, Jesus shows what the kingdom of God is to look like. The leadership of the church is to form a community that is sent. Missional leadership is to challenge natural tendencies and infiltrate what is going on outside. The church needs to train its members in how to encounter and transform the world as Christian ambassadors. Stanley Hauerwas states the challenge of missional leadership in these terms: “In short, the great problem of modernity for the church is how we are to survive as disciplined communities in democratic societies.”<sup>49</sup> It is not a clean process, because when people are involved it becomes messy. According to modern standards Jesus’ disciples would be considered failures. Jesus poured himself into the disciples, and after he went back to heaven all he had done was confirmed when the Holy Spirit descended upon them in the upper room.

Missional leadership cannot be judged through the lenses of business. Leadership means calling people to something greater than themselves, forming people as witnesses to the reign of God in the world and their lives. Alan Roxburgh in *The Missional Leader* states:

Missional leadership is not effectiveness, meeting the inner, spiritual needs of self-actualizing and self-differentiating individuals, or creating numerical growth. It is different from building healthy, nonanxious relationships among members of a congregation so that they appear attractive to people outside the church.

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<sup>49</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *After Christendom* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 97.

Missional leadership is cultivating an environment that releases the missional imagination of the people of God.<sup>50</sup>

Jesus' view of leadership was far different from what is often practiced today. There needs to be a reaffirmation that leadership in the church creates an environment to usher in the kingdom of God.

### **Leading in the Midst of Change**

The Bible states in Malachi 3:6, "I the Lord do not change." There needs to be accommodation between the fact that God does not change and the fact that things on this earth are always changing. The character of God does not change. Stanley Grenz in *A Primer on Postmodernism* says, "Though God may exhibit character traits in different ways and manners, they are nonetheless consistent with His underlying nature and will."<sup>51</sup> The Christian may not understand all of God's character, but his nature and will do not change. His nature is love, justice, compassion, giving, and grace.<sup>52</sup>

God is on a different level, and operates differently from his created beings. In reading the story of Moses, Exodus 3:14 says, "God replied to Moses, "I Am Who I Am. Say this to the people of Israel: I Am has sent me to you." This name for God can be translated "I will be what I will be." Charles McCoy notes, "Form and continuity derive

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<sup>50</sup> Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World*, 122.

<sup>51</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 87.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

from God's covenant faithfulness, not from a static nature."<sup>53</sup> God is not to be looked upon as static, but Christians need to see him as reliable, whose covenant is constant in the past, present, and future.<sup>54</sup>

There are guidelines for Christians to operate by in this world of change. Animals and plants adapt and change according to their surroundings. Humankind's environment is changing all the time. Living things know how to adapt to the environment. The same is true with theology, McCoy affirms. "Living involves the continuing integration of tradition and innovation into the freshness of every presentation."<sup>55</sup>

Barnabas went to Antioch and discovered that uncircumcised Gentile believers were now a part of the community. There should be rejoicing over people who have come to Jesus, but Barnabas thought differently. Ray Anderson points out, "Barnabas was well aware of the fact that the church at Jerusalem was resistant to this accommodation made to Gentile believers."<sup>56</sup> As Paul entered the theological discussion, he came from the perspective that these people were filled with the Holy Spirit and that is objective and not subjective.<sup>57</sup> The manifestation of the Holy Spirit gave evidence that things *do* change; people who are uncircumcised can receive the Holy Ghost.

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<sup>53</sup> Charles S. McCoy, *When Gods Change: Hope for Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 146.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>56</sup> Ray S. Anderson, *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 117.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

Isaiah 43:19 says, “For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?” The context is God’s deliverance of Israel. God has delivered Israel in the past, but he is going to deliver them in another way. From the story of Barnabas, we see God changing to reach man. He moves in new ways doing things that have not been done before. The rabbis expected the Messiah to tear down the Roman Empire and establish the nation of Israel, but Jesus came to tear down Satan’s kingdom.

Luther nailed his thesis to the door of the cathedral. It was a major departure from what was taught in that day. In *Renewing the Center* Grenz states, “The standard Protestant historiography asserts that the Reformation entailed a rediscovery of the biblical gospel, which had been lost in the Middle Ages.”<sup>58</sup> The Bible had been interpreted a certain way to fit the church’s understanding, but Luther could not justify what the church was teaching based on Scripture. In biblical history, there is upheaval from Moses and Israel, and all the way down to the Middle Ages.

### **Theology of Coaching**

The example of Jesus shows us that he not only mentored the disciples, but was their coach. The definition of coaching is “the process of coming alongside a person or team to help them discover God’s agenda for their life and ministry, and then cooperating with the Holy Spirit to see that agenda become reality.”<sup>59</sup> Coaching is the process of

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<sup>58</sup> Stanley Grenz, *Renewing the Center* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 34.

<sup>59</sup> Robert E. Logan, “Biblical Foundations of Coaching” (Lecture, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA, March 26, 2014), 1.

getting people to ask and answer the right questions, digging deeper into what motivates them and how they should accomplish their tasks.

Coaching is not mentioned specifically in the Bible, but it is practiced throughout Scripture. This is the journey Jesus took his disciples on, so they could be mature when he left this world. It is not only about modeling what is right, but making sure the person is on the right path so they can coach others by asking the right questions to highlight what God can do in their lives.

A main principle of coaching is about glorifying God and not self. Coaching is not about people being dependent on the coach, but about the Spirit who leads into all truth. Logan states, “Coaching empowers each individual believer to listen to the Spirit and act in accordance with the mission they sense God calling them toward.”<sup>60</sup> Jesus spent a lot of time praying to know what his Father wanted him to do. In asking the right questions, we are opening ourselves up to an understanding that it is all about the power and leading of the Holy Spirit.

To coach is to encourage, comfort, and urge people to give their best for the sake of the gospel.<sup>61</sup> In the Western world, teams are emphasized within the work place because of the individualistic culture. To be successful, there needs to be encouragement from others along the way. That is why coaches are needed. Barnabas had certain gifts that others like Paul did not have. That is why someone like John Mark could go on to redeem himself for the ministry, even though Paul initially cast him to the side. People

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 4.

like Barnabas are needed to coach people who have failed, so they can get up and make a difference for the gospel.

### **Reproduction**

The biblical record recounts how the New Testament Church grew. It started with Jesus inviting twelve disciples to work with him. By the time Jesus returned to heaven and the Holy Spirit came upon them, thousands of people came to Jesus. The church expanded rapidly during this time as the apostles not only preached the gospel in Israel, but also through Paul the message spread to the Gentiles. The decision to take the message to the other parts of the world was important to accomplish the mission. There were principles the apostles followed for the message to be spread to the far reaches of the world, and many people became Christians. The study of how the church multiplied helps the missional movement, by showing how these principles can be applied today.

For the gospel to be heard Jesus started with a small group in order to reach the larger group. One of the first things Jesus did was call upon people to follow him. He told them they would become fishers of men. The disciples' occupation before joining Jesus was fishing and they would catch men the way they caught fish. Jesus was not satisfied with them just being caught, he brought them along with him, so they could learn to catch people also. That is the principle Jesus exhibits throughout his ministry. It is not enough to save people; he wanted to train the disciples to save others. That is the principle that is important for the church: people are trained to train others.

Paul was instrumental in the process of multiplication in the church. Second Timothy 2:2 says, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many

witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.” The word “reliable” is important to the text. Reliable people are the ones who can be qualified to reach others, because with the instruction given, they can accomplish the task. The root word for reliable is πιστοῖς (*pistois*) which means faithful. In this context it implies being trustworthy, someone who is reliable. Once someone who is trustworthy is found, the person also must be qualified to teach others. In the *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* it talks about teaching as providing instruction in a formal or informal setting.<sup>62</sup> The lexicon goes on to state, “to teach is more than just classroom activity.”<sup>63</sup> Learning must happen in more places than just the classroom. For multiplication to take place, the person who is learning applies the information that they have gleaned as they train others.

Jesus’ methods were not transmitted in a classroom setting, nor always in the temple. The classroom was among the people. Jesus showed the disciples how to minister to the people and there were opportunities for them to demonstrate what they had learned. Jesus asked those disciples to train others, because he had trained them spiritually.

There are always people who need Jesus, but there are only a few workers to accomplish the mission. Luke 10:1–3 says, “After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am

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<sup>62</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 33.224.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

sending you out like lambs among wolves.” There were others who were considered disciples; in this passage the word “send” in various forms is mentioned three times. The workers were sent into the field to spread the word of God. The focus of this verse is in verse two. Even though they are being sent into the world, the prayer is for workers.

For the work to go forward there needs to be ongoing training of other workers. That is how multiplication can take place. The *NIV Commentary* says, “With conversion comes the responsibility to join the task of sharing the good news,”<sup>64</sup> to pray for other workers to join the cause, and train them to spread the gospel. The example is given of Jesus training his disciples as he ministered to the people of that region. When the seventy-two were sent out, they were sent two by two, with the understanding that they would not all go to the same place. There was no need for two by two if they were all going to the same area. The scattering of the disciples meant they were able to reach more places.

Each unique person is called to edify others for the work of ministry. Ephesians 4:11 says, “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers have been described as offices, but they are also functions that build up the church.<sup>65</sup> The church does not believe

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<sup>64</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 291.

<sup>65</sup> Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 168.

in a hierarchy, because the Bible teaches the “priesthood of all believers.” This means that all people of the body of Christ are called to function in one of these areas or a combination of functions. These operate so the church can be equipped for works of service. Paul wanted the people to be trained to work to build up the body of Christ. The best way for the body of Christ to grow is through the process of multiplication; people of different gifting mixes working to train others to continue the work.

In his ministry Jesus showed that people were called to train others and not just to do ministry themselves. The mission can only go forward when people are trained to carry it forward. Their training comes from those who did it before. The theological procedure is that mission comes from God and must be done in an incarnational way, always training others for the multiplication of the ministry.

PART THREE  
MINISTRY STRATEGY

## CHAPTER 4

### GOALS AND PLANS

Goals are important for any institution wanting to make an impact in their field of expertise. It is no different with the church; to accomplish the vision there must be goals. The *Oxford American Dictionary* defines a goal as, “an objective.”<sup>1</sup> The goal of starting missional small groups is not any easy task. It takes an intentional process and leaders who are willing to work. Moving a congregation from a mindset of solely church attendance to making a difference for Christ in the rhythms of life can be a complicated transition. Following are the goals for Valley Fellowship to become a missional congregation, with missional small groups as their foundation. The revitalization of Valley Fellowship depends on mobilizing the congregants to be missional, through the creation of small groups within the church. The starting block is to discover people who can be leaders to reproduce leaders so missional small groups can multiply.

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<sup>1</sup> Eugene Ehrlich, *Oxford American Dictionary*, 278.

## Goals: Creating Missional Small Groups

A major goal is to create a system where missional small group leaders are identified, recruited, and equipped to lead. Creating missional small groups is not done in a classroom setting. It is done where people are being trained by doing, working with people who have done it before, so it is not just theory but also practical.

Creating disciples is an organic process. Many people think you have to create disciples within a specific program. In the book *Multiply*, Francis Chan makes the point that “For some of us, our church experience has been so focused on programs that we immediately think about Jesus’s command to make disciples in programmatic terms. We expect our church leaders to create some sort of disciple-making campaign where we sign up, commit to participating for a few months, and then we get to cross the Great Commission off our list.”<sup>2</sup> In order to create disciples there needs to be an environment where relationships can flourish. Missional small groups at Valley Fellowship are not meant to be a program, but rather an environment where discipleship can take place.

The template used for creating missional small groups at Valley Fellowship was designed by Logan. It uses the metaphor of a hiking trail. Through this template people can be identified, recruited, and equipped. The template shows how to move from one step to another. Missional small groups create an environment where people can grow spiritually by building community with others and practicing ministry by being a blessing to other people.

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<sup>2</sup> Francis Chan and Mark Beuving, *Multiply: Disciples Making Disciples* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2012), 31.

An important part of being missional is being incarnational. Churches want to grow in attendance and finances quickly. Within the Seventh-day Adventist Church the average tenure of a pastor is three years. Pastors try to produce results quickly because their tenure will be short, but it takes time for multiplication to take place. For Valley Fellowship to become incarnational will take time to move from the current pattern of thought and behavior to something different.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, like other denominations, relies heavily on programming. Being incarnational is different; it is about building relationships. To create a church that is incarnational in its orientation takes not only time but patience. Being incarnational shows that a person cares for another person. Human relationships are messy, because people have feelings and different ways of looking at situations. To be incarnational is to display a willingness to work through the messy situations in the lives of people.

Missional small groups that are incarnational must know the needs of the area. The attractional model uses excitement so people are willing to attend an event. For people to keep on coming back, the wow value needs to increase. The most effective way of knowing the needs is being around people in the community and listening. Incarnational leaders not only listen, but observe what is taking place, so they can minister to needs that are not always verbalized.

Missional small groups can be carried out in different formats. The principle behind being missional is dwelling with others and being the salt of the earth. The groups function by performing various acts of service. These could include leading others in hobbies if they are not drawn to social justice issues. The group would look for activities

that can be shared and used to bring meaning and significance to members' lives and lead them into study. For younger generations and neighborhoods that are less affluent, social justice issues—being involved in the community and trying to bring about social change, appeals to many.

### **Servant Projects**

A goal is to have seventy percent of the members participate in servant projects with missional small groups. To begin, once a quarter the worship service will be shortened to an hour. Worship services at Valley Fellowship normally are about two hours in length, from eleven to one o'clock. After the one hour service the people will participate in projects designed to make a difference in the community.

Members will experience being missional in situations where they are not doing it by themselves. The activities will be planned for them, making it easy for participants. Hopefully the members will enjoy doing these projects. This will build on the goal of creating a culture of church members being out among the people of the community. Servant projects will be done to effect positive changes in the community, as Valley Fellowship seeks to make a difference in Rialto.

There will be different projects taking place throughout the city; everyone will not be doing the same project. The point is to meet needs of the city and the demographics Valley Fellowship is trying to reach. As members do projects throughout the city, it will build momentum for projects like these to be done more often.

By the church doing servant projects on Sabbath most of the congregation will get to participate. The goal is for the church to know what servant projects look like so it will

not seem so strange when individual groups do their projects. This way most of the congregation will get to see and experience what the church will be doing, not only on Sabbaths but during the week, so members can serve their communities through the missional small groups.

### **Apprentice Leaders**

The goal is for every missional small group leader to have an apprentice leader, so the groups can multiply at Valley Fellowship. Every six to ten months the number of groups should double. For this goal to be realized the leaders recruit apprentices to shadow them as they lead the missional small groups. Inviting people into a master/apprentice relationship is necessary for multiplication to take place. Having an apprentice is an intentional process that takes both time and prayer. To find someone who is willing to go on a journey of learning and applying the lessons gleaned from the coach involves a commitment of the apprentice's time. Finding such persons is more than just doing ministry.

For leaders, the priority of replacing themselves should be of great importance. In *From Followers to Leaders*, Robert Logan says that “Replacing ourselves is step one, multiplying ourselves (i.e., raising up more than one person to take our role) is step two, and teaching those leaders how to raise up others is step three, which completes the cycle and allows the process to continue to replicate itself.”<sup>3</sup> The practice of replacing oneself is a principle that must be emphasized until it becomes intrinsic at Valley Fellowship.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Logan, *From Followers to Leaders*, 187.

Within the six months the apprentices work with their missional small group leaders, until they are comfortable to lead by themselves. They will gain experience in leading under the guidance of the leader. The leaders will give feedback to the apprentices on ways they can sharpen their skills, so when on their own, they don't feel lost. The best type of master/apprentice relationship is one where leaders not only teach how to do missional small groups, but also affirm the apprentices so they know that their leaders truly care about their well being.

### **Pastoral Instruction**

Another goal for this project is for it to be reproducible so another pastor is able to implement it within the church. As I write this project I have been reassigned to another district. Even though I am in the same conference, which is the administrative wing overseeing the local churches within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, I have changed cities. Instead of pastoring Valley Fellowship in Rialto, California, I have been moved to the city of Moreno Valley where I pastor two churches. The names of the churches are Moreno Valley Seventh-day Adventist church and Imani Praise Fellowship Seventh-day Adventist company. Even though this project was written for Valley Fellowship and the city of Rialto there are similarities between Rialto and Moreno Valley.

The goal is for this project to be used by the next pastor of Valley Fellowship if he chooses to do so. I am providing the pastor with the research and methods to carry out the plan. For Valley Fellowship to have a reproducible model where leaders and groups are multiplying is good for the future of Valley Fellowship. As pastors change, there is

usually a surge of attendees who come to the church to see what the new pastor is offering the congregation. What remains is the culture that has been intact throughout the years. Changing pastors does not mean the culture changes overnight, but it is an opportunity for a new voice to present new ways forward.

I will make an appointment to meet with the pastor to discuss the project, giving the pastor time to think it through, to see if this is a way he wants to move forward. If the pastor does not want to try the plan at first, it will always be available if he wants to utilize the information later. I will make sure the pastor has my information and I will also leave a copy of my presentation with him.

As the pastor of a new district, I will need to do research about the new city to find similarities with Rialto. Since Moreno Valley and Rialto, California are in the area southern Californian's refer to as the Inland Empire, the demographics are similar throughout the area. I will get a demographics study like Precept, to study the demographics of Moreno Valley.

### **Hispanic Outreach**

The goal is to have one fourth of the missional small group leaders be of Hispanic heritage. Some of the missional small groups should be geared toward the Hispanic population that surrounds Valley Fellowship. Many of these Hispanics speak little English. Having Hispanic leaders means greater ability to connect with the Hispanic population in ministry.

Even though everyone is human and has basic needs, there are differences in cultures and preferences. Figuring out the needs of the surrounding Hispanic community

will facilitate meeting those needs. Going to where Hispanics congregate, and spending time with them by developing relationships, will let them know that the leaders of the missional small groups really care about their well-being.

James White, in *The Rise of the Nones*, discusses how nonreligious people are drawn to causes, before they think about becoming a part of someone's church community.<sup>4</sup> Calling attention to societal ills and dealing with those issues is part of what it means to be missional. Identifying causes that cross ethnic boundaries can help missional small groups reach out to the Hispanic population.

### **Coaching**

The goal is for every leader and apprentice to have a relationship with a coach; a culture of coaching is to be created and maintained. Two leaders meet with a coach to go over what is happening in their group. This is outside of group time, so the leaders can review goals and steps to accomplish them in their group.

Coaching helps leaders think through the goals and obstacles they face. In every endeavor leaders take, issues arise that must be handled. Most leaders tend to panic when these issues arise. Coaches are able to help guide leaders through the obstacles to accomplish their goals.

To lead group members in reaching out to people within their sphere of influence takes time for motivating the members. People usually want to be left alone with what they believe. No one wants to try to convince people about their religion or things that are

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<sup>4</sup> James Emery White, *The Rise of the Nones: Understanding and Reaching the Religiously Unaffiliated* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014), 100. Kindle e-book.

considered personal. Coaching helps leaders look at different angles on how to encourage people to share their faith and have the accountability to make sure it happens. Coaching is important for Valley Fellowship to follow through in developing leaders to lead missional small groups.

### **Content Strategy**

I have been able to learn from observing a template set forth by Dr. Robert Logan for transforming a church's leadership process. I intend to incorporate this template in training leaders to reproduce other leaders for reproducing missional small groups. This template can be found in the book *From Followers to Leaders*. The process is referred to as a template and not a model. The *Oxford American Dictionary* defines model as “a design or style of structure,”<sup>5</sup> while a template is defined as “a pattern or gauge.”<sup>6</sup> Dr. Logan emphasizes that the process or path is not to be copied, but it can apply to different ministries and situations.<sup>7</sup>

The metaphor used for the template is that of a hiking path. Taking a hike requires that one start in the parking lot, then move to the trailhead where initial instruction on the path is received, followed by beginning the trail. As one moves along the trail, there are times of rest where campfires are built, and discussions about the trail ensue. After some time the destination is reached and there is a celebration about the accomplishment.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Eugene Ehrlich, *Oxford American Dictionary*, 427.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 706.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Logan, *From Followers to Leaders*, 27.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

For Valley Fellowship to establish missional small groups, the first step is to communicate with the current pastor. The current pastor should be aware of why I thought about implementing missional small groups at Valley Fellowship. The current culture of the church convinced me the church would not be able to grow based on its attractional model of outreach. Following is what I would recommend to the pastor.

Since the Executive Board has already been notified about the launch of reproducible missional small groups, start by finding four individuals to invite to be part of the process. What the pastor is looking for are people who can be considered “people of peace”—individuals who have contacts and influence over a group of people who do not belong to the church. It is best to recruit people who have not been in the church long, who still have contacts with people who are not part of a Christian community. In recruiting, it is good to identify people who look like the rest of the city, and since the majority of Rialto is Hispanic, it would be good to look for people of Hispanic lineage.

After identifying the individuals for this process, the apprentices need to be motivated—to consider this as something worth investing in. They should meet in a safe place where they are able to ask all types of questions. Casting vision is to be done at the beginning when apprentices are being recruited and benefits are laid out for them to evaluate. Trying to force people into the process will be building missional small groups on a shaky foundation. Logan suggests answering questions that most potential apprentices want to have answered, such as “What is being offered? What would be involved? What will it cost in time, energy, and commitment? What is the benefit?”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 33.

In recruiting individuals, the pastor needs to know what they are looking for, and look for leaders in uncommon places. At Valley Fellowship the same leaders have been doing their duties for a long time. Many people in the congregation do not have time to take on additional responsibilities. Everyone is willing to help, but not many are willing to lead. It would be easy to pull leaders from other responsibilities to launch the missional small groups, because they will be considered the backbone of Valley Fellowship, but looking for leaders that are not already in leadership positions would be an asset for beginning the missional small groups.

After the four individuals are recruited, it is time to provide a proper orientation and start training them. The orientation will be done in a small group format. This is where dissemination of information will take place. The orientation will be for two hours and will be a one-time meeting. Now relationships are starting to form and more in-depth questions are being answered. In the recruitment phase, general direction is given to the apprentices; this is a time when more specific information is given. Paperwork is given out with instructions on how to report and communicate outside of the regular meeting times. During orientation it will be important to emphasize the need to find apprentices. The information being disseminated during group meetings is to be passed along to future leaders. This group is the embryonic stage of what the group will be praying for as a movement. Let the apprentices know that the reason why there are not many people involved is so there can be support from the pastor as they make mistakes and learn during the process.

After orientation the team meets every week for the next six months. Each member of the team gets a chance to lead the group. Throughout these months the

principle used with the apprentices is, I do, you watch. I do, you help. You do, I help. You do, I watch. Finally, you do, someone else watches.<sup>10</sup> During these months relationships are forming, and members are held accountable for how they are being incarnational in their context, since the goal is not just to be missional during the daily rhythms of life. The team will take on social justice projects one month and do other hobby projects some of the other months, so the leaders will be well rounded.

In the template there are times for campfire conversations. These conversations are times where people can share their experiences about what is working and what is not. It is good to have other people's perspective on what their experience is like. It is a time where people can celebrate the life changes that are taking place. For the first round of missional small group meetings, the campfire is not necessary because all the apprentices are in one group. The campfire conversations become important once those apprentices become leaders and they need a time to share and encourage one another.

Toward the end of the six months, the team will start to look for and recruit other apprentice leaders. After four months, the original team will meet every other week; so apprentices can begin recruiting and start their own groups. At this time there should be a bigger launch for the missional small groups. The leadership will always invite their apprentices personally, but to have the whole church involved will take personal invitations and a public campaign.

At the end of the six months together there will be a celebration of what has taken place and the lives that have been changed. These testimonies will be used to inspire the members of Valley Fellowship to join a missional small group. The celebration is a

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 38.

weekend retreat with the leaders' families. This provides a time of encouragement for those who have spent their time in the process. Also it is a rally, as they get ready for the next round of leading their groups and training their apprentices. During this weekend the apprentices they have selected during the previous months are on hand to see how it is done and be inspired.

At first the leadership team will be small, but as the group leaders start to multiply there should be a leadership structure. The leadership structure is to be reproducible like the missional group leaders. For every four missional small groups there should be a captain who advises the leader on what is taking place in the groups. Eventually Valley Fellowship will start another campus where the missional small group structure can be duplicated.

As new members join Valley Fellowship, they are given a gift inventory to help them know where to start in ministry. By taking the spiritual gift inventory, they will discover where they may want to serve in the church or outside it. As the groups are being formed, members can pick the kind of missional small group they want to participate in. If they want to serve in a soup kitchen and spend time ministering to the homeless, they can pick a general interest group. As members join the groups, the groups will decide what they want to do together as a team.

### **Target Population**

Two audiences emerge as the target population for this doctoral project. First, the project is meant to be incarnational with the community around Valley Fellowship and where individual members reside. Second is concentrating on the new members who are

identified as “persons of peace,” to become apprentice leaders, so the missional small groups can be reproducible. Since the small group is organic and incarnational, it relies on the relational influence of the members of the missional small groups for it to be reproducible.

### **Leadership Selection**

The leadership selection process is intended to be an organic process. There is no posting for the leadership positions. Even though a job description is formulated, leaders are selected through observation and invitation. Leadership qualities include open-mindedness, the desire to be coached and to coach others, having a passion for missional living, and being willing to live an incarnational life. This includes also being a person of peace, who has influence over groups that are outside the church. The goal is to identify four individuals who meet these criteria for the process of training to begin.

Once the original group is formed and trained, there will be vision casting with the church. It will start by talking to individual church leaders and then there will eventually be a meeting where the ministry is presented and discussed with the congregation. Then church-wide recruitment for the groups will commence. The goal is to have 60 percent enrollment of the members of the church by registration on site and online.

The goals and plans have been outlined for the missional small groups at Valley Fellowship. Using the template designed by Dr. Robert Logan, implementation of the plan and goals will need to be explained. The next chapter seeks to lay out an introductory plan for how to best implement reproducible missional small groups at Valley Fellowship.

## CHAPTER 5

### IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

This chapter deals with the process of creating missional small groups at Valley Fellowship. For goals to be accomplished, a strategy is to be formulated and acted upon. The implementation of missional small groups is a process that is continual. What is described in this chapter is the beginning of the process of developing missional small groups. Implementation of each goal will be described for other practitioners to use and follow.

Since I am not the pastor of Valley Fellowship anymore, making a presentation to the present pastor is necessary for the project moving forward. First meeting with the pastor to layout the vision for creating a missional small group structure. This is done by inviting him to a meeting at the restaurant of his choice. If the pastor is open to the idea of the missional small groups a meeting with all the materials are presented to him as he looks forward to how to implement the project. Also it would be good if I as the former pastor address a group of leaders about the intent of the project. All options are open to what the pastor wants to do to accomplish the project.

While the option is open to Valley Fellowship, additional study is done on the area of Moreno Valley to ascertain how the project can be accomplished. The difference between Moreno Valley/Imani Praise Fellowship churches and Valley Fellowship is Moreno Valley has an English and Spanish service. Meaning there are leaders at the church who are already Hispanic. Due to the parameters set forth by this project, it is necessary to learn how to reach to the Hispanic portion of Rialto.

### **Hispanic Outreach**

Valley Fellowship is located in a primarily Hispanic neighborhood. Most churches when faced with a decision whether to stay or go, vote to go and sell the church to a congregation who can minister to the population. More churches are making the decision to stay and try and minister to their community. Outreach efforts are complicated when there is a language barrier. So the church is discover how to minister in a society that highlights the differences instead of the things all may have in common.

While starting missional small groups, the pastor needs to recruit Hispanic apprentices who are persons of peace, so they can minister to the Hispanic presence in the community. It starts by being willing to start a dialogue with people of Hispanic descent. To discover the needs of the community, the pastor talks with other pastors who pastor Hispanic churches. Extending an invitation to have lunch with those ministers. Starting the conversation with these pastors will help to understand the needs of the community. This time of listening is to see how to better minister to this demographic. The Hispanic pastor can also give the pastor other places where he can listen to the needs of the Hispanic community.

The pastor will spend a few weeks setting up different meetings with community leaders, clergy and people in the neighborhood about the needs of the community. Soliciting their responses to what is missing in the community. Also asking about their stories, and listening to them share about their journeys in life. Listening to people tell their story gives insight into what people go through and what they need in order to make it through. After the meetings the facilitator documents what the people said, and patterns are to be discovered from each person's story. There should be a few ideas that can be used to make a connection with someone of Hispanic descent.

By listening to people's stories the pastor can go out and find a person of peace for the Hispanic community. The reason why it can be done because the needs are being met and it opens up an opportunity where the pastor can spend time with people who may not look like him, since Valley Fellowship is a predominantly African American Church. As the pastor and the person of peace feel comfortable the pastor can extend an invitation for the person to be apart of his missional small group.

### **Plan of Implementation for Leaders**

The implementation plan for the missional small groups covers developing the group leaders, starting the groups, and multiplying leaders along the way. The first step is to develop a flyer explaining what this new ministry is about. On the flyer it will state that Valley has missional small groups to help people who have entered a relationship with Jesus grow into their calling to reproduce people who love Jesus. This will be done through small groups that study the Bible and pray together. Small groups are relational and engage the community. Every week or two the groups will meet to eat, pray, and

study the Word in a time format of an hour and fifteen minutes to an hour and a half. Throughout the week members should check on each other, praying for one another and keeping each other accountable. Every month the group will decide on an outreach service project. Recruiting will be by personal invitation and referrals from church leaders. We are looking for people who are willing to be a part of a new dimension of growth and service at Valley Fellowship.

### **Recruiting**

In recruiting leaders, the focus should be on finding people who have the ability to influence people within their own circles of influence. People of peace know how to move people into action. They can be found by looking at new converts and envisioning who would be able to lead people into fellowship with Christ. The Lord may reveal some names as people pray together. One could also consider people who have led small groups previously. Recruits with experience need to understand that this is different from what they have done in the past, even though there are some elements from past experiences that will apply.

After seeing who is interested in leading the missional small groups, it is important to start off with four people initially. When more people are recruited, some may decide this ministry is not for them, and there will be no pressure for them to stay. Also, there should not be any prolonged periods of dormancy because people may lose interest.

The next step is to look for a video of a ministry that has done missional teams and the successes they have experienced. A video can be found on YouTube, by entering

“missional groups,” or a search can be done on Google. If a video cannot be found, another option is to visit a ministry in the area that is doing the same things and see how it works. Talk to the people who are leading so they can share the benefits and negatives. This gives the leaders an opportunity to count the cost. After the site visit or watching a video, have another conversation about being a leader in missional small groups and ask prospective leaders for another step of commitment. For those who decide they are not interested, talk with them to find out why they believe this opportunity is not for them. It does not have to be a long conversation but make sure a promise is made that they will not be pressured into continuing. For those who are continuing, let them know what is expected of them as the leadership nucleus is formed.

### **Orientation**

After the invitation has been extended to potential leaders, an orientation giving details is needed. This takes leaders who have answered in the affirmative a little further into what is expected of them in the missional small groups. A suggested time for the orientation is Sunday morning from around nine till noon. It is important that the people who have consented be made to feel special. Everything planned must communicate how special they and the missional small groups are to the church.

There should be a continental breakfast. The hall must be decorated. If there are multiple people on the staff, they are to be present to serve these people, because they are going to be putting a lot of effort and time into the groups. There should be music playing in the background while someone registers everyone and hands them their packets with printed nametags. Implement any other creative elements the team considers important.

There will be times when the leaders are going to feel overwhelmed and taken advantage of, but on this day they should feel valued and loved.

The orientation will serve the purpose of going in-depth about what is expected in this ministry. During this session, leaders will be given tools to lead their teams effectively. They can start with an icebreaker, such as “if I was a superhero, which one would I be and why,” with a suggested time of about ten minutes. After the icebreaker, there will be a talk about the purpose of the gathering, and the goals of the missional small groups.

A video needs to be shown again to reinforce the reason why the groups are being done. Missional small groups are about life change for everyone involved. During training, there will be a description of what is supposed to take place, and also an opportunity for role-playing so people will get a better feel for it. Time commitment should be discussed. Topics like how much time it takes to prepare and how best to balance one’s time between work, family, and their missional small group preparation will be helpful.

Following orientation, there should be a follow-up informational meeting with the church. This needs to be done so the leaders can begin to receive encouragement. The missional small group will be done with the four leaders meeting with the pastor. In addition to the groups, coaching should be done with two individuals to one pastor in each session.

## **Equipping**

For the following three months, the pastor will meet with their teams each week, going through the experience of being a group. The small groups will study and pray for one another and build a relational component into the group meeting by sharing a meal or recreational activity together. These groups will also engage in service projects. The pastor will choose the project and let the group members know what is needed for it, also teaching the apprentices how to recognize opportunities to serve in the rhythms of their daily lives.

As the groups commence, the apprentices need a firm understanding of how to be a facilitator. The questions the facilitator asks should be open-ended so group members can share what is going on in their lives. Right and wrong methods of Bible study will be taught, with the goal of the study always being to help people dig deeper in the passage. The leaders also need to learn how to follow up with members to keep them encouraged.

During the three months the pastor is to lead the group, each leader is assigned tasks, so they can see what goes into the process of leading a missional group. One of the tasks is learning how to select an eating establishment to have missional small group meetings. They can go to a restaurant like Starbucks or Panera Bread and see if there is space for a meeting to take place. They should also talk with the manager to see if there are any objections to having a small group discussion in their establishment. Plan a lesson guide with one of the people in the group, so they can see what it takes to prepare. After allowing each member to participate in planning a lesson, then he or she should come up with the lessons while I assist them in preparation.

The Life Transformation Group curriculum would be a good type of training for the apprentice leaders. The small group questions and dimensions of discipleship focus on eight areas for transformation. The life transformation groups read portions of Scripture each week prior to the meeting; focusing on growing in holiness and spiritual maturity. The group will pray for each other and pray for people who are not followers of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

During the six months the pastors must make sure that every apprentice has an opportunity to lead. There must be time where they can ask questions about what they have experienced. As the leaders continue to meet, extra time needs to be set aside for coaching to take place. It will be good to have an established time for this, so the apprentices can connect relationally and have time to ask questions. Familiarity builds trust so they can ask any question and feel safe. If extra time is needed, phone calls can be arranged. It is not only about recruiting leaders but it is also equipping them on how to engage the community.

### **Service Projects**

A follower of Jesus is a person who impacts the society around them. Part of missional small groups is impacting the community. There are different ways to bless the community, but it is important that it be done on a consistent basis. The neighborhood must feel the love of Valley Fellowship reaching out to them.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Logan, "Life Transformation Groups" (lecture, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA, March 25, 2014), 1.

The service projects are to be carried out once a month. Every group does not have to do the same project. The leaders can do research on the internet or go to city hall to discover needs in the community. Some church members may be familiar with non-profit organizations in the community that could use some help.

A list needs to be compiled of all these organizations with their contact information and a description of what they do. This information can be discussed among the group to determine their interest. After determining what they want to do, one of the apprentices can call to schedule the service project. All three service projects should be done in the first month so people can plan their personal schedules. When the leaders have their own groups they can plan their service projects two months in advance.

After the service project, the leader will ask for feedback. How did you feel to minister in this capacity? What did you gain from this experience? Did you see Jesus move in this experience? How did Jesus move? There should be a discussion on how to get the rest of the church involved in missional small groups, so they can have a greater impact in the community. The pastor is to model and then supervise the other leaders in planning service projects.

With the missional small groups that focus on a hobby, leaders can target a group of people with common interests. At their jobs or their children's school, parents may have common interests. The leaders are to see who is interested in taking part in a hobby. It could be biking, off-roading, or fishing, as long as people are willing to do it together on a regular basis. Servant projects help get the group members in a rhythm of serving in the community. For leaders to excel and to accomplish all the tasks set before them, the leaders will benefit from coaching.

## Coaching

For coaching to take place on this level, the leaders are grouped in threes. When a meeting occurs there need to be two people being coached. Everyone has a half hour to discuss what aspects of the life groups they need coaching on. Every person must listen, so they can give insight to the person being coached. Give more positive feedback than negative, because positive feedback with specific complements will be more encouraging. When complements are too general, the person receiving them may not take them seriously. For the complements to be effective they must be clear, and several positive complements must be given for every negative comment.

For the facilitator of the apprentices, it is necessary not just to let people talk, but that the people be coached. Coaching should take place every other week for six months, and can be renewed if needed. “Coaching is the process of coming alongside a person or team to help them discover God’s agenda for their life and ministry, and then cooperating with the Holy Spirit to see that agenda become a reality.”<sup>2</sup> The purpose of coaching is to help people succeed with what is in front of them. Coaching is not giving advice or telling them what they should do. People will be more successful when they discover for themselves what they are to do, and what fits them. As a coach for the leaders, it is important to ask the right questions to aid in self-discovery.

The first rule of coaching is to know it is all right to say, “I do not know.” The goal of leading this group of apprentices is to help them form their curriculum to guide their students and raise new leaders. One of the greatest skills of a coach is listening. If one does not listen, the right questions cannot be asked. People are going to be pouring

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Logan, “Biblical Foundations of Coaching,” 1.

out their hearts, and it will break trust if the coach gives the appearance of not listening or understanding what the people are trying to communicate. To be effective, the facilitator needs to listen and reflect comments back.

Throughout the coaching, everyone is not going to move at the same pace, so it is important that the leader be patient. Some people are going to need more time to discover answers, while the answers may be clear to others. Their discovery process must not be interrupted. The only way the leader can give advice is to let people know that they are transitioning roles. If the people think the leader is still a coach and is giving advice, it will hurt the process. There will be times when people will get frustrated and ask for advice. The leader needs to make a determination that the person has done all the steps in the process of discovering their own way out. If they are about to give up, and ask for help, let them know that the coaching hat is coming off and the role of mentor is being assumed, so advice can be given.

This is done to facilitate refocusing. As the leader coaches the people in their group, some may wander off the topic. The leader needs to refocus on what needs to be done. Refocusing will help the person being coached consider different paths they can take to get to their goal. Logan states, “The first refocusing question asks us to confirm or clarify our goals in light of the present realities.”<sup>3</sup> Once they have determined the possible paths, they need to decide which to choose. Here the goal is to brainstorm together and stretch their thinking, discovering new ways of accomplishing their goals and measuring progress.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert E. Logan and Sherilyn Carlton, *Coaching 101: Discover the Power of Coaching* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 2003), 66.

Even though it is looked upon as a place of safety and intimacy this should not be a group that continues to meet. Coaching lasts for six months with a beginning and end. Always agree on a termination date at the beginning.

The purpose of coaching is to not only to get people ready to lead, but to multiply leaders. There will be time to recruit members for their groups, but during training people can start praying and thinking of one or two other people that can come alongside them in this process in the future, now that they know what it takes, and have gone through some studies and coaching. What I want to avoid is the thinking that apprentices can only be church people. Remind the leaders that leaders and apprentices will come out of the harvest. They need to be prayerful and willing to find potential leaders from any arena of the church or community. They may fast for a 24-hour period and pray about who the Lord wants them to train as leaders. They should also consult other leaders about the people they want to train, and solicit their input. Then the leaders should bring their names to the group so the whole group can pray about them. The leaders need to prepare themselves to go to these people to invite them to join the process. Volunteers interested in becoming apprentices should talk with the pastor to ascertain if this is a good match for them.

### **Overnight Retreat**

The leaders will need time to decompress. After two months, they need to take a break from the training to see how far they have come, and share with others about their journey. This will be done at an overnight retreat which will take place at Pine Springs Ranch in Mountain Center, California, a retreat owned by the Southeastern California

Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. There will be seasons of praying together and journaling about what God has been doing in their lives, and all will be praying for the guidance of God, asking for strength and wisdom to move forward.

There can be some team-building exercises during this time, but overall it should be a relaxing time. It will more organic, such as eating with people you may not know very well. Another way to connect is to assign people a number, then everyone picks out a number and they spend time talking about their experiences in the training. Another activity is to spend time outdoors enjoying nature, discussing what has been learned, what could be done differently, and dreaming about how they are going to make a difference when they get back home. The schedule should not be so crowded that there is no time to relax and enjoy the downtime.

At the end of the overnight retreat there will be a time for the pastor to restate what the church is trying to do, looking at the joys, and also the difficulties. The goal is to make disciples who reproduce other disciples through the missional teams. Nothing ever goes exactly how one expects it, but it is necessary to have the big goal in mind and be able to adjust to reach people. This ministry of dealing with people can get messy. As leaders they have the skills and anointing to make it work.

### **Celebration**

After meeting in the missional small groups with the leaders for a period of three months there needs to be a celebration of what has been accomplished. Take them out for a meal with their spouses or significant others at a nice restaurant. There can be a brunch at a hotel, such as the Mission Inn in Riverside, California. If the budget does not allow

that, it could be a dinner cooked by the pastor. The pastor can get every leader a gift that speaks to them and their journey. The gift should remind them of their time going through this process and should encourage them as they move forward.

During the meal, the next step will be laid out. This will be to start implementing missional small groups for the members, so that at least sixty percent of Valley Fellowship will be included in this activity. These leaders will encourage members to become a part of this endeavor. Leaders must have their recruiting lists of people they have been praying for. Now it is time to start talking to the recruits about participating with them in leading the missional small groups.

A sheet of reflection questions will be passed out. This is to be returned to the pastor in journal format in two weeks. The reflection questions will cover the good things that went on during the training, as well as things that were considered negative, followed by things they felt were missing. After their journals have been turned in, the pastor will send a note of encouragement to each leader, telling them what they are doing is helping the kingdom of God. This should be followed up by another note to make sure they have contacted the people they want to be their apprentices. The pastor must make sure each leader has an apprentice going forward. After being stretched going through the training, give a two week rest for the leaders before they pick up again with the other teams.

### **Evaluation and Assessment**

Evaluation is an important part of the process. Listening to feedback is an important part of making missional small groups work. For the purpose of this doctoral project, a survey for the apprentice leaders will help guide the next training set that is to

take place. The survey is to measure if the training was effective. Feedback is needed to see how the training can be improved upon for the next set of leader/apprentices. The goal of the survey is to receive honest feedback on how to improve the training to make sure the groups continue to multiply and remain consistent. The survey is best done in two parts; surveying the apprentices separately and together. First, survey monkey online will administer the survey individually.<sup>4</sup> These are done first for the respondents to give their initial thoughts without others influencing them. To see the similarities and differences between the individual answers and the group answers will be beneficial. To see how opinion is formed will be advantageous and will give clues for prioritizing concerns and successes in adjusting things for the next round of groups.

Next, a survey will be done among the groups. There are group sessions throughout the training, but for this project an additional time of about an hour to an hour and a half will be conducted off site. The apprentices have had time to reflect on their answers to the survey monkey and now group opinion can be formed on how missional small groups can move forward at Valley Fellowship. With the data from those two surveys, adaptations can be made to strengthen the missional small groups.

Implementation will take much work and determination. Leaders need to remember that confronting problems can strengthen the groups to become better. Even though I am not able to implement this project now, it will be implemented in the future.

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<sup>4</sup> A copy of the survey can be found in appendix A.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Trying to explain missional thinking to Valley Fellowship's elders only brought confusion to their faces. I thought I had explained it wrong, but talking with professors and also my former youth pastor who has a doctorate in missiology, let me know that I had explained it well. For people who have been in church all their lives, culture has so infiltrated what the church does, that missional thought can be confusing. That is why starting outside the church is better than starting within. The Bible calls on Christians to look for laborers, not just people to join. The body of Christ is called to the *missio Dei*, but to be sent of God and make an impact, one must be consistent.

Missional is a word that has various connotations, depending on who is using it. Many individuals try to add missional to what they have already been doing. Some consider missional a fad that will be used for a few years and then the Christian church will move on to the next great thing. But to be missional is a way of life. The kingdom of God is an alternate government operating among men, and under this government Christians are to be missional.

Churches focus on reaching the community when it is necessary. My experience in pastoring churches for over fifteen years has taught me that it takes a lot to maintain a church. Dedicated people spend hours sitting in committee meetings, worship services, and mid-week prayer meetings. Counting money and keeping track of it, dealing with people who are unhappy, and just trying to keep the church together is very time consuming. When the pastor says it is time to reach out to the community, many members feel that they do not have time to do this.

The churches' focus should be on the community. The church exists to disciple individuals and not for individuals to build up the church. Being missional is the way individuals are disciplined. For Valley Fellowship to be revolutionized is to stop trying to get everyone involved, when so many people are overworked. It is to start with a small group of people who are excited about being disciplined by being missional. Jesus concentrated on twelve disciples to take the gospel to the people. They were not the religious elite, but he invited them to follow him, and hoped as he poured his life into these twelve people that they would follow his example.

So many Christians are obsessed with the American dream and the pursuit of happiness. Happiness to Americans is usually represented by a consumeristic mentality—people want to be served. The missional mindset is that of being a servant as Jesus was, listening to the Spirit and what is going on around them in order to serve people in the midst of their rhythms of life. To be missional is to make service to God and people paramount. This missional mindset should govern the decisions one makes in life. To enter the missional life is to ask, what can this group offer to be a blessing to the community? Also, what are the needs of the community that the church can meet?<sup>1</sup> Asking these questions takes the focus off ourselves and places it outward, where Jesus wants it, on the world around us.

Being missional is a dynamic process of people seeking to bless others in various ways. While listening to the rhythms of the community, engagement can be totally different from church to church. No one can predict what will take place. Missional

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<sup>1</sup> M. Scott Boren, *Missional Small Groups*, 44.

groups cannot just go in and start doing anything and everything. Time spent developing authentic relationships is crucial to being missional.

To develop a missional ministry is to be incarnational; this runs in opposition to societal norms. Everyone is in a hurry to accomplish their own agendas and priorities. To be incarnational is to sacrifice what an individual personally wants. It can include sacrificing where one lives, how one spends time, and everything one does. Being incarnational is the practice of consistently putting the needs of others first.

Consistency is a big part of missional small groups. Valley Fellowship has been accused of not being consistent. Initiatives are started and maintained for a couple of months, then people get tired and stop. In many churches the most consistent practice is worship on a Saturday or Sunday. All religions have some sort of celebratory service. Worship can be added to people's regular schedule. To be consistently missional is bigger; it is to place the work of heaven at the forefront of life. It is a way of being, not just doing a few things to fulfill requirements.

Consistently being missional involves a change of lifestyle and how one approaches life. Being involved in missional small groups can turn the culture around and revitalize the church. This does not necessarily mean that the church will be full to capacity; but it will be a healthy church. A healthy community is when leaders are growing and the people are being fulfilled in their calling as Christians. A healthy environment causes the people to be consistent in their service.

Equipping leaders is about embodying the vision of living out a missional life, walking the way of service beside people, being intentional and calling people to be apprentices, developing relationships with people so they can observe how to lead, and

coaching them as leaders. Leaders may feel they don't have time for all this, but it is an important part of changing the culture into a missional movement. Literally taking people along for the journey is essential to changing things, and for future leaders to understand what is taking place. It is easy to explain what a leader wants to have happen, but people may receive the wrong message. For understanding to take place, there needs to be more than explaining what a leader wants to see; it involves demonstration, embodying the vision, and making it real.

It is easier to recruit and equip leaders from the outside than from people who are already members. Matthew 9:37 and 38 says, "Then he said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." People who are just entering a new phase of their lives are open to learning and not set in their ways. People who have been members awhile think a certain way and for them to change their thinking and do things differently can be difficult. Some Christians have a hard time when it comes to missional thinking, because it goes against ingrained cultural norms.

Missional small groups cause a change in lifestyle. They are not a group that just meets once a week or every other week. They involve individuals coming together to be intertwined with each other's lives. Missional groups are about authentic relationships and being incarnational in the community.

To be missional is to remain within the rhythms of life. Many times Christians are in a hurry to make things happen. Instead of following the rhythms of life to make a difference, people try to add on to what they have been doing already. To follow the

rhythms of life means to witness wherever one may be as the Lord impresses, listening as much as doing.

For reproduction of groups to take place, a leader has to be intentional in bringing people along for the journey. Reproduction cannot be an afterthought; it is a priority in revitalizing a church and intentionally promoting the missional movement. For reproduction of missional small groups to take place, one of the leaders' first tasks is finding apprentices to train.

Apprentices work out better when they come from the harvest. Part of the process of multiplying is connecting people to Christians. A declining church becomes insular. New Christians may have many connections with the community at large. As people who are "persons of peace" come into the church it is imperative to train them to connect with others who do not know Jesus. This creates new life in the church.

As a pastor of a declining church I should spend time recruiting and equipping new members, so they can touch those who are still connected. As this is done, members are more likely to leave their comfort zones and reach out to the community.

Attractional events can be helpful, but it becomes harder and harder to attract people, and in the case of Valley Fellowship, many do not stay to become a part of the group. As authentic relationships are built among people, and they are called to be missional by following a cause that is important to them, they are more likely to become part of the group and well grounded.

## Next Steps

Missional small groups at Valley Fellowship represent a cultural change. Valley Fellowship has been known for executing events. The problem with hosting these events is that it is catering to former members and other Adventists in the area. The event is considered a success due to good attendance, but the next Sabbath all the guests go back to their churches, and the sanctuary is only a quarter full. The coordinators of the events feel justified because people have attended their event, but the church has not benefitted long term.

For Valley Fellowship to change its culture into one that is consistent in its approach to ministry will take time. It starts with finding the places where people gather. Paul made it his habit when entering a city to go to the temple because many people were there. He went where the people gathered together, so he could explain the Scriptures to them. Missional small group members need to spend time where the people of Rialto spend time. Rialto has an open food market on Wednesdays and being there would be one way of developing relationships. From there other opportunities to develop relationships could develop.

Another step is preaching on aspects of missional living. If the sermon is a strong biblically based message, members will eventually understand. The message should be explained during the sermon time and should also be discussed during individual conversations. To have passion for a subject causes excitement, and the pastor's enthusiasm may move people to consider becoming missional themselves.

Another step is sharing testimonies from people who have come into the church through the missional model. Sharing stories of people who have been touched and how

their lives are better, and showing the impact on the lives of those who served the community can demonstrate how building relationships benefits all. All these steps can help to change the culture of Valley Fellowship to a missional one.

As the network of missional small groups grows, two or three years after the initial groups are started a churchwide initiative can be held. Inviting new contacts into the groups is a way for the missional small groups to be sustained until the groups become bigger than the current church. Valley Fellowship could have another worship service to bring people who are part of the missional small groups into the church, remembering that the groups cannot fall into the usual patterns of small groups as in the past.

My tenure at Valley Fellowship has been a pattern of starting ministry initiatives, then stopping when there is opposition. Over the years I had tried to build ministry through consensus, to have everyone at least willing to try something different. The overall goal of moving the church to a missional culture through missional small groups is to endure, keeping on when everyone does not quite understand what the differences are. Teaching people how to be consistent in their ministry for Christ and helping them realize that they can be missional within the rhythms of daily life will be a large part of it.

Missional small groups are a strategy for Adventist churches to move their culture from attraction based to missional. The history of the church has been to go throughout the world telling of Jesus' soon return. To accomplish the mission of letting the world know about the coming of Jesus takes the effort of not just administrators, ministers, and some members; it needs the efforts of all who are a part of the church.

Missional churches will vary from each other based on their neighborhoods. Churches will begin to be the salt of the earth Jesus talked about in the Sermon on the Mount. The attitude of members will change from that of consumers to truly being servants. Spending time among the community and building relationships, will help the kingdom of God to expand. Missional small groups will give the church a way of being consistent with what God has called his people to do.

Moving many people in a different direction at one time is not an easy endeavor. For the church, which is at times rooted in tradition, it will be more manageable to move a few people at a time, to work with the early adopters, and as the church moves forward those on the fence will be able to see the benefits.

Reproduction of these groups is essential for the growth of the movement. It is not based on bringing new people into the church quickly. The Adventist model has been to have public evangelistic efforts where fifteen to fifty people come into the church in a short period of time. For a successful evangelist, more than one hundred people can be baptized. Members get excited about the new people associated with their church, and the pastor tries to graft them into the congregation. With missional groups one hundred people may not be baptized every year, but as reproduction takes place, the impact on the community will be stronger.

A missional small group is a way to transform communities with the love of Jesus. Training apprentices who will become leaders is a way for the movement to multiply. People want their lives to be different, and when Christians pour their lives into others, showing the difference Christ can make by being involved with one another, there

will be transformation. Transformation generally happens gradually as people observe and live with others, and the Holy Spirit works within hearts.

## APPENDIX A

### Survey Questions

#### Missional small group training

1. I understand what it means to be missional.

Yes                       Not sure                       No

2. I received adequate information on how to recruit an apprentice.

Yes                       Not sure                       No

3. The plan is achievable.

Yes                       Not sure                       No

4. Missional small groups are viable at Valley Fellowship.

Yes                       Not sure                       No

5. The coaching I received was helpful.

Yes                       Not sure                       No

6. The leader did a good job of training the apprentices.

Yes                       Not sure                       No

7. The leader was open to suggestions.

Yes                       Not sure                       No

8. I will look for apprentice leaders to train in being missional and leading groups.

Yes                       Not sure                       No

9. I value relationships with people.

Yes                       Not sure                       No

10. I am more willing to look for ways to help people I know.

Yes                       Not sure                       No

11. I am more willing to look for ways to help people I don't know.

Yes                       Not sure                       No

12. I will recommend others becoming apprentice missional small group leaders.

Yes                       Not sure                       No

13. I believe a missional environment is important for my life.

Yes                       Not sure                       No

14. I believe a missional environment is important for my church.

Yes                       Not sure                       No

15. I believe missional small groups will help the church.

Yes                       Not sure                       No

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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