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# Youth for Christ as a Multiplication Movement

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# Ministry Focus Paper Approval Sheet

This ministry focus paper entitled

YOUTH FOR CHRIST AS A MULTIPLICATION MOVEMENT:  
RECENT LESSONS FROM THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Written by

CONRAD TRENT PARSONS

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

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upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:

  
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YOUTH FOR CHRIST AS A MULTIPLICATION MOVEMENT:  
RECENT LESSONS FROM THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

A MINISTRY FOCUS PAPER  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE  
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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

CONRAD TRENT PARSONS  
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## ABSTRACT

### **Youth for Christ as a Multiplication Movement: Recent Lessons from the Pacific Islands**

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When people in Western societies imagine Christian ministry, they more often think in terms of addition, such as adding members to a church. With some reflection and re-examination of God's mission in the world, Christians can envisage multiplication of disciples. The Pacific Islands offer lessons in this shift of expectation.

The purpose of this study was to assess the recent success of Youth for Christ's (YFC) expansion in the Pacific Region. This assessment used four prominent contemporary theories about evangelistic multiplication movements, where disciples are making disciples who make disciples. It discusses the identity of "church," methods of evangelization and disciple-making, and the place of multiplication movements in achieving the Great Commission. The goal was to imagine reproducible, transferable principles that can advance YFC's global vision that every young person be given an opportunity to become a follower of Jesus Christ.

YFC is committed to indigenous evangelism among teenagers. It has established new outreach ministries in more than thirty countries since 2008. During the same period YFC Australia has undergone radical transformation by implementing key components of multiplication movements. This has cemented recognition that to achieve such a grand vision YFC needs reproducible systems that equip new disciples to evangelize and disciple others.

The core components of an effective multiplication strategy founded on the Gospel can become the basis for reproducible and transferable systems relevant across the diverse nations of the Pacific. Pilot training seminars in several Pacific island nations taught disciple-making principles, shared learning from various national ministries and explored effective approaches to changing culture. These seminars were valuable in helping national ministries multiply disciples, navigate change and plan for the future.

Content Reader: Kara Powell, PhD

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To my wife, Wendy, and to Natasha, Harmoni and William for their unending patience  
with my travels and my enduring quest to follow Christ and make disciples

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I would like to thank my brothers and sisters in Youth for Christ throughout the Pacific Region for their many hours of prayer, conversation and collaboration. I have been inspired by your unwavering commitment to finding effective ways of building disciples who can teach others and fulfill the vision of enabling every young person in the Pacific Region to hear the Gospel. Your compassion for those from other islands and people groups has encouraged me. Your commitment to exalting the person of Christ and accelerating the process of evangelism and disciple-making resonates with that which is in my own heart.

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PART ONE  
MINISTRY CONTEXT

## INTRODUCTION

This Ministry Focus Paper captures lessons learned from Youth for Christ (YFC) among the islands in the Pacific Region between 2013 and 2017. It reflects on important experiments in evangelism and outreach. In addition, it identifies some principles arising from these experiences, and compares them with YFC's ministry in the US and other countries with a view to increasing understanding of the cross-cultural implications and needs of multiplication ministry.

This paper explores the insights gained from recent YFC ministry initiatives in the Pacific into the process of multiplying disciples as well as strategic issues that need to be addressed. Specific actions and policies that clearly increase the likelihood of success in starting new YFC ministries in the twenty-first century Pacific are described, including the importance of working closely with local churches, so YFC can better fulfill its primary vision. That is, to provide every young person with an opportunity to respond to the Gospel and follow Jesus Christ as members of a church while recognizing that it is the Holy Spirit who leads and sustains the process.

### **The Failure to Establish Ongoing YFC Ministries in the Pacific Region**

Despite extensive investment of time, energy and finances in YFC Pacific in past decades, and many encouraging conversion and discipleship stories, to date the history of YFC as a multiplication movement in the Pacific is one of disappointment. Progress made in Tonga, Samoa, American Samoa and Australia offers some hope. Nonetheless, so far there is no enduring model of success. Nauru, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Fiji and New

Zealand illustrate the struggles faced in this task, and provide a challenge for future leaders.

This failure suggests that the model needs to be reexamined and refined so that it provides a robust structural framework for the dedication and sacrifice of individuals and results in lasting ministry outcomes. The disappointing outcomes present a challenge that needs to be faced so that future initiatives both in the Pacific and elsewhere are more effective. Some of the key issues that emerged included ongoing leadership, financial support and relationships with churches.

### **The Birth and Development of Youth for Christ in the United States**

Youth for Christ began as a whirlwind. It was born in the euphoria of young soldiers and other service personnel returning home to the United States (US) after World War II. Men and women had given their lives to serve noble purposes during the war and still wanted to give themselves to something significant. The Christian Gospel and the Great Commission met that need. Godly leaders rode that energetic wave from New York across the US, learning to replicate its insights in each city. Lessons were captured and programs copied. Thousands of young people became enthusiastic followers of Jesus Christ and their lives were transformed. The movement spread to many other countries and Youth for Christ International was created.

After more than seven decades the whirlwind has died down and it is clearly time to revisit core strategies with a view to ensuring that new ministries are as effective and lasting as those seen in earlier years. Through the decades there has been a continual ebb and flow of vision and effectiveness. From time to time, new life has burst forth in

unexpected places. Old structures and programs have been revisited and new experiments undertaken although the intensity and breadth of these has not matched the initial post-war momentum. Nonetheless, YFC's clarified core values and its clear vision built around the Great Commission give solid support to ongoing evangelistic ministries in the US and around the world.

In many nations, YFC's commitment to the original vigorous mission remains. Each generation produces young people who are called by God to preach the Gospel of Jesus and make disciples. The challenge is to provide them with the structures and tools needed to create the greatest possible impact. The core principles and lessons articulated by YFC provide a valid platform on which to build new evangelistic ministries in the twenty-first century. These programs enable local churches to reach teenagers who otherwise would have no opportunity to hear the Good News and the call to follow Jesus Christ as his disciples.

### **Youth for Christ Expands into Australia and the Pacific**

In contrast with Youth for Christ in the US, which was somewhat centralized and coordinated, branches in Australia were far more diverse and autonomous and only later combined to form a national organization. The conglomerated structure that eventually developed retained the strength of local ministries and established a national office and resource center to facilitate collaboration and accelerate growth. Tensions between the local chapters, known as "branches," and between the branches and the national leadership were addressed through a National Leadership Team (NLT). The NLT consisted of the Executive Director of each branch, the National Director or Chief

Executive Officer and National Resource Center staff. Meeting periodically, issues such as policy compliance, cooperation, fundraising, strategy and branding were discussed. Originally, each branch was incorporated and had its own board, but around 2000 this was gradually transitioned to recognize a single National Board plus branches with regional committees.

A similar spontaneity and diversity prevailed in the rest of the Pacific Region and may have contributed to the transience of YFC programs in these countries. Historically, YFC was strongest in New Zealand and Samoa, although YFC programs were established in countries such as Fiji, Tonga and, more recently, Kiribati and American Samoa. Exploratory work has been undertaken in several nations including Nauru, Cook Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea with a view to strengthening evangelism and discipleship amongst young people in these nations.

### **Evangelistic Multiplication Movements and Church Disruption**

This paper reviews key literature that informs evangelistic ministry and mission. The process of evangelism generates new forms of worship and community as believers gather around the stories of Jesus and carry forward the work of sharing the Gospel and making disciples. It is essential to understand how groups arising from evangelization interact with more traditional forms of church, especially in societies where community and tradition are closely linked. These groups have some continuity with past forms of church community and worship, yet they also have discontinuities. This can either cause conflict with more traditional expressions of faith, or their new shape can be welcomed as an expression of God's future Kingdom. It is important not only to evaluate from the

perspective of what has been known and experienced in the past, but also to look forward to the heavenly future when all current forms and structures will be subsumed.

Reaching young people with the Gospel and making new disciples can create a problem. Relationships forged during the mission will create Christian community in a variety of new forms. For some young people this is their first introduction to church, for others, it may be their first positive experience of church. In both cases, the necessity of nurturing new Christian disciples in their faith through meaningful relationships and community raises questions about the nature of church. To some extent, each group that emerges from the mission of YFC has the potential to be a church or to add to a church. This issue must be examined both theologically and pragmatically, particularly given the nature of YFC as a multiplication movement because YFC does not merely multiply national programs or local chapters or even individual disciples, it also multiplies groups and small communities as it carries out its mission. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify the nature of those groups in relation to “local church,” and resolve what has been a divisive and disputed issue in the movement from time to time.

### **God’s Mission and Strategy and the Place of Youth for Christ**

The Bible is the story of God’s mission.<sup>1</sup> It conveys a coherent story of God’s intentions, plans and strategic action. Any micro-strategies should be valued according to their compliance with that larger story and strategy. Evangelistic efforts may appear random, spontaneous and unexpected, yet there should be an overall intentionality and purposefulness so that both local churches and evangelistic movements such as YFC are

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 48.

working together to proclaim and extend God's Kingdom here on earth. Those seeking to establish new churches today can gain wisdom by examining the methods used by the Apostle Paul<sup>2</sup> and considering how local churches and organizations such as YFC might utilize these. Like YFC, Paul made every effort to create self-supporting ministries that were not dependent on external funding. In support of this view, Henry Venn argued for an indigenous church principle that each church in a missionary context should be self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating.<sup>3</sup> Responsibility and authority should be localized, creating a climate of freedom and empowerment.

The Great Commission, critical to God's purposes in the world, requires the multiplication of Christian disciples. There must be replication: disciples making disciples who make disciples. Nothing short of a multiplication movement can keep up with global population growth and the scope of God's plan for the salvation of the world.<sup>4</sup> Rapid reproduction and exponential growth is ideal and desirable so that salvation can be made available to as many people as possible. Movements with this capacity and potential have been examined and have generated practical insights that can be used in planning strategic outreach. Although all growth is dependent on God, it is possible to design evangelistic ministry in such a way that it has greater potential to quickly and easily spread from person to person.

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<sup>2</sup> Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1962), 8-9.

<sup>3</sup> Dana Robert, ed., "Henry Venn," *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*, [http://www.dacb.org/stories/non%20africans/legacy\\_venn.html](http://www.dacb.org/stories/non%20africans/legacy_venn.html) (accessed 23 August 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Walter A. Henrichsen, *Disciples Are Made, Not Born: Making Disciples Out of Christians* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1974), 142.

## **Design for Maximum Impact and Reach in the Pacific**

The heart of Youth for Christ's mission is the multiplication of young disciples. In the Pacific Region, careful consideration of the essential elements was required so that YFC could function effectively in a variety of cultures. Formulating an effective strategy required both a theological approach and a practical approach that took into account cultural values and challenges.

Case studies of recent YFC ministry in the Pacific Region provide helpful lessons and can shape strategies for starting YFC in new countries as well as for expanding ministry in current countries. Theories concerning reproducible ministry systems reveal the importance and interdependence of each component in a YFC ministry. This awareness will better equip members of YFC, such as young evangelists, youth workers, national leaders and board members, to fulfill their goals. It also has relevance for other ministries that are focused on multiplication and growth through discipleship of new believers. A clear strategy can give a fledgling national evangelistic youth ministry a healthy start. This paper documents initial attempts to teach multiplication principles within the YFC movement and the lessons learned which have helped to identify essential components.

The process of evangelization involves reception of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the making of disciples in community and the communication of the Gospel by those disciples. Its power lies in the Gospel message. No human strategy will bring people to salvation unless it centers on the Gospel. Making disciples is best done in a group or faith community. Fulfillment of the Great Commission requires effort not just from the

Apostles, but also from disciples in every generation. New disciples must make new disciples or the movement will end.

### **The Study of Multiplication Movements**

YFC needs a theology of evangelization, a theology of multiplication and a theology of imagination. That is, critical activities must be biblically informed and clearly articulated so they can be the foundation of mission planning. As a global ministry, YFC must be clear on the key ideas that fuel its vision and enable it to become a multiplication movement that can reproduce young Christian disciples. Once these key ideas are articulated, they can be integrated into ministry strategy and implemented in a variety of cultures. Vision casting and calling people into new territory is vital to YFC ministry.

These key ideas can be developed from the work of several recent thought leaders in this area and modified to fit the circumstances. Some of the seminal thinkers and movement leaders include: Neil Cole of Church Multiplication Associates, who outlines the Life Transformation Group Model; Alan Hirsch and the Fergusons with their focus on missional church movements, and the reproduction of leaders, groups, communities and networks; and Bob Logan, whose decades of experience in church planting and multiplication movements has culminated in the creation of processes, pathways and resources for assessing and growing healthy new disciples is another key resource.

These theologies can draw on the work of leaders and theorists who have written about imagination and social change. Consideration will be given in Chapter 3, for example, to the thematic universe of Paulo Freire, to the prophetic imagination of Walter Brueggemann and to the social imaginaries of Charles Taylor. Such authors have

recorded their insights into the processes of societal change, each one adding new ideas and language to the body of theory. Multiplication necessarily involves large and increasing numbers of people and requires communication, cohesion, cooperation and movement together. Frameworks emerging from the experience of social movements can enable YFC to be intentional in its strategies to truly be what it was established to be: an evangelistic youth movement.

### **Summary of Key Issues that Need to be Considered in the Pacific**

My own experience with starting and developing YFC ministries throughout the Pacific Region raised several issues that need to be addressed. These issues have relevance for many multiplication and outreach ministries, especially those that involve crossing cultural borders. Some of the key issues that have caused problems with YFC in the Pacific which will be explored in this paper include: funding ministry in a largely subsistence culture without creating dependence on outside investment; regulatory compliance, such as balancing the requirements of YFC International with local culture and perceptions about foreign involvement; creating relationships with local churches (especially when these churches sometimes tend towards nominalism) and helping new converts find churches that will encourage their growth and deepen their level of discipleship; developing and supporting leadership teams so that the work is not dependent on a single leader; and wrestling with the identity of YFC as a multiplication movement rather than a church, especially in contexts where the established church is spiritually weak or may feel threatened by the work.

The strategic design of new YFC ministries can draw on several case studies from the Pacific Region, even where these are stories of failure rather than success. There is much to be learned from YFC's mistakes to ensure that they are not repeated. At the same time, it is important to remember that God has used those mistakes to bring people into his Kingdom. Contemporary theories about multiplication movements also provide valuable models to explore and from which to learn, and are highly transferable. Clearly, the design of funding and training models needs to be refined so that it is relevant in these contexts and leaders are not dependent on external funding. This is especially pertinent when facing overtones of colonialism and struggling to survive because of time and energy spent on discipleship and ministry.

A clear theology of evangelism and discipleship should be available to YFC pioneers and executives in each Area and Region. The issue of "church" needs to be addressed so that leaders and converts have a clear understanding of where YFC fits into existing structures. This is particularly important because of the way Pacific society functions. YFC must be careful not to needlessly offend church leaders nor compromise the discipleship and growth of converts by forcing foreign cultural expectations upon them. YFC structures and systems should be assessed for their functionality within a multiplication movement and weighed alongside essential components of biblical multiplication movements, with thought given to how these can be aligned with the resources and leadership available locally.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE IDENTITY OF YOUTH FOR CHRIST AS AN EVANGELISTIC MULTIPLICATION MOVEMENT

I was appointed National Director of YFC Australia in 2009. This was my first role in the organization. Where unreferenced, my reporting in this chapter will be based on my primary research, observations and learning during the eight years of my tenure.

At this time, YFC Australia had become aware of some ministry issues that its fragmented administration was causing, especially with respect to YFC's expansion in the Pacific Region. The organisation was keen to identify the underlying issues and address the major differences between the branches if that would help it fulfil the vision that was integral to YFC's role as a multiplication ministry. A key reason for this self-examination was the vision for ministry in various Pacific nations.

#### **YFC International's History as a Global Evangelistic Youth Movement**

After the Second World War, many young people who had seen the suffering and devastation of war throughout Europe and the Pacific returned to the US. Many of them struggled to adjust to civilian life. They had been in the forefront of an ideological battle.

They had lost friends and comrades. Many were wounded physically, and had suffered mentally and emotionally.

The shock of the transition from war-torn Europe and the Pacific to the peaceful, relatively untouched landscape of the US made life seem somewhat meaningless. These returned soldiers were in search of purpose and progress. At the same time chaplains and ministers, as well as those whose family members and friends had served overseas also were trying to understand the plight of humanity. Thus, the scene was set for the dramatic revival which was soon to come.

#### An Organization Birthed out of a Post-war Movement

Large gatherings of youth took place in New York City and banners were erected with the slogan “Youth for Christ.” At some of these gatherings, up to twenty thousand young people expressed and reaffirmed Christian faith and “hundreds were won to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup> This enthusiasm spread to other cities and by 1947 there were thousands of weekly youth rallies being held across the country as well as overseas. Average weekly attendance at these meetings was estimated to be close to a million.<sup>2</sup> This scale was seen as evidence that God was driving the YFC movement: “If ‘Youth for Christ’ took root in only one or two places, it could be attributed to

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<sup>1</sup> Torrey Johnson and Robert Cook, *Reaching Youth for Christ* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1944), 10.

<sup>2</sup> Forrest Dale Forbes, *God Hath Chosen: The Story of Jack Wyrzten and the Word of Life Hour* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1948), cited in Joel Carpenter, ed., *The Youth for Christ Movement and its Pioneers* (New York: Garland, 1988), [http://www.talbot.edu/ce20/educators/protestant/jack\\_wyrzten/](http://www.talbot.edu/ce20/educators/protestant/jack_wyrzten/) (accessed 24 August 2017).

unusual leadership or to especially providential circumstances. But ‘Youth for Christ’ has taken root all over America, wherever it has been prayerfully and carefully launched.”<sup>3</sup>

This success in the US was followed by the creation of YFC International as the movement spread to several other countries. Billy Graham noted that in 1946, “Something happened which radically changed the entire course of Youth for Christ International. By the grace of God and under His leadership we leaped the oceans, sped to the islands, spared no money or men to carry the gospel as far as we could into as many lands as possible.”<sup>4</sup> Gradually, structures were put in place to sustain and guide the growth of the movement. In the early years, it was seen more as a phenomenon, rather than a lasting national movement.<sup>5</sup> During the following decades, YFC developed a theology of mission and church relations,<sup>6</sup> systems to administer funds, and policies and practices to ensure the original vision for multiplying disciples remained at the front and center of all activities.

#### International Goals and Declarations that Reshaped the Movement

The international movement that developed and grew during YFC’s first seventy years faced many challenges. The outward forms and structures of the movement were continually re-envisioned. YFC sought to remain relevant in a changing society while holding to the core vision.

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<sup>3</sup> Johnson and Cook, *Reaching Youth for Christ*, 29.

<sup>4</sup> James C. Hefley, *God Goes to High School: An Indepth Look at an Incredible Phenomenon* (Waco, TX: Word Publishing, 1970), 154.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson and Cook, *Reaching Youth for Christ*, 34.

<sup>6</sup> Ajith Fernando, *The Mission of Youth for Christ International: Our Context* (Singapore: YFC International, 1985), 1-34.

An Organizational Development Study Report<sup>7</sup> was released in 1996 after a comprehensive external review of the global organization. That paper represented a compilation of eleven original areas of study: Reputation, Intra-YFC Relationships, Inter-Organizational Relationships, President's Office and Role, Systems, Ministry Effectiveness, International Board, Cultural Values and Philosophy, Internationalization, Staff and Training, and Finances. It identified the Unifying Essentials of YFC that held the movement together and formed the basis for global collaboration. The documents that guide and define the work and vision of YFC include the Constitution,<sup>8</sup> the Statement of Faith,<sup>9</sup> the Seven Core Values,<sup>10</sup> the Ten Operating Principles<sup>11</sup> and the Covenant of Partnership.<sup>12</sup>

These documents were written to ensure the movement maintained its core vision and mission in the middle of national and international expansion. They are evangelistic and action-focused. They call the movement to youth evangelism and discipleship, and maintain its integrity by qualifying its priorities and guarding its activities from diversified or misguided effort.

Over time, relationships between various national YFC programs experienced tensions. In June 2001, thirty-three YFC International leaders wrote and signed the

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<sup>7</sup> YFCI, *Organizational Development Study Report* (YFCI internal paper, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> YFCI, *Handbook, Amended 21 Dec 2012* (YFCI internal paper, 2012), 13-15.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

Valence Covenant,<sup>13</sup> committing to make prayer and the Word of God the foundation of the movement. This Covenant emerged in response to a need to re-establish healthy relationships between national entities based on a shared vision, equal standing and a need to build unity, trust, sacrificial generosity and reciprocity between YFC in different countries. It was an attempt to heal past wounds and move forward in faith, confidence and unity by embracing the principles of federalism within a theocracy.

The Covenant of Partnership between YFC International and its member nations clarifies the respective relationships and roles and facilitates interdependence and cooperation. This Covenant established the foundational commitments of member entities as well as the standards for charter of national programs, which must be confirmed annually. The intention was to ensure that each national YFC ministry or program adheres to the vision, governance and financial management standards of the organization. It has since become clear that in some cases they cause tension and division and inhibit ministry rather than enhancing it. Reconsidering these standards to ensure that they also provide flexibility for cultural modification is a high priority moving forward.

YFC International's clear vision is to see that every young person, in every people group and nation, has an opportunity to make an informed response to the Gospel and become a follower of Jesus Christ and part of a local church. The Global Ministry Plan<sup>14</sup> was developed around the turn of the millennium. This is an organization-wide strategy

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<sup>13</sup> Youth For Christ International, *Youth for Christ History*, <https://yfci.org/about/history/valence-covenant/> (accessed 24 August 2017).

<sup>14</sup> Youth For Christ International, *Youth for Christ International Global Ministry Plan*, (YFCI internal paper, 2004), 1.

designed to provide a road map so that YFC will more effectively impact young people throughout the world.

### A Rapidly Expanding Movement in More than 110 Countries

The 2008 General Assembly in South Africa, an international meeting of about eight hundred YFC leaders, was a watershed moment for the global movement as seasoned leaders handed over symbolic keys to a new generation. Over the next several years YFC was established in more than thirty new countries. Young leaders pioneered most of these new national programs. This success generated new problems for YFC International, such as the absence of a long corporate memory among younger leaders.

The components of the global movement were already in place and available, yet the push to start new ministries often overrode the need to comply with YFC International policies. This then raised questions about the authority of YFC International, its role in relation to each national program and the level of participation by each YFC nation in the global mission. There was a constant conflict between the need for discipline and the linguistic and cultural barriers that were being crossed as the organization expanded.

### **YFC Australia's History as a National Evangelistic Youth Movement**

During its early years, YFC International reached several places in Australia simultaneously. Numerous chapters started, each viewing itself as directly linked to YFC International rather than connected to other Australian branches. The normal style of leadership was entrepreneurial, independent and competitive. Executive Directors were

the key leaders in the movement and tended to see themselves as business owners of their branch or chapter.

Although this was a natural stance it later hindered national cooperation and had a negative impact on the growth of YFC in the Pacific due to the absence of a national vision or cross-border cooperation. There was a tendency to focus on the demands of local ministries. The concept of a national movement only emerged gradually, starting in the mid-1990s when state and regional chapters opted into the federated entity. It took several years for independence to give way to committed cooperation and tentative unity.

#### A Recent Federation Created from Colonies of YFC International

Youth for Christ Australia was formally incorporated on 18 August 1995. The new incorporated structure was put in place with all YFC centers forming a national movement under the one banner of Youth for Christ Australia.<sup>15</sup> This was an important step in the process of unification and renewal of the movement. Because of its relative wealth and geographical locality, YFC Australia would appear to be a natural proponent of leadership development and missionary activity throughout the Pacific Region, yet prior to 1995, its lack of unified vision and strategy meant that it failed to assume this role or even to become an effective multiplication movement.

#### Barriers to YFC Australia Becoming a Multiplication Movement

Several obstacles prevented YFC Australia from becoming a growing multiplication movement. The lack of cohesion within YFC Australia prior to its

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<sup>15</sup> Youth For Christ Australia, *Board Membership Pack April 2011* (YFC Australia internal paper, 2011), 5.

incorporation in 1995, meant that not only did the branches fail to work together and share ideas and resources within the country, but also that it did not take seriously its responsibility to support or cooperate with other Pacific island nations. It remained an isolated island entity, albeit a large, well-resourced one, and was only rarely generous to poorer nations nearby.

The skills needed to run a YFC branch were primarily those of administrators and managers, which excluded most young field workers from being promoted. This created an endless need to recruit leaders from outside YFC rather than growing them up from among the staff. As a result, the culture of YFC was continually challenged. Since there was no clear internal pathway to leadership, gifted YFC leaders would sooner or later move to other organizations. In addition, a dual funding model, with some programs (mostly social intervention) funded by government grants and others funded by donors, created major discrepancies in resources. Most staff members served as full-time missionaries, but were usually paid part-time salaries they raised from friends, family and other donors.

Even after YFC Australia was incorporated in 1995, there was a tendency for local boards to resist the national organization's decision-making, quality control, communication and fundraising initiatives. Local administration generally increased local financial and volunteer commitment and provided helpful supervision of management in each region. There was a real fear that any dilution of the relationship with donors meant that programs would no longer be viable and staff could no longer be paid. However, the central board was concerned about financial risk through lack of control and the absence of consistent, coherent, quality communication with donors.

Donor income diminished over time. This was partly because stories about life transformation became scarce due to low quality, inconsistent communication via personal or branch newsletters. The national office had to raise all of the funds to provide training and administration at a national level, yet, without stories to encourage donors they had no tangible way of justifying the money they raised. Most donors around the country were supporting individual YFC staff members yet very few people were able to raise sufficient money to fund a reasonable salary and cover their expenses. Commitment to the vision of YFC Australia was increasingly carried by a small number of wealthy donors who remained hopeful that YFC could stay the course and fulfil its mission as an evangelistic youth movement.

At times this looked doubtful. Very few teenagers seemed to be turning to Christ as Lord and Savior and committing to discipleship as a result of YFC Australia's ministry. Those staff members who were best at creating new outreach programs had moved into other roles with the result that some of the programs were becoming tired or outdated. Ministries were designed to shape values and improve behavior rather than confront teenagers with their need for forgiveness and salvation. Fundraising was difficult and the donor base declined. Most donor income came from strongly committed board members and one or two Christian philanthropic trusts.

#### The Seven-year Goal: No-longer-at-risk Youth Leading YFC Ministries

YFC Australia had focused its mission on "at-risk youth," meaning young people in society who were at risk of being harmed by themselves or by others. This included homeless youth, unemployed youth, abused youth and youth in the juvenile justice

system. In mid-2009, soon after my appointment as National Director, the organization adopted a goal to refocus on the core vision of reaching all young people with the Gospel so that they had a chance to respond to its invitation. The goal was that “within seven years more than half of all YFC ministries will be led by no-longer-at-risk youth.” These were the aims expressed in a 2009 report:

1. Instead of mainly recruiting and inducting outsiders, the YFC movement will grow a steady supply of young leaders who are born (again) and raised within YFC ministries
2. We will articulate effective pathways and processes for at-risk youth to become healthy disciples of Christ and grow into effective leaders of new YFC ministries
3. A shift towards the deployment of at-risk youth to reach their own kind will necessitate the construction of simpler, reproducible organizational models
4. As YFC ministries multiply, state-wide coordination will be designed or adjusted to intentionally and purposefully sponsor the starting, and supporting, of new YFC leaders and ministries
5. Current YFC staff will be affirmed primarily for responsible evangelistic ministry among at-risk youth that empowers those same youth to lead in the ways they themselves are leading
6. More than just supporting YFC staff to reach at-risk youth, our financial partners will in the future directly support at-risk youth to create YFC ministries that reach at-risk youth
7. The work of YFC will move from programs, “doing ministry” and course delivery towards giving at-risk youth the opportunity to become effective YFC staff and reach their peers<sup>16</sup>

The culture of YFC changed, particularly in the period 2008 to 2010, through the introduction of coaching, coach training and accreditation. Leaders were encouraged to focus on developing new young leaders. At the start of 2009, about thirty of the one hundred staff members were funded through government grants for social welfare programs while the others were underfunded missionaries. The Seven Year Goal was designed to challenge both groups and to address several problems in the organization

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<sup>16</sup> Conrad Parsons, “National Director’s Report,’ National Board Meeting Documents – July 2009” (YFC Australia internal paper, 2009), 4.

such as the leadership model, the financial structure and communication, all of which were fractured by the lack of a unifying national vision. It was hoped that this shared goal would unite both groups and dissolve the blockages that were preventing YFC Australia from fulfilling its mission.

This goal means that all YFC staff must lead in such a way that teenagers become Christian disciples, develop a vision for evangelistic youth ministry and are equipped and resourced to implement it. The lessons learned through YFC Australia's challenges have implications for multiplication ministry worldwide, and have shaped outreach, training and structures in the Pacific Region. One particular lesson was the danger of building YFC ministry around income sources such as government grants rather than continually focusing on the core mission. It became clear that any evangelistic ministry must continually refocus on evangelism since the natural flow of any culture's life and activity will not normally prioritize the making of new disciples.

### **YFC's Current Opportunities in the Pacific Region**

As YFC Australia empowered younger leaders and recommitted to the core vision and mission of reaching out to young people and giving them an opportunity to respond to the claims of the Gospel, my attention shifted to developing new YFC ministries in the Pacific Region. I prayerfully considered the lessons learned in Australia and their application to ministry in the Pacific.

I stepped down in early 2013 from my role as National Director of YFC Australia to support and work alongside YFC missionaries in Tonga and other Pacific nations. The leadership of YFC Australia supported this decision and agreed that many of the lessons

that had been learned could be applied to these new outreach efforts. In retrospect, the leadership of both YFC Australia and YFC Pacific learned even more than was anticipated about the need for and complexity of effective systems for developing replicable multiplication ministries.

### Rapid Multiplication of Disciples in Tonga

Zack and Anna Woolwine from YFCUSA World Outreach spent two years from 2011 in Tonga on the island of Vava'u, teaching English as a second language and setting up a youth center. They laid a good foundation, built positive relationships with Christian leaders and became a valued part of the local community. YFC staff in another country introduced Zack to Training for Trainers (T4T),<sup>17</sup> Discovery Bible Studies (DBS) and disciple-making movements in general. He enthusiastically read books and other materials to understand these processes.

After a few months, he contacted the Asia Pacific Area Director and the Pacific Regional Director and reported that he was convinced T4T was well suited to the people in Tonga and would be a helpful resource for growth. As a result, the Regional Director took a T4T trainer named Grant Morrison from the Move Network to Tonga to run T4T training for one week in August 2013. The training began with a gathering of about fifty people on Saturday and Sunday to introduce the trainers and the T4T training. Fourteen people, mostly youth and young adults, then attended the main training during the week. The young people were particularly teachable and the whole group began implementing lessons from the training. Several local people became Christians that week.

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<sup>17</sup> Steve Smith and Ying Kai, *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution* (Monument, CO: WIGTake Resources, 2011).

In less than six months the newly trained volunteers saw large numbers of new converts. T4T jumped to islands where YFC had not yet planned or done any ministry. Invitations arrived from churches on the main island to train key people who were teachable and gifted in evangelism. Woolwine and Morrison also ran trainings in other island nations, such as Tahiti and Fiji, with several people becoming Christians and demonstrating a desire for further teaching despite, at times, limited follow-through by local leadership.

In January 2015, the Woolwines relocated to the main island, Tongatapu. This was a strategic move in response to the receptivity and growing opportunities within the country and the region. After three years of training Christians in T4T, the Woolwines had seen hundreds of people become Christians and several hundred of them were creating and gathering in discipleship groups. Tongans were receiving the Gospel enthusiastically; they were becoming disciples and making new disciples. The result has been extraordinary and gained international attention. However, despite the positive impact of the ministry, the Woolwines were unable to establish a functioning board to provide governance, continuity or financial support for whoever would be his successor. The incoming National Director did not have the benefit of American sponsors and national donor income was negligible. No identifiable team of staff or volunteers was built up to take the ministry of YFC forward. Thus, the movement has continued to make disciples but without any organizational structure to facilitate longevity for YFC Tonga.

## Disciple-making Training in Fiji and Vanuatu

Morrison and Woolwine ran T4T training in Suva, Fiji with a group of twenty-five people gathered by Tomasi Raiviu, who was at that time the National Director of YFC Fiji. Two members of YFC Samoa were included in the training. Bento Rotan, later National Coordinator of YFC Kiribati, was then on staff at YFC Fiji and participated in the training. Rotan quickly implemented his new learning. By the end of the week there were several stories of implementation and lives changed. Morrison returned for follow-up training a few months later, on his way to Vanuatu.

In my role as Regional Director, I accompanied Morrison to Vanuatu in July 2014 and trained thirty young people in T4T. However, an additional follow up visit by Morrison was cancelled at the last minute by the Presbyterian denomination that hosted the training. They wanted to first put in place a Memorandum of Understanding with YFC International, possibly because they were afraid that their young people would leave and join other churches. Morrison moved to Port Vila, the capital, in 2015 and continued to work among a variety of denominations until late 2016. Since then, YFC has had no further ministry in Vanuatu.

## Pioneering Youth Evangelism and Discipleship in Nauru and Kiribati

I was invited by the leader of Nauru Assemblies of God (AOG) churches to run T4T in Nauru in October 2014. We trained ninety people. The leader of the AOG churches in Kiribati and his wife were among them. They saw in T4T the answer to their need for discipleship training in their country. They extended a pressing invitation to visit Kiribati as soon as possible to train their leaders.

In December 2014, I visited Tarawa, Kiribati at Golden Beach AOG with my then twelve-year-old daughter. Fifty people attended the training. On the second day, a small number of local people became Christians. Overall, the training introduced leaders to new teaching that focused on the basics of discipleship. In December 2015, I returned to train leaders for one week at the bi-annual AOG conference. Woolwine and I (with support from Rotan, then the Kiribati National Coordinator) trained forty people from sixteen islands. The training was enthusiastically received and immediately effective. Trainees applied their learning and saw people immediately becoming new disciples. Disappointingly, there was little evidence that the enthusiasm continued into 2016 and attempts by Woolwine to establish regular coaching relationships failed. Rotan and his wife moved home to Fiji in November 2016 when YFC Kiribati was suspended due to lack of funding and lack of evidence that local churches wanted the ministry of YFC.

#### Continued Reformation in Australia

From 2013 to 2014, under the leadership of YFC Australia National Director Richard Sharp the strategy to empower younger leaders continued and many youth interns were trained in Australia. In 2015, Cindy McGarvie became the National Director, bringing missionary experience and strong management skills to YFC Australia. YFC Australia was restructured and the organizational identity changed from a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) to a Religious Entity (RE). This was done to more strongly focus on the religious, evangelistic calling of YFC. This move not only clarified the purpose of YFC Australia, it also removed the financial risk for the organization. Staff became volunteer missionaries supported by donations, which was historically the model,

rather than paid employees. General donations were no longer tax-deductible. This radical shift positioned YFC more as a movement of volunteers than as an organization with employees. The National Director and central administration staff were now funded by retaining 10 percent of all donations received by YFC Australia.

David Ridley, the Regional Director of the Northern Territory and now National Mission Director, started a new program he called The Jesus School:

The heart of the Jesus School is a belief that a company of people who know God will change the world. This is the passion of our hearts – to know Him!  
The Jesus School is about becoming intimately acquainted with the Father. Becoming aware of our inseparable union with Him through Jesus’ finished work on the cross. We will do this by unpacking one simple statement:  
Jesus is the truth about God and the truth about us.  
Together we desire to fully apply the weight and depth of this truth to our lives. Every idea about who God is and who we are must be filtered through the expressed life of Jesus. He is Truth personified.<sup>18</sup>

The course has become a key generator of life-change stories for YFC Australia. Students stay together for the duration of the school, sharing meals and lives as they study the Gospel together. Testimonies, question and answer sessions, times of worship, prophecy and healing allow students to develop practical understanding of ministry and work through their own questions.<sup>19</sup>

#### Expansion in Samoa, Including into American Samoa

The two Samoans who attended T4T in Fiji during 2014 gave a positive report to YFC Samoa, which now had a new National Director, Manasa Aloalii. He then welcomed a request from the Pacific Director for training to take place in Apia, Samoa.

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<sup>18</sup> Youth for Christ Australia, *Youth for Christ: The Jesus School*, <https://yfc.org.au/jesus-school/> (accessed 25 August 2017).

<sup>19</sup> Mark Greenwood, “Report on The Jesus School Port Pirie,” <http://saintsbynature.com/the-jesus-school-port-pirie/> (accessed 25 August 2017).

Woolwine travelled there in mid-2015 to train the YFC staff. The introductory training was well received and they began using T4T tools in their existing programs. For example, they shared testimonies in the schools where they had existing ministry and many students indicated a desire to follow Jesus. This showed the transferability of the tools and their effectiveness in island culture.

The long-term methods of youth rallies in Apia continued, supplemented by ministry in schools and the development of village Bible studies. These were led by a local Bible teacher in the Samoan language and hosted by a Christian family living in the village with suitable space, such as a veranda. Songs were sung, prayers were offered, testimonies were shared and the Bible was taught. They were very popular and were overseen in each region by an appointed YFC volunteer. In 2015 grants were secured to refit and re-launch the YFC radio station and this resulted in many new Christian disciples. Aloalii added a National Youth Praise festival and regional youth rallies. Together these methods have seen large numbers of people saved and discipled. T4T has not been a key factor in the ministry of YFC Samoa, partly due to the existing effective outreach ministries of YFC Samoa, its thorough follow-up processes and its continual growth and expansion. T4T seems to be most useful in situations where there is no existing church and no evangelistic ministry.

During Easter 2015, I sent Aloalii to Pago Pago to explore the possibility of restarting YFC in American Samoa. By the end of his brief visit, he had restored broken relationships, established a new board and appointed a National Coordinator. Aloalii's credibility and humility and the responsiveness of Christians with past YFC associations

to his initiative, indicated it was right to proceed with the development of the new national program at that time, starting with ministry in schools.

In June 2016, YFC American Samoa was officially launched. I joined a team from YFC Samoa to conduct a mission, in which the churches and government welcomed YFC to their nation. A large church donated office space to the new ministry and other Christians also pledged support. Teenagers began gathering in the YFC office for Bible Study and to run regular youth rallies. A schools' ministry developed and has expanded to several campuses. A monthly stipend was provided to the National Coordinator by one of the local donors.

#### Laying a Foundation in New Zealand and Cook Islands

YFC New Zealand was, anecdotally, once one of the strongest and most effective YFC programs in the world. Many people wanted YFC to restart in that country and there were some attempts made to do so, all of which failed. YFC New Zealand's ministry was interrupted several years ago by a radical restructuring and liberal shift, along with a name change to Incedo. These events cast a long shadow. However, the more important question was whether YFC could adapt to the current culture of New Zealand and not merely replicate the youth rallies of the 1970s. Recently, Samoan parents living in Auckland have teamed up to sponsor the restarting of YFC New Zealand (YFCNZ). This team faced many challenges but has succeeded in re-launching YFCNZ. The strategic vision of the new YFCNZ is, first, to reach all youth in that country: including Pacific Islanders, Asians, Maoris and the people of European heritage. Second, it is expected to

start in Auckland and spread out from there once it is firmly established in that city. Finally, it will focus strongly on evangelism, discipleship and leadership training.

In late-2014 some of the leaders in Auckland expressed a need for discipleship training so Woolwine accepted an invitation to run T4T in early-2015. Unfortunately, since there was no specific local leader to promote and organize the training, attendance was poor. The most enthusiastic reception came from a pastor, Isaia Lameta, a former National Director of YFC Samoa and a director on the new YFCNZ board. He immediately implemented changes in his church, passing on elements of the training to his congregation the next day. Doug Allington, chairman of the new YFCNZ board, attended one night of training and immediately saw potential for T4T as foundational for future YFCNZ ministry.

In 2015 and 2016 Woolwine travelled to Auckland to run T4T. There was sufficient interest and participation to continue this strategy and train more people. By the end of 2016 a well-trained group of more than thirty people was implementing T4T in and around Auckland. The training succeeded and laid the principled foundation of evangelism, discipleship and leadership training that was sought by the board.

In April and May 2016, Eli Tyler from YFC Long Island, New York, visited Auckland to attend T4T on his way to Cook Islands to explore the possibility of establishing YFC in that nation. Building on contacts provided by United Christian Broadcasters (UCB) who had just set up a radio station in the capital, Rarotonga, Tyler met with church leaders over a period of one week. Afterwards he confirmed that the churches would welcome YFC in their country. In December 2017, Tyler revisited Rarotonga as the next stage towards pioneering YFC Cook Islands.

Opportunities for YFC to strengthen youth evangelism and discipleship in the Pacific islands are increasing. Numerous Christian organizations are now focusing strongly on the region. Doors for evangelism and discipleship are continually opening yet financial resources and the cost of international travel are limiting YFC's ability to respond.

PART TWO  
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The twentieth century saw the decline of participation in “traditional” churches and the explosive growth of many other forms of Christian organization.<sup>1</sup> Church growth and evangelism programs became more necessary as the number of people attending church on Sundays declined. These factors gave rise to substantial theological reflections on the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20) and its implications for churches, evangelization movements and effective multiplication models.

The literature discussed in this chapter provides valuable insights into the theological grounding of experimental discoveries in this area to date. Each of the authors provides challenges to existing thinking and implementation in these areas. The specific issues that these studies raise are directly relevant to the challenges YFC faces establishing and sustaining new ministries. These include the nature of church, funding models, ministry structures and governance.

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<sup>1</sup> Russell E Richey, “Denominationalism in Perspective,” *The Journal of Presbyterian History* 79:3 (2001): <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23336225> (accessed 25 August 2017).

## **Evangelization Generates Fresh Expressions of Church**

Tensions between existing churches and grassroots Christian communities that spring from evangelistic efforts and revival have been around since the earliest days of the Church. The Apostle Paul encountered tensions between newly formed churches and existing synagogues, and many of his letters provide guidance on these issues. Leonardo Boff and Ray Andersen wrestle with similar issues in the context of their experience as the Gospel expands in new areas of the world, and some of the older denominations struggle to come to terms with these new forms.

For an organization such as YFC these issues are especially relevant. In the context of evangelization YFC ministries often encounter challenges when enthusiastic new converts visit, or return to, local churches which lack the vibrancy and vision these converts are anticipating. As they gather in small groups for Bible study and prayer it is easy to see why they consider the established church irrelevant and this can cause tension in relationships with their family and with local churches.

*Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church* - Leonardo Boff

In 1977 Leonardo Boff, a South American liberation theologian, published his book *Ecclesiogenesis*, about grassroots Christian communities or basic church communities in South America. In Brazil, these small groups began around 1956 as a community evangelization movement led by trained coordinators, spurred to action in

part by a shortage of Roman Catholic priests.<sup>2</sup> The movement grew rapidly and spread widely. Boff described these communities in the following words:

Christian life in the basic communities is characterized by the absence of alienating structures, by direct relationships, by reciprocity, by a deep communion, by mutual assistance, by communality of gospel ideals, by equality among members. The specific characteristics of society are absent here: rigid rules; hierarchies; prescribed relationships in a framework of a distinction of functions, qualities and titles.<sup>3</sup>

Boff saw these base communities as the beginning of a shift in the global Church and “a genuine renewal of the institutional framework of the church.”<sup>4</sup> He discussed whether the groups are truly church, or if they merely contain elements of church.<sup>5</sup> As he examined how the relationship between the local church and the wider Church is to be conceived, he concluded: “The particular church is the universal church rendered visible within the framework of a time and a place, medium and a culture.”<sup>6</sup> In addition, each local church is complete and not merely a part of the Church.

Boff asserts that it is not only the clerical institution that must build up the church, but that it is the responsibility of all its members. He offers an image of “the church as faith community . . . globally co-responsible for all the affairs of the church . . . first comes the flock and then, for the sake of the flock, the shepherd.”<sup>7</sup> He challenges disempowerment arising from the pope-bishop-pastor axis, and champions the potential

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<sup>2</sup> Leonardo Boff, *Ecclesiology: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1986), 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

of all church members, such as the poor who gather in base communities, “for decision-making and creation of religious content.”<sup>8</sup> He thereby counteracts any suggestion that a priest must be present for unity, for decision-making or for genuine church to exist.

While Boff’s analysis of the nature of church, and his identification of the “base community” concept, is extremely valuable in many ways it is subject to his Marxist worldview and to liberation theology’s unvarying efforts to turn Christ into a political agitator and the Church into an instrument of socialist values. Since the context of his work is rooted in Roman Catholicism, some of his applications are not relevant for YFC’s purposes. In YFC Pacific, issues arise from the presence of local Protestant churches that feel threatened by the emergence of church-like groups, whereas base communities resulted from experimentation due to insufficient numbers of ordained leaders. As YFC discovered in Vanuatu, a perceived threat can lead to the closure of opportunity and withdrawal of support. However, Boff presents an extremely empowering view of Christian ministry through small groups and strong theological arguments for these relationships. Disciple-making ministry, and the ministry of YFC in general, will cause people to gather together in various ways. These gatherings should be understood not merely socially or organizationally but theologically, giving due consideration to ecclesiology.

*An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches* - Ray S. Anderson

A challenge faced in many evangelistic endeavors is that new converts connect with one another in ways that resemble church life as depicted in the New Testament, for

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 30-31.

example in Acts 2, yet they are not what is commonly thought of as “church.” Anderson recommends focusing on the future that breaks into the present. That is, instead of only looking for evidence of continuity with the early church, or with well-established churches, he recommends looking to the future Kingdom of God and celebrating an emerging resemblance between the local gathering and the heavenly gathering: “Paul argued that continuity with Jesus the Messiah could not be established backward through a historical connection but only forward through an eschatological conversion . . . he came to know Jesus of Nazareth first of all as one coming to him from the future rather than from the past.”<sup>9</sup>

Anderson’s vision is powerful and positive. He identifies three forms of Christ’s apostolic ministry: incarnational, resurrected and transformational. Jesus came to earth in history, he sent his disciples as apostles and he “will return and is returning through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>10</sup> He contrasts historical theology, which tends to look back to the first century, with an emergent theology that “looks towards the ‘final century,’ or the century in which Christ can be expected to return, as normative and apostolic.”<sup>11</sup> In his model “the Christian community that emerged out of Antioch constitutes the original form and the theology of the emerging church as contrasted with the believing community at Jerusalem.”<sup>12</sup> The biblical precedent found in the church in

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<sup>9</sup> Ray S. Anderson, *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 203-204.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

Antioch affirms the fledgling churches emerging today from incarnational, hospitable mission, offering a framework that justifies discontinuity with existing church patterns.

As he says, “The emerging church appears a bit naked to those who see it unencumbered by the traditional institutional forms and polity of the church.”<sup>13</sup> Since the Church is “the visible and corporate manifestation of God’s mission to the world,”<sup>14</sup> his view is that churches naturally emerge from mission and the participation of Christians in God’s mission. As they emerge, they should resemble the coming Kingdom, which is breaking into the present reality currently experienced and which will be discontinuous with much of what is generally known as “church.”<sup>15</sup> His view is very attractive, original and has strong merit. At the same time, his unvarying emphasis on looking forward to the emerging church as the pattern that all Christians should follow ignores the strengths and lessons that can be gained from looking to historical patterns of church and other perspectives.

This sense that churches naturally emerge from mission in new forms, stripped of the ornament of tradition, challenges YFC’s historical position that “it is not a church.” YFC continually makes new disciples and gathers them into small groups yet is reluctant to treat these faith communities as churches. On the other hand, Anderson does not address the issues that would arise were a group of new believers to establish their own community rather than joining with an established church that felt culturally alien. Ajith Fernando explains, “When YFC’s mission statement says we participate in the body of

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 186.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

Christ, it refers to the church universal. Both YFC and the local church are legitimate expressions of the church universal. They stand side-by-side or parallel to each other fulfilling different roles related to the church universal, and complementing each other in the fulfilling of these roles.”<sup>16</sup> In the light of this, YFC must re-examine its position on this matter and consider whether, in the context of cross-cultural activity, new groups of believers should be offered the opportunity to develop forms of church that are integrated into local customs and affirm them as meaningful and sufficient.

### **God’s Mission is Purposeful and Strategic**

Roland Allen and Christopher Wright look at missionary methods and models of the New Testament in search of principles and patterns. As they caution, it is easy to get caught up in the way things are always done, and what one expects to see and to fail to recognize the kernel of God’s work. Both authors have made a significant contribution to the literature in this area and challenge Christians to take a fresh look at established missionary methods and narrative.

The principles and patterns they outline are particularly relevant to YFC. As discussed in the previous chapter, YFC has periodically experienced seasons of unprecedented and exciting growth. In the midst of the excitement it is helpful to look to biblical examples to see how the resulting tensions can best be managed to ensure continued growth.

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<sup>16</sup> Fernando, *The Mission of Youth for Christ International*, 3-4.

*Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours?* - Roland Allen

Allen, in 1912, set forth missionary methods the Apostle Paul used over ten years in establishing churches in the provinces of Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia and Asia.

According to his view, Paul had a strategy that targeted “the centres of Roman administration, the centres of Hellenistic civilization, the centres of Jewish influence, the keys of the great trade routes.”<sup>17</sup> However, “he did not start out with any definite design to establish his churches in this place or that. He was led as God opened the door; but wherever he was led he always found a centre, and seizing upon that centre he made it a centre of Christian life.”<sup>18</sup> Neither, Allen asserts, did Paul target a particular segment of society: “The majority of St Paul’s converts were of the lower commercial and working classes, laborers, freed-men, and slaves; but he himself did not deliberately aim at any class.”<sup>19</sup>

Allen considered Paul’s missionary methods and results in the light of today’s situation to determine whether Paul had specific advantages. His conclusion was there were no fundamental differences. First-century society was neither more nor less moral or conservative than modern society. God is the same yesterday, today and forever and his Spirit is with his followers so that they do not lack power. Paul faced the same need to build and sustain relationships, and support his endeavors financially as they do today.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours?* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1962), 16.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 37-49.

Allen also examined St Paul's preaching, his training of converts, his exercise of authority and discipline, and his maintenance of unity. None of his methods indicate an advantage over, or unreachable standard for, mission today. The apostle's methods, or rules of practice, are accessible in the New Testament. To enable application of these principles and methods, Allen asserts:

Nothing should be taught which cannot so be grasped and used. . . . Nothing should be established as part of the ordinary church life of the people which they cannot understand and carry on. . . . All financial arrangements made for the ordinary life and existence of the church should be such that the people themselves can and will control and manage their own business independently of any foreign subsidies. . . . The whole community is responsible for the proper administration of baptism, ordination and discipline. . . . Authority to exercise spiritual gifts should be given freely and at once.<sup>21</sup>

It is clear from Allen's book that while Paul may not have started with a detailed strategy, he was strategic in his execution of the mission. He did not target particular cities, but he managed to generate life and momentum in key places. He did not target particular socio-economic groups, yet found a ready audience among common people who normally had no access to the liberation and love available in the Gospel. When challenging people with God's message, or demonstrating God's power, or making financial decisions, Paul had no missional advantage, but patterns are still observable in his methods. The principles identified by Allen support the notion that mission benefits from strategy and that the God of mission is strategic.

Allen's principles remain relevant today. However, it should not be assumed that Paul's actions were completely strategic, as they may have been a spontaneous response to opportunities that arose. There must not be confusion that a narrative account of what

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 151.

happened with a strategic roadmap should guide all missionary activity. As YFC considers its mission and experience in the Pacific, it is essential to remember that the effectiveness of YFC's outreach must be both strategic and spontaneous. It is necessary to keep in mind that results (or lack thereof) cannot be attributed to the moral condition of local people, the presence or absence of miracles and other spectacular evidences of God's power, or the financial prosperity of people. Now, as ever, God's mission is to draw men and women to himself, and to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

*Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* - Christopher J. H. Wright

Wright wrote this substantial book in response to a hermeneutical question: "Is it possible, is it legitimate, is it helpful for Christians to read the whole Bible from the angle of mission?" He answers affirmatively, stating: "The Bible renders and reveals to us the God whose creative and redemptive work is permeated from beginning to end with God's own great mission, his purposeful, sovereign intentionality. All mission or missions we initiate, or into which we invest our own vocation, gifts and energies, flow from the prior and larger reality of the mission of God."<sup>22</sup>

From that platform, he presents God as one "who wills to be known to the ends of the earth;"<sup>23</sup> one who blesses the nations, which includes "ridding them of gods that masquerade as protectors and saviors, but are ultimately devouring, destroying,

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<sup>22</sup> Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grant Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press Academic, 2013), 530.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

disappearing deceptions;”<sup>24</sup> and as one who does that through Israel and through “the new covenant people of God.”<sup>25</sup>

Wright describes the entire Bible as the story of God’s mission. While affirming the postmodern focus on “cultural, local, relational, narrative,”<sup>26</sup> he challenges the view that no overarching narrative ties things together, and firmly presents the Bible as “the grand narrative that constitutes truth for all. And within this story, as narrated or anticipated by the Bible, there is at work the God whose mission is evident from creation to new creation. This is a story of God’s mission. It is a coherent story with universal claim.”<sup>27</sup> Thus the whole of Scripture is about God’s intentions, plans and strategic actions. Scripture is not strategy-neutral. It is a story of the strategic action of God and thus micro-strategies should be valued according to their compliance with that larger story and that larger strategy.<sup>28</sup>

While applauding William Carey for championing foreign mission, Wright warns against the “continuing practice in many missionary circles to go on and on building the massive edifice of Christian missionary circles on this one text (Mt 28:18-29), with varying degrees of exegetical ingenuity.”<sup>29</sup> It is lazy to build strategic action on one Bible text while ignoring the breadth of God’s concerns and activities. To do so may suggest a passive and disinterested view of God, leaving Christians to complete the Great

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 391.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 34.

Commission with their own strategies and they as the primary agents. On the contrary, God is strategic and active.

Mission is participation in, and an extension of, God's sending. It is God's initiative that propels God's people into mission. Wright explains, "Barth and Hartenstein want to make clear that mission is grounded in an intra-trinitarian movement of God himself and that it expresses the power of God over history, to which the only appropriate response is obedience."<sup>30</sup> It is not that a stationary God commands people to go, but more that a sending God includes, calls and invites his people to participate in divine movement. Mission therefore means "the committed participation of God's people in the purposes of God for the redemption of the whole creation. The mission is God's. The marvel is that God invites us to join in."<sup>31</sup>

Wright's work is exciting, inspiring and comprehensive. It emphasizes the privilege of God's invitation to co-labor with him in mission and his nature as a sending God. However, some readers may mistakenly think that God does the work alone and that humanity has no need to consider strategic action. On the contrary, heeding Wright's insightful recommendations, YFC can develop a substantial theology of mission that looks at the opportunity God gives to take part in his redemptive purposes as part of his overarching plan, not merely as a response to a single command.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 67.

## **The Great Commission Requires Multiplication**

Alan Hirsch along with Luther Gerlach and Virginia Hine turn to the process of building people movements through multiplication. They describe some useful ways of evaluating and assessing effective multiplication movements and provide guidelines that, when followed, may accelerate explosive growth and change in whole people groups and nations. The focus is on building networks and relationships around a central vision or ideology and using these linked networks to facilitate change at a deep level.

The balance between risk and consolidation is one with which every growing organization struggles. There is a constant tension between the vibrancy of new ideas, fresh enthusiasm and momentum and the need for strong foundations. Finding the balance between structure and flexibility is extremely important for YFC as it seeks to fulfil its vision for sharing the Gospel with young people.

*Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church*, Alan Hirsch

Hirsch describes what he calls “missional DNA” (mDNA), consisting of five elements. When these “are in place and mutually informing one another . . . something fundamentally different is activated.”<sup>32</sup> The first, and most important of these five elements is discipleship and disciple-making since this is the normal way that Christian faith is passed from person to person.<sup>33</sup> Next, is the “missional-incarnational impulse,” which reflects both the identity of the Church as God’s sent people and the incarnation of

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<sup>32</sup> Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 76.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

Jesus Christ.<sup>34</sup> Third, is an apostolic environment, which: embeds mDNA through pioneering new ground for the Gospel and church, guards mDNA through the application and integration of apostolic theology, and creates the environment in which the other ministries (including evangelism) emerge.<sup>35</sup>

There are also “Organic Systems,” in which “we try to emulate as closely as possible the innate capacity of living systems to develop higher levels of organization, to adapt to different conditions, and to activate latent intelligence when needed.”<sup>36</sup> Finally, is “*communitas*, not community.” Drawing on the observations and ideas of Victor Turner, an anthropologist, Hirsch explains: “*Communitas* . . . happens in situations where individuals are driven to find each other through a common experience of ordeal, humbling, transition, and marginalization.”<sup>37</sup> When churches do not address “the abiding human need for adventure, journey, and comradeship,”<sup>38</sup> they “are missing the missional component that takes us out of our safety zones into risky engagement with the world.”<sup>39</sup> This creates an inability to adapt and diversify its internal structure, making it . . . vulnerable to potential demise.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 154-159.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 221.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 229-230.

Hirsch summarizes his stance on the importance of Christian mission:

A missional church is a church that defines itself, and organizes its life around, its real purpose as an agent of God's mission to the world. In other words, the church's true and authentic organizing principle is mission. When the church is in mission, it is the true church. The church itself is not only a product of that mission but is obliged and destined to extend it by whatever means possible. The mission of God flows directly through every believer and every community of faith that adheres to Jesus. To obstruct this is to block God's purposes in and through his people.<sup>41</sup>

Although Hirsch's five elements provide valuable guidelines for the vision and mission of YFC and describe the missional impetus that has been the driving force behind its growth and liveliness over the past seventy years or so since its inception, it is not clear that his theory has ever been successfully applied. As a theorist, he over-complicates some aspects of faith-communities, while down-playing specialist leadership roles and potentially implying all committed participants will play an equal part. On the other hand, it is clear that when YFC has ventured into "risky engagement with the world," as Hirsch recommends, it has been vibrant and effective. The challenge for YFC Pacific (and YFC as an organization) is to integrate these five elements into a guiding structure that is both dynamic and supportive.

*People, Power, Change: Movements of Social Transformation* - Luther P. Gerlach and Virginia H. Hine

Gerlach and Hine defined a movement as "a group of people who are organized for, ideologically motivated by, and committed to a purpose which implements some form of personal or social change; who are actively engaged in the recruitment of others; and whose influence is spreading in opposition to the established order within which it

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 285.

originated.”<sup>42</sup> They researched the internal dynamics of movements and concluded that, “a social, political, or religious movement is characterized by five factors; when all five are present, the movement can grow independently of the original generating conditions; and opposition from the established order normally serves only to provide optimal conditions for growth.”<sup>43</sup> The five factors are:

(a) segmented organizational units linked together into a reticulate network by various personal, organizational, and ideological ties; (b) face-to-face recruitment along the lines of pre-existing significant social relationships of positive effect; (c) personal commitment on the part of most, if not all, participants resulting from an identity-altering experience, a bridge-burning act or both; (d) an ideology which provides the basis for overall unity as well as segmentary diversity, which exploits the motive power of an ideal-real gap, and which constitutes a comprehensive conceptual framework by means of which events are interpreted and the opposition defined; (e) the perception of opposition from the established order within which the movement is spreading.<sup>44</sup>

Gerlach and Hine identified four functions of a movement “which are adaptive in the growth of the movement and in the accomplishment of its purpose.”<sup>45</sup> Security is maintained by protecting leaders’ identities and ensuring a supply of new leaders should any be lost.<sup>46</sup> The movement spreads across class and cultural boundaries to draw adherents from the widest possible variety of backgrounds.<sup>47</sup> Social innovation is decentralized so that change and experimentation occurs throughout the organization and

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<sup>42</sup> Luther P. Gerlach and Virginia H. Hine, *People, Power, Change: Movements of Social Transformation* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1970), xvi.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 69-70.

not merely at the center.<sup>48</sup> Duplication in innovation enables expendability so that social change can continue despite failures and thus the whole organization is not put in jeopardy by the decisions of just one leader.<sup>49</sup>

The authors identified seven steps in the process of commitment to a movement: “initial contact with a participant; focus of needs through demonstration; re-education through group interaction; decision and surrender; the commitment event; testifying to the experience; and group support for changed cognitive and behavioral patterns.”<sup>50</sup> Two elements of commitment to a movement are of particular importance: “an identity-altering experience, and a bridge-burning act.”<sup>51</sup> These facilitate the “cognitive restructuring necessary for commitment in movements involving personal transformation and social change.”<sup>52</sup> A belief structure can differentiate the fledging response from the status quo and mobilize more sympathizers to action. A movement may begin as a reaction to local conditions or restrictions, but if successful, it can travel beyond that context: “When evangelistic face-to-face recruiting by truly committed individuals begins to create a network of organizational cells united by a shared ideology, the movement lifts off the launching pad of causal conditions and becomes an autonomous social entity.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 73-77.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 77-78.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 195.

While Gerlach and Hine's classic work describes important principles of people movements and provides insightful observation and analysis of examples, it has limitations. First, its focus on movements from the 1950s and 1960s (feminism, black power and Pentecostalism) is somewhat dated and raises questions about the relevance of some of the principles in today's world. Also, all of the movements studied have an American focus. A third and more important limitation is that their analysis fails to account for the substance of faith and its influence on people movements.

YFC will not learn theology from this work but has used the strategies outlined. YFC has heavily resourced the development of young leaders and entrusted them with significant freedom and responsibility. It has continually succeeded in crossing class and cultural boundaries so that YFC ministry can be established with people of any background. YFC has empowered all of its workers to innovate and experiment and built this expectation into the organization's global culture. It has demonstrated resilience by continuing to operate and expand its ministry despite occasional setbacks and failures at the centre and in YFC nations. The authors' description of the elements of effective movements are all present in the theory of YFC's methodology and they provide a useful filter for evaluating regional ministries and increasing their potential.

### **Summary of Literature**

The studies outlined above wrestle with important issues relevant not only to YFC and similar multiplication movements, but also to churches. They highlight some of the failings that can be seen in the church and multiplication movements today, and some of the challenges these organizations and movements face as they seek to multiply disciples.

Each of the sources provides grounds for moving towards a theological perspective that addresses the complex reality of church, mission and strategy in the light of the Church's responsibility and God's sovereignty.

These studies pose challenging questions about the nature of mission, the overarching narrative that describes mission, theology of church and YFC's commitment to discipleship and conformity to God's plan rather than its own. Careful consideration of these questions will accelerate YFC's ability to expand across cultures and borders. A strategy which successfully integrates these answers has the potential to shape highly effective reproducible multiplication ministries.

## CHAPTER 3

### A THEOLOGY FOR EVANGELISTIC MULTIPLICATION MOVEMENTS

#### **Premises of Evangelization**

YFC is a Christian organization focused on ensuring that all young people have the opportunity to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ and respond to its promise of new life. This vision is rooted in Scripture and current theological thought and practice. This section looks at the actions and teaching of the Apostles and the early church and the clear theological principles demonstrated in New Testament churches.

Two pivotal factors in New Testament churches are the importance of evangelization and the strategy of multiplication. It is clear that the apostles were imitating Jesus' discipleship actions in their efforts. There are examples of both church leaders and members taking responsibility for the evangelization and teaching of others. The picture is one of personal responsibility for growth in the knowledge of God, for the development of characteristics that demonstrate the power of God to transform lives and also for the active participation of each new member in the mission of evangelization.

## The Gospel is the Power of God for Salvation (Rom 1:16)<sup>1</sup>

The Christian Gospel is a declaration of salvation made available to everyone by God's righteousness revealed in Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup> It is described as the "power of God for salvation" because it changes people.<sup>3</sup> A response of faith in God's provision, together with a change of mind, called repentance, brings salvation to believers (Acts 20:21), and changes their standing before God.

Salvation is essentially "the removal of dangers menacing to life and the consequent placing of life in conditions favorable to free and healthy expansion."<sup>4</sup>

Through the Gospel, the Holy Spirit "brings to fruition the goal of divine communication,"<sup>5</sup> which is "salvation from sin and death unto righteousness and life."<sup>6</sup>

Billy Graham explains, "Paul well knew that the Holy Spirit takes the simple message of

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<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quoted is from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), unless otherwise noted.

<sup>2</sup> John Calvin, *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries: The Epistle of Paul to the Romans and Thessalonians*, eds., David W Torrance and Thomas F Torrance (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), 27-28.

<sup>3</sup> Tokunboh Adeyemo, "The Whole Gospel," in *The Whole Gospel for The Whole World: Story of Lausanne II Congress on World Evangelization Manila 1989* (Charlotte, NC: Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and Regal Books, 1989), 73.

<sup>4</sup> William Sanday and Arthur C Headlam, *The International Critical Commentary, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1895), 23.

<sup>5</sup> John Murray, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1968), 27.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims On the Way* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 573-574.

the cross, with its message of redemptive love and grace, through the proclaiming of Christ, and infuses it into lives with authority and power.”<sup>7</sup>

#### God Gives New Birth through his Message (1 Pt 1:23)

The Bible states that God saves people through the Gospel into a new eternal relationship: “You have been born anew, not of perishable, but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Pt 1:23). This echoes the Apostle’s earlier declaration, “By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you” (1 Pt 1:3-4).

Salvation brings new life to people: a fresh start and the hope of a better future. Christians are “called by God into new life”<sup>8</sup> and their entry into that new life is described as a “new birth.” Peter Toon explains, “God’s call is both outward through the Gospel and inward through the activity of the Spirit. The effect of the internal activity of the Spirit is likened to a new birth—an entrance into eternal life and a new relationship and communion with God.”<sup>9</sup> The Apostle Paul reassured his readers that the change they experienced would not fade away or be taken from them.

The means of new birth include God’s mercy and God’s Word. The Good News can be announced and heard in many ways including preaching, reading or hearing the

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<sup>7</sup> Billy Graham, “The Evangelist and His Preaching,” *The Work of an Evangelist: International Congress for Itinerant Evangelists, Amsterdam, The Netherlands*, ed., J D Douglas (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1984), 95.

<sup>8</sup> Karl Heinrich Ringwald, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology Vol.1*, ed., Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975), 180.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Toon, *About Turn: The Decisive Event of Conversion* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1987), 62.

Bible and debate or discussion.<sup>10</sup> Ulrich Becker asserts: “However varied may be the emphasis and development of the term *euangelion* in the NT, the reference is always to the oral proclamation of the message of salvation and never to something fixed in writing, such as a book or a letter.”<sup>11</sup> However, this seems unnecessarily restrictive. Paul Helm argues that the medium by which the message is delivered is secondary, if not irrelevant: “The indispensable agent in conversion is God’s revealed truth, the good news which centers in the provision of God’s Son as a sacrifice for sin through which sinners are reconciled to God.”<sup>12</sup>

God will make himself known through the preaching or announcement of the Gospel, and this is the only method over which his people have any control or responsibility. God’s power to save people is not limited to this method: “it would be an unsafe argument that would take from the Lord the power to make himself known . . . in any way he pleases.”<sup>13</sup> Christians can expect, however, that if they faithfully deliver the message of the Gospel people will be saved from their sins and born again.

#### Multiplication is Essential to Fulfil the Great Commission and Make Disciples of all Nations (Mt 28:18-20)

Jesus Christ commissioned his eleven disciples before returning from earth to heaven. Jesus’ words were, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

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<sup>10</sup> Paul Helm, *The Beginnings: Word and Spirit in Conversion* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1986), 17.

<sup>11</sup> Ulrich Becker, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* Vol 2, ed., Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975), 113.

<sup>12</sup> Helm, *The Beginnings*, 15.

<sup>13</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Vol 2, ed., John T. McNeill (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press), 1341.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Mt 28:18-20). Even with God’s presence to guide and empower them, eleven short lives, with limited transport options, linguistic challenges to overcome, opposition from authoritarian governments and hostile listeners had no hope of making disciples of all nations. The task was too great for such a small number of people unless multiplication was implicit in the instructions.

The command to “make disciples” is not complete unless it leads the newly made disciples to a life of obedience to Jesus’ commandments:<sup>14</sup> “They must obey all the commands, including the Great Commission.”<sup>15</sup> To be a disciple of Jesus requires a commitment to obey him in everything including passing on the message. D.A. Carson writes, “Failure to disciple, baptize, and teach the peoples of the world is already itself one of the failures of our own discipleship.”<sup>16</sup> Multiplication is implicit in the Great Commission, and the message carried from Jesus transformed its believing listeners into disciples who carried out their collective mission.

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<sup>14</sup> R. T. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 415.

<sup>15</sup> Smith and Kai, *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution*, 49.

<sup>16</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary with New International Version of the Holy Bible in Twelve Volumes, Volume 8 (Matthew, Mark, Luke)*, ed., Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1984), 599.

## The Message Sounds Forth from New Believers (1 Thes 1:6-8)

The church in Thessalonica was an example of multiplication. Many people in that city welcomed the Gospel, believed its message and became models of it. The message they received changed them and changed their priorities. They passed on the Gospel to others extensively.

Paul wrote, “You became an example to all the believers” (1 Thes 1:7). Robert Thomas explains, “They had become ‘a model’ to Christians throughout Greece. *Typon* (‘model’) suggests an exact reproduction.”<sup>17</sup> Leon Morris adds, “Paul is speaking of the church as a pattern community.”<sup>18</sup> The message they heard and believed changed them such that they became a living example or pattern for others to follow. As a result, “The word of the Lord has sounded forth from you” (1 Thes 1:8). The church was not only a product and model of the Gospel, it was also a carrier of the Gospel to others. Thomas continues, “Their progress was remarkable in that what Paul and his companions had preached (v.5) and the Thessalonians had received (v.6), they were now sharing on the widest scale possible.”<sup>19</sup>

The Church persisted in spreading the Gospel: “With Thessalonica as the starting point (‘from you’), the message ‘rang out’ (v.8) as brass instruments that keep on sounding. The figure is of an echo that continues indefinitely (perfect tense, *eksechetai*,

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<sup>17</sup> Robert L. Thomas, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary with New International Version of the Holy Bible in Twelve Volumes, Volume 11 (Ephesians to Philemon)*, ed., Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1984), 246.

<sup>18</sup> Leon Morris, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, ed., F.F. Bruce (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959), 60.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary with New International Version of the Holy Bible in Twelve Volumes, Volume 11 (Ephesians to Philemon)*, 247.

‘rang out’) and implies the persistence of the testimony over an ever-increasing expanse.”<sup>20</sup> In part, their continuing activity was aided by “the strategic situation of Thessalonica, on the great highway, the *Via Egnatia*, and with a harbor giving ready access to many places by sea.”<sup>21</sup>

The Thessalonian church remains a pattern, model and example for Christians today. The power of the Gospel brought salvation and changed the individual church members and together they lived lives congruent with that message. Michael Holmes states, “The Thessalonians . . . were sharing both the good news about Jesus and also demonstrating the impact of that good news in their own lives.”<sup>22</sup> Thus they are an example of multiplication whereby the Gospel changes people and at the same time enlists them as carriers of that same message.

### **Contemporary Theories about Evangelistic Multiplication Movements**

The history of the church shows many vibrant and powerful periods of dynamic growth during which disciples took seriously the Great Commission. There are also periods of stagnation in which there was little forward movement of the Gospel. The latter periods largely coincide with efforts to formalize and institutionalize movements.

As a multiplication movement, YFC does not wish to hinder the expansion of its work by unnecessary formalism. At the same time, there is concern about the dangers of unbridled expansion without any structure. The theories that follow represent some

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>21</sup> Morris, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 61.

<sup>22</sup> Michael W Holmes, *1 and 2 Thessalonians: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 61.

effective, cross-culturally relevant and tested ways of looking and thinking about evangelization and multiplication today.

### Training for Trainers: Steve Smith with Ying Kai

Ying Kai prayed after seeing 20 million people in need of the Gospel and gained three insights for ministry: “We must go to where the lost are and train new believers to also go to the lost. . . . We cannot predict who will believe and whom God will use to birth a movement. . . . Every disciple must be a trainer.”<sup>23</sup> By 2012, as a result of Kai’s ministry, “more than 1.7 million people have come to faith and been baptized.”<sup>24</sup> He developed “Training for Trainers” (T4T) as a simple method of equipping Christians “to share the gospel and make disciples in a reproducible way.”<sup>25</sup> His strategy is to “train every willing local Christian in how to be more obedient in their spiritual life, how to effectively share their faith person to person, how to immediately follow up with new believers, and how to initiate reproducing groups which often become churches.”<sup>26</sup>

Kai learned from experience that only a fraction of T4T trainees “led others to faith, started groups and trained these new believers to witness to and train others. Some truly became trainers not just trainees, but their numbers rarely exceeded 15-20%.”<sup>27</sup> A key principle of T4T is therefore to “invest more of your time in fruitful soil people . . .

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<sup>23</sup> Steve Addison, *What Jesus Started: Joining the Movement Changing the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 106-107.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>27</sup> Smith with Kai, *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution*, 109-110.

who will pass the kingdom DNA on to the next generation.”<sup>28</sup> Practically though, Kai’s advice is to train as many people as possible because one can never know which ones will be in the minority who will go on to be effective trainers of trainers.

#### Church Multiplication Associates: Neil Cole

Neil Cole describes his life calling as “trying to discover the secret to starting spontaneous church multiplication movements.”<sup>29</sup> He is the founder and Executive Director of Church Multiplication Associates in the USA, well known for its Life Transformation Groups (LTG) System. According to Cole, “A LTG is made up of two to three people, all of the same gender, who meet weekly for personal accountability in the areas of their spiritual growth and development . . . a steady diet of Scripture, confession of sin and prayer for others who need Christ.”<sup>30</sup> These groups focus on making Christian disciples and multiplication is the natural result. The addition of a fourth person triggers, often within just a few weeks, a split into two groups of two people. Cole summarizes:

LTG’s meet once a week for approximately one hour . . . groups of two or three . . . groups are not coed. . . . There is no curriculum, workbook or training involved. There is no leader needed. . . . Only three tasks are to be accomplished: 1) Sin is confessed to one another in mutual accountability. 2) Scripture is read repetitively, in entire context and in community. 3) Souls are prayed for strategically, specifically and continuously.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 110-111.

<sup>29</sup> Neil Cole, *Church 3.0: Upgrades for the Future of the Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 66.

<sup>30</sup> Neil Cole, *Cultivating a Life for God: Multiplying Disciples through Life Transformation Groups* (Carol Stream IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1999), 63.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 70.

Successful, spontaneous multiplication on a large scale has established LTG's as an effective tool for making disciples, planting churches and enabling multiplication movements. Like John Wesley, "The LTG system incorporates evangelism with spiritual formation . . . and produces a more natural, relational evangelism that flows out of one's personal redemptive experience."<sup>32</sup> Cole states, "If we focus on making disciples, and keeping the system simple and solid, multiplication becomes easy and natural."<sup>33</sup>

LTG's are advantageous for several reasons. They require regular, frequent Bible reading, ensure disciples follow Jesus instead of a pastor, gather people into small groups that include accountability, introduce disciples to the benefits of self-discipline, develops trust in the Holy Spirit to teach and guide disciples, inducts disciples into an enduring model or method, activates in disciples a desire to serve in ministry, provides evidence of leadership potential, releases existing leaders from being the primary caregivers, stimulates internal motivation to grow individually and communally and establishes multiplication in the identity of new disciples.<sup>34</sup>

In his 2005 book, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens*, Cole recounts his failures in church planting and explains what he would do differently if he started again. He writes,

First, I would begin in the harvest and start small. Don't start with a team of already-saved Christians. . . . Second, I would allow God to build around others. Don't start in your own home; find a person of peace and start in that home. . . . Third, I would empower others from the start. . . . Let the new believers do the work of ministry without your imposed control. . . . Fourth . . . question all your ministry assumptions in light of Scripture, with courage and faith. . . . Fifth . . .

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 71-94.

leadership recruitment is a dead end. . . . Any leadership development system that doesn't start with the lost is starting in the wrong place. . . . Sixth . . . baptize quickly and publicly and let the one doing the evangelizing do the baptizing. . . . Seventh . . . stop being concerned about whether "your" church plant will succeed or not. It isn't yours in the first place.<sup>35</sup>

Cole develops these thoughts in his 2009 book, *Organic Leadership: Leading Naturally Right Where You Are*: "We must farm our leaders, not recruit them. The new disciples are the new workers, and the seed of the next generation is found in the fruit of the current one. This is farming, and it is the way God created the world to work."<sup>36</sup>

Forge Mission Training Network: Alan Hirsch and  
New Thing: Dave Ferguson and Jon Ferguson

In 2003, Mike Frost and Alan Hirsch (founder of the Forge Mission Training Network) advocated "for a wholesale change in the way Christians are doing and being the church."<sup>37</sup> They offered three overarching principles: "The missional church is incarnational, not attractional, in its ecclesiology . . . [it] is messianic . . . like Christ it sees the world and God's place in it as more holistic and integrated . . . adopts an apostolic, rather than a hierarchical, mode of leadership . . . that recognizes the fivefold

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<sup>35</sup> Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 204-206.

<sup>36</sup> Neil Cole, *Organic Leadership: Leading Naturally Right Where You Are* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Books, 2009), 137.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), ix.

model detailed by Paul in Ephesians.”<sup>38</sup> They present the fluidity, vision, chaos and dynamism of movements as “essential for transforming our world for Jesus.”<sup>39</sup>

In his 2006 book, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church*, Alan Hirsch discusses how the early Christians grew “from being a small movement to the most significant religious force in the Roman Empire in two centuries.”<sup>40</sup> Convinced that the same power is available today, he proposes:

The awakening of that dormant potential has something to do with the strange mixture of the passionate love of God, prayer, and incarnational practice . . . appropriate models of leadership (as expressed in Ephesians 4), the recovery of radical discipleship, relevant forms of organization and structures, and the appropriate conditions for these to be able to catalyze. When these factors come together, the situation is ripe for something remarkable to take place.<sup>41</sup>

In 2011, Hirsch teamed up with David Ferguson, the pioneering leader of the New Thing Network, and published *On the Verge: A Journey into the Apostolic Future of the Church*. It is a “serious attempt to process and apply the Apostolic Genius paradigm, developed in *The Forgotten Ways*, to existing (largely evangelical and evangelistic) churches, as well as to other existing church systems . . . to inform and engage a healthy megachurch movement.”<sup>42</sup> They teach what is essentially the convergence of church-growth theory, exponential thinking and incarnational missiology.<sup>43</sup> To generate what they call “momentum,” they offer a four-step process: imagine, shift, innovate and

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>40</sup> Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 18.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>42</sup> Alan Hirsch and Dave Ferguson, *On The Verge: A Journey into the Apostolic Future of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 19.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 42.

move. The write, “Movementum can be defined as the process of gaining missional momentum until we birth an apostolic movement, and movementum occurs when we are continuously taking our church through the preceding three stages: imagine, shift, and innovate.”<sup>44</sup> Further, “It is what happens when *ecclesia* is being what *ecclesia* is meant to be: an expansive, high impact, transformative people-movement.”<sup>45</sup>

Dave Ferguson, with his brother Jon Ferguson, wrote *Exponential: How You and Your Friends Can Start a Missional Church Movement*. They outlined five reproducing principles: reproducing requires everyone to have an apprentice; reproducing is proactive, not reactive; reproducing is not about size, it is about leader readiness; reproducing is not about our kingdom, it is about God’s Kingdom; and reproducing happens both on the edge of a movement and at its center.<sup>46</sup> They also helpfully identified three primary tasks for leading a movement: casting a clear vision so people can decide if they want to be part of it, and creating simple systems, thereby enabling reproduction.<sup>47</sup>

#### CoachNet, C2M2 and *Via Cordis*: Bob Logan

Robert E. Logan has dedicated his life to equipping church planters and multiplying disciples, leaders, churches and movements. Central to all of his publications and ministries is multiplication:

Multiplication is inherent in the creation principle: everything reproduces after its own kind. The true fruit of an apple tree is not just an apple, but another apple

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 255.

<sup>46</sup> Dave and Jon Ferguson, *Exponential: How You and Your Friends Can Start a Missional Church Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 25-29.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 200-206.

tree. A person can count the number of seeds inside one apple, but only God can count the number of apples inside one seed. Just as disciples reproduce disciples and ministries reproduce ministries, churches reproduce churches.<sup>48</sup>

In 1995, he and Cole published a training manual called *Raising Leaders for the Harvest*. They listed five key components for effective “leadership farm” systems: evangelism and discipleship, modeling and mentoring, character and skills formation, action and theological reflection, and leadership emergence and focus.<sup>49</sup> Its key insight is the need for processes and pathways to develop non-Christians into effective Christian leaders who can carry forward the Great Commission given by Jesus Christ.

Logan launched the CoachNet website in 1999 to build and equip networks of church planters in numerous denominations around the world. Through that ministry he developed C2M2, a network for Cultivating Church Multiplication Movements. It teaches ten essential components of multiplication movements: spiritual dynamics, shared vision, planning, mobilizing, developing, assessing, coaching, planting, networks and funding.<sup>50</sup>

After selling CoachNet, Logan focused very strongly on discipleship through the development of the *Via Cordis* network of multi-cultural leaders and associated churches, who journey together to start and multiply communities of Jesus followers who love God,

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<sup>48</sup> Logan, *Be Fruitful and Multiply*, 24.

<sup>49</sup> Neil Cole and Robert E. Logan, *Raising Leaders for the Harvest* (St Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1995), 63.

<sup>50</sup> Logan, *Be Fruitful and Multiply*, 63.

love others and make disciples.<sup>51</sup> Logan recently developed and published a *Guide for Discipling*<sup>52</sup> that explores eight dimensions of a disciple of Jesus.

CoachNet, C2M2 and Via Cordis each focused on the need for generative thinking. They developed principles and practices that facilitate the propagation of disciples and leaders. Although not every new believer will immediately demonstrate the effects of the Gospel and grasp the importance of evangelization, it should be an expected result of belief.

### **Principles of Imagining New Reproducible Systems**

While the preceding section focused on strategic principles of multiplication, the sociologists and theologians discussed in this section have thought about social change in different terms. Their focus is on changing the perspective from which one views society and history to open up the possibility of new options. In addition, they are acutely aware of philosophies and practices within the Church and wider society that suppress the vibrant growth that is at the heart of multiplication theory and practice.

Multiplication must necessarily involve a loss of institutional control and tidiness. However, when history and society are viewed from a new perspective the new options can provide different pathways forward that are not seen as disruptive. The key is creating a broad enough vision in the context of interaction and discussion to enable all parties to be heard.

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<sup>51</sup> Robert E. Logan, *ViaCordis Expressions of the 12 Life Commitments*, <https://loganleadership.com/product/viacordis-expressions-life-commitments/> (accessed 22 August, 2017).

<sup>52</sup> Robert E. Logan, *Guide for Discipling Overview*, <https://loganleadership.com/product/guide-for-discipling-overview/> (accessed 22 August, 2017).

## The Thematic Universe of Paulo Freire

Freire views human history as a continuous series of interrelated epochal units, each containing themes that represent: “ideas, values, concepts, and hopes, as well as the obstacles which impede the people’s full humanization.”<sup>53</sup> Meaningful, generative themes “exist in people in their relations with the world”<sup>54</sup> and interact within an epoch to create a “thematic universe.” That universe can be actively explored together to “deepen their critical awareness of reality and, in spelling out those themes, take possession of that reality.”<sup>55</sup> He explains that, “The investigation of what I have termed the people’s ‘thematic universe’—the complex of their ‘generative themes’—inaugurates the dialogue of education as the practice of freedom. The methodology of that investigation must likewise be dialogical, affording the opportunity both to discover generative themes and to stimulate people’s awareness in regard to these themes.”<sup>56</sup>

This liberating process of education requires active participation by people in any given situation so that teachers and students are investigating and learning together. The people are “producing and acting upon their own ideas—not consuming those of others.”<sup>57</sup> He contrasts this method with what he calls the “depositing” or “banking approach” where “the students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them.”<sup>58</sup> He argues that: “Any situation in which some individuals prevent others from engaging in

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<sup>53</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 82.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

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

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-78.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

the process of inquiry is one of violence . . . to alienate human beings from their own decision-making is to change them into objects.”<sup>59</sup> He continues,

Oppression—overwhelming control—is necrophilic; it is nourished by love of death, not life. The banking concept of education, which serves the interests of oppression, is also necrophilic. Based on a mechanistic, static, naturalistic, spatialized view of consciousness, it transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads women and men to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power.<sup>60</sup>

Freire avoids the shallow extremes of passive verbalism, where reality is ignored and words are overused, and activism, where people are used to bringing about social change without understanding the reasons. He instead affirms theory and practice, meaning both reflection and action. Treating oppressed people as activists denies them the opportunity for reflection and leaves them open to manipulation.<sup>61</sup> He explains, “The antidote to manipulation lies in a critically conscious revolutionary organization, which will pose to the people as problems their position in the historical process, the natural reality, and manipulation itself.”<sup>62</sup> Dialogue is needed since: “Only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking.”<sup>63</sup> More strongly, he states: “Revolutionary leaders cannot think without the people, nor for the people, but only with the people.”<sup>64</sup> The people need to stick together as teams. The purpose of this

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 129-130.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 112.

dialogical action is “to make it possible for the oppressed, by perceiving their adhesion, to opt to transform an unjust reality.”<sup>65</sup>

Cultural action or intervention, Freire explains, can be characterized either as invading or synthesizing: “In cultural invasion, the actors draw the thematic content of their action from their own values and ideology: their starting point is their own world, from which they enter the world of those they invade. In cultural synthesis, the actors . . . do not come to teach or to transmit or to give anything, but rather to learn, with the people, about the people’s world.”<sup>66</sup>

### The Prophetic Imagination of Walter Brueggemann

Walter Brueggemann is an American Protestant Old Testament scholar and theologian born in 1933. He published his first book, *The Prophetic Imagination*, in 1978 during a tumultuous time in the US when minorities and marginalized sectors of society, such as female leaders, were fighting for equality. He issued a revised edition in 2001.

Prophetic imagination is about “effecting change in social perspective and social policy.”<sup>67</sup> It is “a concrete practice that is undertaken by real believers who share the conviction of grief and hope that escapes the restraints of dominant culture.”<sup>68</sup>

Brueggemann characterizes dominant culture as “royal consciousness,” or a “false

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>67</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), xii.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 121.

consciousness,”<sup>69</sup> that shares three dimensions from the time of Solomon: affluence, oppressive social policy and static religion.<sup>70</sup>

He asserts that, “Human transformative activity depends upon a transformed imagination,”<sup>71</sup> that frequently involves “evoking, forming, and reforming an alternative community.”<sup>72</sup> This is to counteract the hopelessness and stagnation of life within the royal consciousness. He commends three actions to penetrate despair: offer symbols, which activate memories that contradict the dominant culture; acknowledge and participate in people’s grief and bring to public expression their hopes and yearnings; and speak about the hope arising from God’s enduring freedom and ability to enact his purposes for his people.<sup>73</sup>

Brueggemann contrasts the “largely ineffectual posturing”<sup>74</sup> of stereotypical prophetic ministry with a more imaginative style. His “governing hypothesis is that the alternative prophetic community is concerned with both criticizing and energizing . . . to present an alternative consciousness that can energize the community to fresh forms of faithfulness and vitality.”<sup>75</sup> It aims “to bring people to engage the promise of newness

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., xiv-xv.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 25-29.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., xx.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 60-67.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., xii.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 59.

that is at work in our history with God.”<sup>76</sup> Effective intervention requires imagination, and he recommends using three poetic images: new songs that enthrone God; multiple births indicating a better, alternative future; and fresh bread bringing nourishment for the impoverished.<sup>77</sup>

### The Social Imaginaries of Charles Taylor

The philosopher Charles Taylor, in his book *Modern Social Imaginaries*, identifies multiple “modernities,” and ways in which people imagine their collective social life. He uses the term “social imaginary” to mean, “the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations.”<sup>78</sup>

Using Taylor’s reflections on the place of theory and practice, it is possible to shift a movement towards a new way of imagining itself. He notes it is shared “images, stories and legends . . . that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy.”<sup>79</sup> New stories can be introduced to change a social imaginary. However, it may be more powerfully transformational when people “take up, improvise, or are inducted into new practices.”<sup>80</sup> Essentially, “The new practice, with the implicit understanding it generates, can be the basis for modifications of theory, which in turn can

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 59-60.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 74-76.

<sup>78</sup> Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 23.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 29.

inflect practice, and so on.”<sup>81</sup> According to Taylor’s insights concerning Western culture, establishing new reproducible systems within a movement can result from new or restored stories, images and legends. It also can result from the introduction of new practices that lead to new ways of imagining internal and external relationships.

### The Systems Thinking of Peter Senge

Peter Senge, an American systems scientist, is well known among corporate managers for his 1990 book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization*. Senge wanted to accelerate exploration of what it means to be a learning organization. A learning organization is “an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future.”<sup>82</sup> He proposed five personal learning disciplines “to do with how we think, what we truly want, and how we interact and learn with one another.”<sup>83</sup> They include building shared vision, mental models, team learning and personal mastery. The fifth discipline is systems thinking: “It is the discipline that integrates the disciplines, fusing them into a coherent body of theory and practice . . . it continually reminds us that the whole can exceed the sum of the parts.”<sup>84</sup> Further, it “is a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things.”<sup>85</sup>

His concept of “localness” is particularly relevant to the implementation of multiplication ministries across cultures. He writes, “Localness means unleashing

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>82</sup> Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization* (Sydney: Random House Australia, 1992), 14.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 68.

people's commitment by giving them the freedom to act, to try out their own ideas and be responsible for producing results."<sup>86</sup> Senge argues that localness "is especially vital in times of rapid change. Local actors . . . are in a better position to manage the continuous adaptation that change demands."<sup>87</sup>

In chapter eighteen, "The Leader's New Work," Senge writes: "Our traditional view of leaders—as special people who set the direction, make the key decisions, and energize the troops—are deeply rooted in an individualistic and non-systemic worldview."<sup>88</sup> By way of contrast, "In a learning organization, leaders are designers, stewards and teachers."<sup>89</sup> As designers of learning processes, leaders need "skills in mentoring, coaching, and helping others learn."<sup>90</sup> Leaders in learning organizations listen to the stories of others and "begin to see that their own personal vision is part of something larger"<sup>91</sup> and become stewards of that larger vision. They also must integrate the "purpose story" of the organization with systemic structure: "At this level, leaders are continually helping people see the big picture: how different parts of the organization interact, how different situations parallel one another because of common underlying

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 287-288.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 288.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 340.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 345.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 346.

structures, how local actions have longer-term and broader impacts than local actors often realize, and why certain operating policies are needed for the system as a whole.”<sup>92</sup>

As designers, stewards and teachers within learning organizations, leaders live with a creative tension: “This tension is generated by holding a vision and concurrently telling the truth about current reality relative to that vision.”<sup>93</sup> Senge states emphatically:

A leader’s story, sense of purpose, values and vision establish the direction and target. His relentless commitment to the truth and to inquiry into the forces underlying current reality continually highlight the gaps between reality and the vision. Leaders generate and manage this creative tension – not just in themselves but in an entire organization. This is how they energize an organization. That is their basic job. That is why they exist.<sup>94</sup>

#### The Complex Responsive Processes of Ralph Stacey and Douglas Griffin

In *Complexity and the Experience of Leading Organizations*, Ralph Stacey and Douglas Griffin challenge mainstream perspectives on leadership. They characterize it as culture manipulation: “It is generally thought to be the role of the leaders of an organization to set its direction in the form of vision, purpose, objectives and targets, and then apply monitoring forms of control to ensure the vision and so on is realized.”<sup>95</sup> That first mainstream view is a form of social control. A second mainstream view is about system design: “The leaders play a significant role in designing this system, specifying its purpose and inspiring others to act according to values that will achieve this purpose . . .

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 353.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 357.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Douglas Griffin and Ralph Stacey, eds., *Complexity and the Experience of Leading Organizations* (London: Routledge, 2005), 3.

positing capacities of foresight in leaders which they do not actually possess.”<sup>96</sup> The authors boldly state: “If one thinks of organizations as widespread narrative patterns emerging in local interaction, then it is impossible for leaders to determine values, change cultures or move whole organizations along their own envisioned direction.”<sup>97</sup>

Stacey and Griffin propose a fresh way of understanding organizations. They concentrate on “acts of communication, relations of power, and the interplay between people’s choices arising in acts of evaluation.”<sup>98</sup> It is these patterns of interactions that constitute an organization, more than spatial metaphors or a system outside of the participants. The thematic patterning of interaction is: complex, suitable to the fluidity of everyday life; self-organizing and emergent, generating coherence from the myriad local interactions between local people; and evolving, particularizing themes in specific situations.<sup>99</sup>

This fresh approach has implications for leaders of organizations. The role of leaders is “co-created,”<sup>100</sup> meaning that while a leader may form a group, the group’s recognition of the leader is also required. The authority of leaders comes partly from their discernment of situations and their ability to assist groups to find ways forward. For

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 10.

example, a leader can articulate emerging themes to help a group to take its next step.<sup>101</sup>

In summary, the authors describe effective leadership as:

Participating skillfully in interaction with others in reflective and imaginative ways, aware of the potentially destructive processes one may be caught up in. It is in this practice that one is recognized as leader, as one who has the capacity to assist the group to continue acting ethically, creatively and courageously into the unknown. This is a very different way of understanding the role of leader to the mainstream perspective in which the leader stands outside the system, designing, manipulating variables and pulling levers in order to stay in control.<sup>102</sup>

These core principles of multiplication, plus the highly adaptable approach to leadership proposed by Stacey and Griffin, are all focused on empowering people and enabling them to take responsibility for their own growth. Combining the premises of evangelization and multiplication theories, outlined in the previous section, with the vision and holistic worldview expressed by these authors provides principles and practices by which ministries can develop truly effective, localized, ministries with similar themes, frameworks and patterns.

### **Theological Implications for YFC**

YFC needs to develop ministry guidelines that effectively meld local autonomy and responsiveness to specific needs and situations with a model that can be easily deployed in any context. It needs to ensure these have a strong theological basis. This has special importance in contexts where local churches already exist, especially where those churches are not already committed to evangelization and multiplication.

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 13.

Leaders need to understand the grounds of their model, the scriptural and theological framework in which they are operating and the extent of their autonomy. Without a deep grasp of these things they will struggle to answer the inevitable questions raised by new believers as they confront churches with an institutional model of existence, rather than a missional model. The practical outworking of these issues may vary depending on the specific situation, but the principles are enduring.

### A Theology of Evangelization

God loves people and provides for their salvation. His message to the world is Jesus Christ, God's righteousness. He calls humanity into his Kingdom and enlists his followers as disciples of Christ. They carry his saving message to others; some will welcome the Gospel, believe its message, gather together as Christians and join in passing on the same message to others.

It is through the message of the Gospel that people are saved from their sins and born again. Disciples are sent by God to announce this Good News and to call people to repent and believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. God's offer of salvation is firm and the relationship he offers everyone is imperishable. It is "undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you" (1 Pt 1:4). YFC exists to make this offer to young people who are yet to hear this Good News. The method of announcing may vary but the message must not. Thus, the historic YFC motto is "Geared to the times. Anchored to the rock."

Multiplication is implicit in the Great Commission given by Jesus to his eleven disciples. Jesus had all authority and sent his followers to all nations, promising to be with them for all days. The message they carried from him transformed its believing

listeners into disciples who carried on their collective mission. To be like Jesus whom they follow, every disciple must do as he did and declare God's Good News so that people can be saved into God's kingdom.

The Thessalonian church remains a pattern, model and example for Christians today. The number of people carrying the Gospel to others increases with each new disciple of Christ. This is how the Great Commission is fulfilled. The Gospel generates a communal response as people receive the message and live out its new relational architecture. All under Christ serve God together, thus modeling for outsiders the message they speak and enabling that illustrated message to travel further, and with more integrity, to more people than was previously possible.

### A Theology of Multiplication

God's intention for multiplication can be seen throughout creation, particularly in the reproduction of animals and plants. Each reproduces its own kind and it is a tragedy when one of them becomes extinct. The absence of multiplication in Christian ministries may indicate straying from God's intentions or commands. Disciples need to produce disciples. Leaders need to produce leaders. Churches need to produce churches. Movements need to produce movements. To think again about multiplication, one should consider his expectations of new disciples, leaders, local churches, priorities and money.

New disciples are the building blocks of the Christian movement. The way they live among others should be holistic, refreshing and meaningful. They will live disciplined lives, meeting regularly with others, reading the Bible, confessing sin, praying for others who need Christ and mentoring apprentices. They will be expected to love

God, love others and make disciples. They will learn to pass onto others faithfully, and teach effectively, the message of Jesus that changed their lives. They will also baptize and train those who respond to Christ as Lord so that they too can pass on to others the Gospel. Thus, from the start, new disciples are leaders of a new expansion of the Kingdom of God in the lives of people who need Christ.

Local churches are responsible for the quality of disciples they are growing and for the pace of multiplication through their system design. Church ministry should be optimized for healthy disciples, healthy community and active participation in God's mission to save the world. As the number, diversity and dispersion of disciples increases, churches will need to generate or sponsor new churches. YFC partners with local churches so that together they can make new disciples among young people in their vicinities who would otherwise remain without Christ. Where there is no local church, YFC expects one to emerge from new disciples.

Leadership emerges in local contexts to move people forward. Casting a picture of a preferred future and growing a shared vision can focus group activity. Leadership is not simply control of power or activity but discernment in a specific context and facilitation of collective progress. Thus, leaders are responsible to be led by God in building spiritual capacity and healthy cohesiveness so that God's purposes are progressed. To facilitate multiplication, leaders require imagination, a systems perspective and both commitment and skills to plan, design, recruit, train, assess and coach other leaders. They are models and mentors who initiate reproducible groups and processes that can enable multiplication. The result of their work is the benefit brought to

an increasing number of groups of people who are enjoying the Kingdom of God and its new relationships and priorities.

Specific priorities are necessary within a Christian multiplication movement. They include making disciples, growing leaders and building a reproduction system. Strategically this involves going to where there are people who need Christ and living among them, incarnating within the local context and sharing the Gospel in ways that are easily understood. Training, equipping and skill-building are also essential priorities so that every person has a pathway to grow personally, participate in making disciples, and exercise leadership appropriate to their talent and experience. Building a multiplication movement within a context requires imagination, skills in design and a capacity for managing complexity. The focus must be on constructing something that has coherence, purpose and the ability to replicate. It will be independent from its originator apart from continuous referral back to the intention or purpose of the venture.

Money is an important consideration in a multiplication movement and is frequently a limiting factor for expansion or a source of conflict. In the Pacific, where most young people do not have jobs that pay wages, and neither do many adults, it would be foolish to design a ministry that needs a regular supply of cash. Historically, YFC is a volunteer-led movement and its more recent dependence on paid leaders is a barrier to its success. Christians should not be paid to follow Jesus and leaders need not be paid to exercise leadership. People committed to a cause can choose to give their labor without charge, though it would normally be wrong to demand labor without reward. Financial support can be given to leaders so they can more strongly focus their attention and efforts without needing to get a job. However, in designing and building a leadership farm, or a

process for growing increasing numbers of leaders, may be setting an organization up for failure if it commits to pay leaders. The work of making disciples does not generate an income stream. It would be deceitful to promise an income stream to those who commit to that mission but if money becomes available then leaders can be financially supported to focus on the mission. This should be done in a sustainable way that minimizes disruption to family commitments, such as the support of children, and does not deskill or interrupt the ability of leaders to earn a living.

Multiplication systems require careful thinking and planning concerning new disciples, local churches, leaders, priorities and money. Each of these components is interdependent within the movement. Reproduction is hindered by unthinking additions to the system design, such as disciples who do not follow their Master in making new disciples, churches that fail to reproduce quality communities of disciples, flawed models of leadership, confused priorities and unsustainable income streams. When the components are right and their combination is successful, an ongoing multiplication movement can proceed.

#### Principles of Imagination for YFC

In entering the world of others, it is vital that YFC's entry stance should be that of a learner, seeking to learn with the local people about their situation. Freire recommends giving others opportunities to consider and reflect on their world. Treating others as activists to be mobilized, as though they are incapable of finding solutions to their own problems should be avoided. Instead, learning and investigating together with the people and engaging them in the process of enquiry and reflection is preferable. In this way,

manipulation by others can be exposed. Setting out plainly the people's place in society and in their history allows them to reflect and hopefully opt to transform an unjust or undesirable situation. Then they can act in response to their own critical thinking concerning their world and not merely to someone else's thinking.

A transformed imagination can bring about positive change in hopeless situations. Brueggemann suggests using ancient symbols to activate memory and contradict the dominant culture. He also recommends acknowledging and participating in people's grief and bringing to public expression their hopes and yearnings. Third, he recommends speaking about hope arising from God's enduring freedom and ability to enact his purposes for his people. In all this it is useful to counteract the dominant culture and its false consciousness by evoking, forming and reforming an alternative community. This prophetic group of people has the twin tasks of criticizing and energizing. It can present an alternative consciousness that can energize the group to fresh forms of faithfulness and vitality. Within YFC, this can be expressed through giving people access to new songs and stories about God, the joy of seeing new saved young people and offering new and relevant resources.

People can change the way they imagine how they fit together with others in their collective life. To do this, Taylor suggests introducing new stories, new meaningful images, substantial legends and new practices. It is also feasible to restore stories, images, legends and practices and as a result shift or sharpen people's expectations. Intervening in these ways can generate new understandings and cause theories to be modified. That is, through new stimuli, or by reflecting on ancient stimuli, people can reimagine the way their lives fit together with the lives of others. These new imaginaries

can then be embedded through the creation of stories, new images, new legends and new practices. Once firmly embedded within the reimagined movement, these stimuli give a shared sense of legitimacy and confidence to move forward in a collective mission.

YFC is ripe for this process of re-imagination and would be better equipped to move forward in its mandated mission and vision if it clarified its essential stories, images, legends and practices. The history of YFC is often presented as a series of structural changes led by a series of national or international directors. It focuses on evolution of the organization, the most well-known leaders and the largest gatherings of young people. Alternatively, YFC could publish brief biographies of teenagers who made personal sacrifices and responded with courage and creativity to significant challenges in a variety of mission contexts. YFC could champion young female leadership in contexts where Christian ministry or leadership in general was considered to be a male domain. YFC could also trace the life pathway of numerous teenagers who became disciples of Christ as a result of YFC ministry decades ago and show the potential effect.

As discussed, Senge explains that five disciplines can expand the capacity of an organization to move towards its vision of the future. The first four disciplines are shared vision, mental models, team learning and personal mastery. The fifth discipline is systems thinking which integrates the other four and is about seeing interrelationships and the big picture. YFC could benefit greatly by improving its ability to identify how some situations follow similar patterns as each other, how the parts of an organization interact, the broader impact of local actions and why particular operating policies are necessary for the system as a whole.

Stacey and Griffin regard the use of vision casting, goals, objectives and core values as a form of social control and culture manipulation. The primary role of leaders, they assert, is to give tentative expression to emerging themes that can help a group to take its next step. Their articulation of those themes triggers further exploration by the group and stimulates development of those themes. Generating coherence in the patterns of interactions within an organization, in part by drawing attention to the emerging themes, can often build an organization more effectively than traditional strategic planning. Leaders are embedded in conversations and interactions as active participants and discern with others the ways forward. While vision, goals, values, purpose and system design are essential for YFC, lasting and sustainable change is more likely to result from within the acts of communication between people in the movement.

PART THREE

PRACTICE

## CHAPTER 4

### DESIGNING YFC TO FUNCTION AS A MULTIPLICATION MOVEMENT

#### **The Implications of a Theology of Multiplication for YFC in the Pacific**

YFC's focus on reaching young people with the Gospel acknowledges the importance of the Great Commission. As an organization, YFC adapts its methods in order to most effectively deliver the Gospel to young people who do not yet have access to this life-saving message. Strong theological and philosophical principles can underpin strategy (as discussed in Chapter 3) and the development of a ministry framework that is culturally neutral so that it can be easily transferred to almost any environment with minimal modification and without a long period of training. Following Jesus' strategic ministry plan and the example of the Thessalonian church it must clearly be based on multiplication methodology. For example, new disciples are expected to love God, love others and make disciples. Also, churches reproduce quality communities of disciples, offer effective models of leadership and have clear priorities.

#### Recent Developments in YFC in the Pacific Region

Historically, YFC has had a clear vision and mission focused on partnership with local churches in the global evangelization of young people. It has published its core

values, operating principles, goals, objectives, constitution, bylaws, policies and strategic foci. It did this to bring unity internationally and enable progress in the mission of YFC. Following a breakdown in collegial relationships, it wrote a covenant to describe how YFC relates within itself internationally. Some effective youth outreach and discipling programs have been replicated internationally, but generally YFC has deliberately avoided being prescriptive concerning methods of evangelism and discipleship. This may be a strategic error that has potentially robbed YFC of clear missiology and global impact. The effect has been for YFC in each nation to work in its own way towards the global mission and vision. This shared understanding and commitment to a task has proved insufficient to build momentum and synergy.

In 2013, when YFC Australia increased its support of youth discipleship in the Pacific Islands it was in response to solid and growing Australian branches, a vision for international ministry and conviction that the Pacific Islands were a high priority for a few key reasons: geographical proximity, lack of outreach in existing churches, openness to the Gospel amongst Islanders who came to Australia and recognition that obedience to the Great Commission demanded YFC look beyond the shores of Australia.

At that time, YFC programs existed in Samoa, Fiji and Tonga. Yet the same need among young people existed in about thirty other island nations in the region. A growing number of enquiries expressed a concern and desire for YFC to start in more countries. As a result of YFC's engagement over the past four years the current situation is generally more positive. YFC is being pioneered in New Zealand and Cook Islands. It has been established in American Samoa. YFC youth workers have also conducted youth evangelism and discipleship training in several other nations including Vanuatu, Nauru

and Kiribati. YFC Pacific is currently seeing significant numbers of young people in Samoa, Tonga, American Samoa and Australia turning to Jesus Christ and becoming his disciples. However, the national YFC program in YFC Fiji and the pioneering work in Kiribati have closed.

This research project has drawn lessons from YFC's recent experience in the Pacific Region and from the Bible, from social theorists and from missional leaders. It has worked on the realization that YFC's "unifying essentials" have failed to bring sufficient coherence to the movement. Although YFC has had agreement on its mission, it has been contradictory in its leadership models, organizational structures, missional priorities and methods. In the light of this reality this doctoral project has focused on the practical missiological implications of YFC's mission and vision. That is, it has identified specific expectations of YFC ministries, YFC leaders and the new disciples resulting from YFC's ministries. This paper is therefore prescriptive in the sense that it advocates for several specific leadership tasks, priorities and practices.

#### Design Transferrable Strategies that can Advance the Global Vision

As a result of the reflections above, YFC's goal for ministry in the Pacific was to design a strategy that could be transferred from one Pacific culture to another with maximum effectiveness and minimum modification. This would enable leaders from different Island nations to share materials and strategies with one another and also enable established ministries to send out their people to other countries or sub-cultures and see the fruits of their labor in a relatively short space of time.

Where possible, strategic ministry involves YFC partnering with local churches so together they can make new disciples among local young people. In some cases, this has proved challenging as existing churches either lacked vision for evangelism, discipleship and multiplication, or lacked obvious evidence of spiritual zeal. In these situations, ministry leaders benefited from a renewed theological grounding for their ministry and effective alternative strategies to help new disciples grow and multiply themselves.

New disciples are the building blocks of the Christian movement and leaders of a new expansion of the Kingdom of God in the lives of people who need Christ. They will be expected to love God, love others, share the Gospel and make disciples. A ministry strategy needs to be designed with this focus in mind and with transferrable strategies for each of these areas.

While disciples are the building blocks of growth, it is important to develop leaders who will take responsibility for building spiritual capacity and healthy cohesiveness so that God's purposes move forward. Leaders require imagination, a systems perspective and both the commitment to and skills for, planning, recruiting, training, assessing and coaching other leaders. They are models and mentors who initiate reproducible groups and processes that can enable multiplication. Within YFC (as in most churches and ministries) leaders must be prepared to adapt to new contexts and subcultures as they reach out to different groups of young people and encounter changes in culture over time (often rapidly). The strategies that were tested in this project were designed to equip disciples and leaders for youth ministry in a variety of national cultures.

Most YFC ministries in the Pacific Region have had paid staff but no local fundraising strategies. This has created financial dependence on larger, wealthier countries such as New Zealand and Australia. In designing and building a leadership farm (a process for growing increasing numbers of leaders), the financial realities must be considered. A strategy must be developed around providing these resources to ensure YFC does not commit to pay leaders before having the finances to do so.

While vision, goals, values, purpose and system design are essential for YFC, lasting, sustainable growth is more likely to result when these are developed through communication between people in the movement. Leaders need to ensure that they are listening, observing and discerning rather than merely directing, controlling and inspiring action by others. Thus, the strategy (both on entry into a new context and on a continuing basis) should be that of a learner, seeking to understand the situation of the local people. The strategy must contain tools for engaging local disciples in the process of enquiry and reflection so that they can act in response to their own critical thinking concerning their world and not merely to our ways of seeing things.

Charles Taylor claims that war, revolution and rapid economic change can expel people from their old forms; new practices will likely result and can embed a new worldview.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, new practices can be introduced to shift people's thinking and enable them to transition to a new way of imagining their world and their relationships. Activating people's memories, acknowledging their grief and hopes and reminding them of God's liberating power can generate new imagination. Introducing new stories, images, legends and practices can stimulate new imaginings as well as giving people a

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<sup>1</sup> Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 18.

bigger picture view so they are empowered to imagine different and more satisfying relationships and outcomes. This can be integrated into the process of vision casting by imagining a future in which all members of the group or church are actively multiplying disciples, a process that almost inevitably leads to the life and action that engenders such results.

In keeping with the strategy of listening and learning from local disciples with a view of engaging their critical thinking, it is important to discern and draw attention to emerging themes. This generates increasing coherence in the patterns of interactions within an organization and can build an organization more effectively than traditional strategic planning. Providing leaders with tools for this ministry of discernment enables them to give tentative expression to emerging themes. This can help a group to take its next step forward. This is an important concern that can be implemented both within YFC ministries, as well as in their interactions with local churches, networks of churches and ministries.

In summary, these principles can be presented as statements about YFC that should be true for any program and therefore can be used to measure, assess or shape YFC ministries in each nation:

1. YFC participates in God's evangelization of the world by passing on the Gospel message so that young people will be saved.
2. YFC adapts its methods in order to safely deliver the Gospel to young people who do not yet have access to God's life-saving message.
3. YFC serves God in partnership with others and thereby illustrates for outsiders the Gospel message of reconciliation.
4. YFC ministries are optimized for reproduction and multiplication by applying common principles of multiplication movements.
5. YFC teaches new disciples to love God, love others and make disciples.
6. YFC leaders prayerfully build spiritual capacity and healthy cohesiveness.

7. YFC has local fundraising strategies and is not financially dependent on wealthier countries.
8. YFC leaders are in the habit of interacting, listening, observing and discerning.
9. YFC leaders learn and investigate together with the young people and engage them in a process of enquiry and reflection.
10. YFC leaders activate people's memories, acknowledge their grief and hopes and remind them of God's liberating power.
11. YFC leaders discern and draw attention to emerging patterns of interactions to generate group coherence and thus enable collective progress.

### **A Ministry Strategy that Teaches these Strategies to Key YFC Leaders**

This doctoral project was designed to inform YFC ministry in the Pacific and in other regions. In particular it aimed to challenge the way YFC designs new national programs and emphasize multiplication. Initially, it was proposed that a seminar, lasting up to three days, would include teaching sessions, discussions and skills training. As the project progressed it became obvious that a modular approach would offer more flexibility and also enable testing in a variety of contexts. That is, rather than test a full seminar, each module was tested and adjusted in the light of the experience. This means that seminars can be constructed from components that best match the learning needs in a specific country or region.

This doctoral project demonstrated that introducing four specific strategies (Serendipity Baseball Diamond, Discovery Bible Study, Training for Trainers and Listening Circles), each derived from one of the eleven statements, would positively influence the shape of YFC ministries. Other modules, derived by the remaining seven statements, can easily be added to any seminar or taught as standalone modules in the future. Each module can also be introduced and supplemented by a lesson on the full list of statements.

## Piloting the Seminar in at Least Three Countries

The four key practices recommended by this doctoral project were tested in different ministry contexts. While they could possibly be combined into one long seminar, they were tested as standalone modules, which allowed clearer examination of the results. Also, the modules on Discovery Bible Study and Training for Trainers were often combined and sometimes lasted up to five days. It is difficult to obtain people's commitment for seminars of this length. The table below shows the location, date and attendance of each modular test.

Table 1. Training Locations and Dates

Module	Location	Date	Days	Attendance
Discovery Bible Study & Training for Trainers	Vava'u, Tonga	August 2013	5	14
Discovery Bible Study & Training for Trainers	Port Vila, Vanuatu	June 2014	5	35
Discovery Bible Study & Training for Trainers	Nauru	October 2014	2	75
Discovery Bible Study & Training for Trainers	Tarawa, Kiribati	December 2014	2	50
Discovery Bible Study & Training for Trainers	Tarawa, Kiribati	December 2015	5	40
Serendipity Baseball Diamond	Pago Pago, American Samoa	June 2016	1	50
Listening Circle	Melbourne, Australia	December 2017	1	12

## Content of the Strategy

Of the eleven statements derived from this project, there are several ministry practices that could be intentionally embedded in YFC ministries and thus facilitate multiplication. I have chosen the four that best corresponded to current needs. They generate energy, interaction and renewed hope for pioneering; focus on the basics of

making disciples; and explore culturally appropriate forms of strategic planning. Each of the following can have a significant impact if practiced consistently.

1. Teach all new disciples to love God, love others and make disciples.
2. Learn and investigate together with young people and engage them in a process of enquiry and reflection.
3. Activate people's memories, acknowledge their grief and hopes, and remind them of God's liberating power.
4. Discern and draw attention to emerging patterns of interactions.

Embedding these four practices within the YFC movement will call people into God's mission, enable young people to discover Christ, equip them to follow Jesus and maintain an effective strategic focus based on discernment. People can experience tangible benefits when they recall God's past actions in history and in their own lives. Those benefits might include purpose, confidence, joy, hope and courage. It is important to acknowledge reality and to be in solidarity with people as they consider what they have lost and also their longings. This is the basis of motivation as it gives people meaningful reasons for action. With this, people need to know who God is and what God is doing in the world and that God has the power to do what he has said he will do.

While it is faster to tell young people what to think, what to believe and how to behave, without explanation or opportunity to question those actions and instructions, it is counterproductive in the long term. It is better to create space for young people to discover for themselves, in their own language and with their own points of reference, symbols and illustrations, what is important and what they truly need. As they develop their capacity to investigate and reflect on their lives and situation, young people will, with more vigor, commit to actions that make sense to them and which they have crafted. This is a sustainable and lasting basis for action and gives dignity to the young people.

### Case Study: Assessment of YFC Australia against the Eleven Statements

The Jesus School, a key ministry of YFC Australia, complies with most of the eleven statements. It passes on the Gospel message, adapts its methods and partners with others. It is not yet optimized for reproduction and multiplication but has that potential. It teaches young people to love God, love others and make disciples, plus its leaders build spiritual capacity and healthy cohesiveness. Funds are raised locally, within the nation. In the Jesus School, leaders are interacting, listening, observing and discerning, plus learning and investigating together with young people. Jesus School sometimes activates people's memories, and acknowledges their grief and hopes, and it consistently reminds them of God's liberating power. There is no evidence to suggest that leaders draw attention to emerging patterns of interaction but this would be well within their capabilities and contextually appropriate. Overall, the Jesus School in Australia measures up well to the findings of this project, particularly if it is giving thought to principles of multiplication in its running of Jesus Schools in new locations.

### Case Study: Assessment of YFC Tonga against the Eleven Statements

"Following Jesus, Fishing for People" is the name that Move Network uses for its adaptation of DBS and T4T. It is currently the only program being used in YFC Tonga and is entirely about passing on the Gospel message, adaptive methods, partnership with others and optimizing for reproduction and multiplication. It teaches new disciples to love God, love others and make disciples.

Many of the key volunteers are pastors of churches who are prayerfully building spiritual capacity and healthy cohesiveness. This is an ideal situation for YFC ministry as

it eliminates the additional complexity involved where churches do not welcome new believers and focus on discipleship. No funds are required for the program though local fundraising strategies could free up the National Director to focus on growing, supporting and directing the ministry nationally. DBS has equipped leaders to comply with the final four statements from this research project but these listening processes might benefit from more attention by future leaders.

#### Case Study: Assessment of YFC Fiji against the Eleven Statements

YFC Fiji ceased operations in 2016, though a new board is preparing to re-launch the ministry in 2018. Prior to closure of the existing program, it showed little evidence of compliance with the eleven statements. In addition to financial challenges, the lack of vision, local support and overall impact contributed to its closure.

The YFC Fiji ministry was largely funded by partnerships with New Zealand organizations and there were no significant or consistent local fundraising strategies. Generally, the leadership demonstrated by the board appeared more reactive than strategic, which made it difficult for the young man who served as National Director. Additionally, the primary vehicle for passing the Gospel on to others, was an annual youth camp with very little post-camp engagement to encourage and nurture any new believers.

#### **Specific Components and Activities That Have Demonstrated Results**

The four specific strategies that have been incorporated and field-tested as modules are as follows. First, for new youth ministries or rejuvenation of existing ministries: activating people's memories, acknowledging their griefs and hopes, and

reminding them of God's liberating power. Next, for ministry to non-Christians who want to explore the relevance of Christian faith to their lives: engaging young people in a process of collaborative enquiry and reflection. Third, for young Christians who want to become effective disciple-making disciples: teaching young people to love and obey God and make disciples. Finally, for established Christians who want to move in a new direction or find ways forward: discerning and drawing attention to ongoing patterns of interaction and emerging needs.

Strategy One: Activating People's Memories, Acknowledging their Grievances and Hopes, and Reminding them of God's Liberating Power

This strategy is most appropriate for Christians who want to start a new youth ministry or rejuvenate an existing youth ministry. It is effective and powerful since it creates a safe space for people to reveal what they really think. So much of island culture is closely knitted together with hierarchical structures. High respect for positional authority of leaders can hinder women and young people who want to be heard on any issue. A process is needed that starts simply but can generate deep conversation as it continues, giving the youngest children and the shyest, or least listened to, adults a chance to speak their mind. Sometimes, people are not really aware of what they think or how they are feeling about important issues.

This process enables them to identify, express and clarify their thoughts and feelings including unfulfilled hopes that yet remain possible or grief that holds people down and shows itself in anger or depression. Most importantly, it invites people to retell stories, recall legends and see again important images or symbols that can energize and facilitate forward movement towards a cause. This practice, exercise or activity is simple

enough to be used in a group as small as four people (two pairs) or in any large group that can be divided into several groups of six (three pairs).

The Serendipity Baseball Diamond, developed by Lyman Coleman, is a process for building Christian community using fact sharing or history-giving, affirmation or expressing appreciation and thanks, and goal setting or need sharing that invites support from the group. Essentially people share stories until they feel known and accepted. Next, they affirm one another with positive statements, encouraging observations and inspiring promises that give hope and confidence until each person feels valued and experiences a sense of belonging. After that there is an ability to work together on common goals and causes, such as the needs of young people in a specific location. This strategy produces movement and progress that, if strong attention has been given to the Gospel, can lead to *Koinonia* or true Christian community. Until people feel known and valued, they are unlikely to be able to move forward as a group towards the creation of a new youth ministry, particularly a national YFC program.

This method is ideal in situations where there is need for rejuvenation of fellowship or to heal division because it is accessible, dynamic, enjoyable, gradual and effective. It is helpful to prepare questions and to set up the venue in advance to enable the activity to flow easily and to direct people into groups of six. People find a partner and then the pairs are asked to gather with two other pairs to form groups of six. One member of each pair is in the center facing outwards toward their partner. They answer questions with one another and after one or two questions the outside member of the pair rotates to the next person and the new pairs answer together the next question or two. This process continues while the fellowship or sense of cohesion builds. Towards the

latter stages of the exercise, real needs are expressed and the group is bonded together with each member feeling known and valued, ready to respond with tangible actions.

### Strategy Two: Learn and Investigate Together with Young People and Engage them in a Process of Collaborative Enquiry and Reflection

This strategy is appropriate for use with young people who have not yet professed Christian faith but who want to explore its relevance to their own lives. Often the people with knowledge about God and the Bible begin by telling others what they have discovered. Sometimes they link multiple Bible verses or Gospel stories together in the hope that new people will find a personal relationship with God. One difficulty of this approach is that it requires training and education to do it competently. Many Christians do not pass on their faith because they fear making a mistake or saying the wrong thing or not having answers to all of the questions that might be asked. This method addresses these problems.

Discovery Bible Study is a powerful technique that helps non-Christians explore for themselves what the Bible says. It is learner-centered and provides an opportunity for people without any knowledge of the Bible to hear a story of hope, such as the encounter between Jesus and Zacchaeus, and through answering a set of simple questions gain profound understanding of its main message: What did you like about the story? What does this passage teach us about God? What does this passage teach us about people? Is there a command to obey or an example to follow? Next, they consider: How will you obey? Who will you share with this week? After that they pray by name for people they know who are far from God and they pray for each other.

A story is shared verbally, from memory, and it can also be read from the Bible. In oral cultures, and where paper tends to rot in the humidity (such as in Solomon Islands), faithfully retelling a story in your own words can be very powerful since this is how information is normally conveyed and received there. The questions are as simple as “What did you like about the story?” and “What does the story tell us about Jesus?” By answering the questions for themselves, rather than being told something that the facilitator wants to say about the story, discoveries are made. The process creates space for the Holy Spirit to give understanding directly to the learner. If they do not gain understanding the question can be asked again. The learning that is sought is contained in that one story and so it becomes a simple method of passing on stories of hope and introducing the person of Jesus, who he is and what he has done.

#### Strategy Three: Teach All New Disciples to Love God, Love Others and Make Disciples

Young Christians who are just starting their walk with God are usually enthusiastic and fervently desire to grow as disciples themselves and frequently want to make new disciples. That is, after finding something good through Christian faith they are usually keen to discuss it and share their discovery with others. Unfortunately, in many churches there is no simple, clear instruction in how to pass on their faith so that others can have what they now possess.

T4T enables new disciples to accomplish all of these goals. It offers simple tools and models for understanding and implementing processes for making new disciples. It has been developed in a way that it can be quickly and easily passed onto new disciples so they can participate in God’s mission and make new disciples (sometimes on the same

day that they turned to Christ and became his follower). It aims to generate a new paradigm for Christian living. This is quite achievable, but it takes time. A five-day seminar has more chance of succeeding than a three-day seminar. YFC Pacific experimented with various periods of time and various sized groups to discover which provided the most appropriate vehicle for growth. None were ideal and each has advantages and disadvantages. To grow momentum and maintain progress in achieving multiplication and building a movement, it is easiest to start with a small, highly committed group for five days and to follow up with coaching support and communities of practice. For practitioners to consistently implement T4T they need to network with others who are doing the same and to have access to someone with more experience who can answer their questions and guide their development in using the method.

#### Strategy Four: Discern and Draw Attention to Emerging Patterns of Interactions and Emerging Needs

Established Christian groups often find themselves stuck in tradition or disputes that hinder them from moving forward and discerning their next step. Rather than defaulting to corporate strategic planning in the form of vision, mission, goals and objectives, this strategy offers a simpler, more flexible method. Strategies are relatively easy to write and difficult to implement, partly because the writers are not the implementers. Sometimes there is a reality gap where something decided behind a desk in a meeting room does not quite address the real challenges and opportunities being faced by people in the organization, especially if the context is often changing. Another problem arises when the leaders designing the strategy place too little value on the views, ideas and energy of others in the group or system. In a changing situation, discernment

and intuition become powerful tools. It is necessary to gather clues and connect information to generate a sketch revealing a bigger picture or giving an overview. If that process involves listening to people and using their language, their symbols and their ideas, it can provide adaptability and simpler implementation rather than unrealistic plans that are designed without reference to the people who need them.

Listening circles can be used in a variety of circumstances to give people opportunity to discover, express and reflect on their own thoughts in response to a strategic question. A listening circle, also known as a dialogue circle or talking circle, is a component of Open Space Technology:

A dialogue circle, or talking circle, is another way for facilitating deep listening for “emergence”. Rather than people posting conversations and breaking into smaller groups, as is the case in an Open Space meeting, a group of people sit in a circle to explore a particular theme or question. An object, called a “talking piece” is passed from person to person (or is placed in the middle of the circle for people to pick up). Whoever has the talking piece in his/her hand can speak uninterrupted by others. The talking circle continues for as long as necessary provided the group continues to stick with the agreed principles of listening. If necessary, recesses can be called and follow up meetings scheduled. The process gives rise to a deeper level of listening and dialogue than conventional conversations which operate on “discussion” or “debate”.<sup>2</sup>

As each person in a circle has had a turn of talking, it is possible for people in the group to draw attention to themes or patterns in the things said. These patterns, once noticed, can become self-evident and become building blocks for understanding an issue and important elements of a key topic. The central activity in this simple exercise is to have a talking object and a question and to invite people to take turns to hold the talking

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Wood, *Practicing Peace*, <https://www.michaeljohnwood.com/articles-by-michael-wood> (accessed 3 December 2017).

object and give the group their answer to the question. As the conversation progresses the themes and patterns emerge and potentially suggest solutions, even to complex problems.

Experiencing a listening circle once or twice is sufficient training to host and facilitate one in a local context. The method is accessible to people without formal education or critical thinking skills, which is relevant to islander cultures relatively unexposed to Western cultures. It could easily fit within traditional islander communities, due to its respectful and open discussion, which can bypass potential barriers arising from hierarchy and formality.

### **Target Population for Testing the Practices**

Different situations require different interventions. Each practice generated by this project has a specific purpose and can be applied when needed. For example, if a group of people want to start a new YFC program they would first need to define what is important in their shared vision or desire to do something new. The serendipity exercise could enable them to form a unified team with a motivating sense of the needs their youth ministry might address. However, for existing groups who want to resolve problems and redirect their ministry they could use a listening circle to discern possible solutions.

Opportunities to teach DBS and T4T are readily available in YFC ministry. There are always young people who want to discover who Jesus Christ is and how his teaching might be relevant for their lives. There are also young people who need confidence to share their faith simply with people they care about. Teaching these two practices, DBS and T4T, was therefore an appropriate starting point. It also forms the most common part of YFC ministry since its core business is to make new young disciples. Encouragement

from YFC International to start new programs in new countries creates the need for ways to engage groups of people who have the beginnings of a shared vision and may not have many ideas about how to get started. The Serendipity Baseball Diamond, combined with the story sharing and affirmation in groups of six people, is an easy to use method of forming a group with a shared vision. Before creating a new ministry, people need to understand who they are, what they bring to the team, how they might work together and what they want most to achieve as a group. Reflection of this kind before starting a new youth ministry can galvanize energy and build momentum as well as clarify what people are agreeing to do. Discernment is a powerful tool anytime but is especially useful when at a crossroads in ministry. The listening circles, which can be very simple, are useful when an existing group needs a realistic strategy that people will implement in response to a complex situation or problem. As such one must wait until a problem arises. It is difficult to test until there is a genuine problem that needs to be tackled or a genuine question that people need answered.

## CHAPTER 5

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND EVALUATION

#### **Pilot Project Summary: Teach Strategic Seminars to YFC in at Least Three Countries**

Three of the four interventions have been tested in the Pacific islands: T4T, DBS and the Serendipity Baseball Diamond. The fourth intervention, listening circles, was tested with a multi-ethnic group of young people, who although not Islanders, were facing a complex situation that resembles situations encountered in the Pacific. All four practices are easily learned and can be taught quickly, then implemented immediately.

These interventions do not require sophisticated equipment, though a flip chart or data projector may be useful if available. In general, a printed booklet, a Bible or New Testament and a talking object would be sufficient. A suitable meeting space can be found in any village or town since groups are likely to range in size from ten to fifty people and can meet outside if necessary.

The greatest success with DBS and T4T was in Tonga where a full-time, paid leader was motivated to implement the training in as many locations as possible and see multiplication occur to the fourth generation, meaning that a Christian had made a new disciple who then made a new disciple and then they too made a new disciple. This

occurred several times on Vava'u. The global leaders of T4T noted these phenomena by marking Tonga on their map of viable multiplication movements. Training in Vanuatu, Nauru and Kiribati, while bringing immediate benefits to the ministry and resulting in new disciples, did not produce any noticeable multiplication effect.

The Serendipity Baseball Diamond was tested in American Samoa and had a transformative effect, showing its usefulness in situations where people want to come together to reach young people in a new or renewed venture. It also enabled people to process their grief from past disappointments with YFC since a ministry had existed there decades previously but was closed down due to lack of staff and resources. Also, several Samoans present had left Samoa years ago and needed to forgive people associated back then with YFC Samoa.

The revised listening circles intervention has not yet been implemented in the islands but after completing the training and initial testing I believe it is extremely well suited to situations where forward movement is needed. That is, as well as using conventional or commonplace methods of strategic planning and systems design, I am confident that listening circles will be an effective practice in Pacific cultures because it assumes that everything is interconnected. People in the islands, possibly aided by their clearly-bounded community, know that intervention in one part of an island can have an effect, often unknown or surprising, in another part of the island. Further, Islanders know that human plans often fail because of nature and the everyday happenings of life in a village setting. That is, they tend to go with the flow, sometimes at a more relaxed pace, and will observe what is happening and draw conclusions. Wisdom is generated from continually observing village life on the island and seeing the effect of various

interventions of people and nature. For those reasons, I believe this method will fit naturally into Pacific cultures and be readily accessible without requiring Western thinking, linear thinking or fully developed critical thinking.

### **Implementation: Results, Lessons and Observations**

The following section follows the actual implementation timeline and reports the outcomes of various trainings and seminars in different nations. For each training, there is discussion of the number of attendees, the scope of training and the response. There is also an analysis of the impact, where this was seen. As the seminars were implemented they were modified based on the observations made.

#### Discovery Bible Study and T4T: Kingdom of Tonga, August 2013

Grant Morrison from Move Network delivered the initial training in T4T and DBS in Tonga. Fourteen people attended the four-day training on Vava'u, a secondary but beautiful island in Tonga. Within weeks of that training, 150 people had accepted Christ and most were being disciplined in small groups led by new Christians. A further thirty-five Tongans were trained by the end of December and seventeen discipleship groups were started. That month, through prayer and consultation a decision was made to invite local churches to begin implementing T4T within their congregations.

By February 2014, the number of groups had doubled to thirty-four. Woolwine (the Pioneering Coordinator of YFC Tonga) began meeting with local church leaders on Vava'u and two pastors committed to integrate T4T into their churches. T4T "jumped" from Vava'u to Tongatapu (the main island 200 miles away) through telephone conversations. Woolwine then flew down to Tongatapu and met with one young person

who had learned about T4T from a friend on Vava'u and started six further groups.

Woolwine also met with four leaders who showed interest and two immediately asked for training. One of the training requests came directly from the president of a denomination who wanted to personally attend the training along with his leadership.

Within the first six months, 275 people accepted Christ and around 130 people were disciplined in small groups. In one instance three young people were sent by their employer, to another island and while there they shared the Gospel with three young Mormons. Each one became a follower of Jesus Christ and interestingly was offered money by the Mormon Church to return into its fellowship. They turned down the offer since they now understood the Gospel and had found new life as Christian disciples.

In 2016, Woolwine sent this report from pastors on the island of Vava'u:

- We baptized 22 people in August.
- We are training five new leaders to add to the five we have now.
- Six new groups started recently.
- We are using the tools you guys brought us a few months ago.
- People are active in sharing their faith.
- We are learning why groups die and how to combat that.
- The church I pastor has grown from 20 to 150. We cannot fit everyone inside now.
- Many of the people in the groups are not part of my church or the church I am affiliated with.
- We recently trained another church.
- We had a goal of seeing 500 people within the groups by the end of the year. We are almost there already.
- I think pretty soon we will have the whole island.
- The only reason I'm doing this is that I see the impact it's making.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Zack Woolwine, unpublished internal YFCI report, September 2016.

In June 2014, Morrison and I taught DBS and T4T in Port Vila, Vanuatu. We trained thirty-five young people (mostly from one denomination) for five days. The impact of the teaching was seen immediately, with daily testimonies of personal change and the responses of friends and family to the Gospel as the method was implemented. However, political issues within the denomination affected the host and made it difficult to ensure progress in implementation after their departure. There is no evidence of ongoing use of the training among the young people or within the denomination.

#### Discovery Bible Study and T4T: Nauru, October 2014

In October 2014, Morrison and I taught DBS and T4T in Nauru at the invitation of a denominational leader. We taught together for several days, mostly in the town hall. An invitation was sent by SMS text message to every cell phone on the island and approximately seventy-five people attended.

Participation was enthusiastic, particularly in the large town hall gathering, yet implementation was minimal. There was no direct impact from the training, although a few local people became Christians or were healed. Since there was no local leadership for the program there was no active follow up and implementation was minimal.

#### Discovery Bible Study and T4T: Kiribati, December 2014

The leaders of one denomination invited me to Kiribati because they recognized the need for a different type of leadership training that focused on the basics of discipleship and multiplication. They had observed the training YFC ran in Nauru in October and were very keen to run a similar program in Kiribati. I went with my twelve-year-old daughter and trained fifty people in the essentials of basic discipleship, how to

deliver a personal testimony and DBS. The training took place in a traditional meeting hall, with a thatched roof, concrete floor and no walls. The opening night was a welcome ceremony. The teaching sessions started the next day and ran for two full days from 10am to 12noon and 2pm to 4pm each day, plus some night sessions.

All T4T sessions are designed to encompass the three main channels of Christian life: heart (worship, gratitude, confession and expression of need), head (growing in knowledge of the Bible, responsibility to grow and multiply and learning to understand and retell the stories) and hands (actions they need to take). The program used the “Following and Fishing” booklet from Move Network, expanded by Woolwine in Tonga, which focuses on practical questions such as: “What are you thankful for?” and “What do you need God to do?” and encourages sharing answers with someone. This interactive process was very important as it helped them become comfortable with talking about spiritual things with others. A key principle that needs to be explained carefully and repeatedly is the notion of the Great Commission as demanding a ministry response, especially if they come from churches where this is not emphasized or is absent. As they studied Bible stories throughout the seminar, the emphasis was also on learning, understanding and retelling. Practice in memorizing and retelling stories about Jesus was a critical element in the training. They followed the process of reading the story, retelling the story and answering the four questions from the DBS process in the booklet.

By the end of the second day participants had become quite familiar with this process and had practiced it with a number of different partners and small groups. In addition, they had become comfortable with sharing their testimony in three minutes, structured around the following three topics: your life before you met Jesus, how you met

Jesus and how your life has changed as a result of your encounter with Jesus. They also had become familiar with a series of Bible verses, which they marked in a “Share Jesus Without Fear” New Testament<sup>2</sup> containing a sinner’s prayer and had been challenged to use these tools with people outside the seminar. Vision casting for the harvest (telling stories and anecdotes to illustrate the importance and priority of making new disciples) proved extremely helpful in motivating them to take action in sharing the Gospel, especially since they now had tools to help them do so and had practiced these techniques until they felt comfortable with them.

A key concern was the need for time and training before a new Christian could be trusted to not only share the Gospel, but especially to lead discipleship groups. I gave them twelve reasons why this was not the case, and allowed time to discuss it at some length. These statements include: You do not have enough leaders to run all of the new groups. The Gospel spreads fastest when you reach the fourth generation. Bible stories will keep people on the right track. New Christians can achieve more than people think they can. You disciple them as they disciple others. You only need to teach people as much as they obey (one story at a time). Young people engage with Jesus when they are trusted with the ministry of Jesus. Children are very good at sharing stories with other children. Your role as a pastor will change to that of a coach with more time for helping others to mature into leadership. Ephesians 4 states that leaders must equip the saints (believers). Simple things multiply faster. Coconut trees produce coconuts and also

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<sup>2</sup> Holman Christian Standard Bible, *Share Jesus Without Fear: Personal Evangelism New Testament* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), xi-xiv.

coconut trees. Overall the response was excellent, people were responsive to the message, used the tools provided and many new disciples began following Jesus.

#### Discovery Bible Study and T4T: Kiribati, December 2015

In December 2015 YFC was invited back to Kiribati to do further training.

Woolwine and I taught DBS and T4T to a large group of leaders from fourteen different islands in Kiribati. There were several days of teaching, though the leader of the host denomination felt that people could not cope with more than about two hours teaching per day. Unlike the previous year's seminar, attendance was inconsistent so we could not build effectively on each day's teaching. One of the major lessons learned was that the less intensive teaching time made it far more difficult to bring about the required paradigm shift in people's understanding of Christian life and ministry.

Despite those challenges, the Gospel teaching and implementation of DBS and T4T changed many lives. Coaching through videoconference was offered, but not taken up by the local leaders. Ongoing changes in their discipleship practice were not evident, despite a YFC Pioneering Leader from Fiji being onsite for more than a year. It appears that he either did not have the position in the community to lead the implementation of the new discipleship practices or he did not understand them sufficiently.

In addition, the leader of the training school did not make himself or his students available for coaching via the Internet despite having arranged this opportunity with Woolwine. This reinforced the importance of having committed YFC leadership to manage the early stages of implementation so that a new paradigm of Christian discipleship can be firmly embedded in the participants over time. Without someone

championing the new lifestyle, people revert to traditional ways of expressing Christian faith and being a church. Introducing new practices requires persistence and assistance from leaders.

#### Serendipity Baseball Diamond: American Samoa, June 2016

The official launch of YFC American Samoa was on June 17, 2016. The following day I taught about fifty YFC volunteers and staff about leadership. The group was fresh from the launch celebration and members were excited for the future. At the same time, they were acutely aware that the mission to launch YFC American Samoa was ended and they were not sure what the following week would look like.

The training was structured in three parts. First, were the five core values in which all Christians need to set an example: prayer, relationships, Bible reading, respect for leadership and commitment to global mission. Second, were the five key characteristics of leaders: modeling behavior, walking with others, sharing a vision for the future, building a team, and discerning direction. Finally there was an exercise to empower people to speak up and voice their opinion.

The third element was crucial because the formal, traditional, hierarchical culture of Samoa and American Samoa sometimes prevented young people and women from saying what they think. This exercise needed to be non-hierarchical, relational and accessible to everyone regardless of their level of education, critical thinking skills, age, assertiveness or self-confidence. It was an essential element to help them form a team that could carry the ministry forward. The Serendipity Baseball Diamond model for developing *Koinonia*, or deep Christian fellowship, met all of the objectives.

The aim of the serendipity model is to travel around three bases to reach home base which is “what happened in the Upper Room when a bunch of broken people . . . got together, cared for each other and discovered a whole new power in their lives through the Holy Spirit.”<sup>3</sup> The model is described in detail in Chapter 4.

Due to the limited time available in this context, the group spent most of the time on first base and a little time on the second base. The first base is about sharing facts or stories about oneself with the aim that each person feels known. I gradually fed the groups fourteen questions to answer together in pairs. They started with the basic, fact-sharing questions, and gradually moved onto deeper, more personal questions and rotated the groups to cross-pollinate the sharing of stories and affirmation so that fellowship was built into the whole group. The effect was almost instantaneous as people realized they had a chance to speak and be heard on personal, emotional issues connected with their passionate desire to start YFC in their nation.

The exercise went extremely well and had a transformational effect on the whole group. So much so that there were more than twenty minutes of testimony from about fifteen people who had just experienced a significant revelation or spiritual change. There were many tears and much joy as people brought their whole selves to others in an environment of affirmation and trust. The effect was astounding and led to a great number of positive comments in the days following. Notably, the National Director of YFC Samoa, who was visiting with his staff for the launch of YFC American Samoa, gained sufficient experience to use this method in his own country. Since the launch and that training seminar on leadership, YFC American Samoa has gone from strength to

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<sup>3</sup> *The NIV Serendipity Bible for Study Groups* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 13.

strength and is now a thriving national youth ministry with strong partnerships with church leaders and good support from community leaders and the government.

#### Listening Circle: Australia, December 2017

I did not have a suitable opportunity in the Pacific Islands to test this strategy. Instead I tested part of the strategy at a meeting in Melbourne. The purpose of the meeting was to enable teenagers to create a youth conference that would be congenial to refugees, second-generation immigrants and Caucasian Australians, three widely divergent communities. Duku Wolikare, a South Sudanese community chaplain who works among at-risk youth in immigrant communities, led the workshop. I assisted him along with Jan Crombie, the host of the listening circle training workshop I had attended in November, who serves as Archdeacon for Parish Partnerships.

Listening was a key aim of the meeting. The intent was to test assumptions about common tensions in Australia between immigrants and their children and to hear their needs, frustrations, and ideas as well as to empower them to plan and organize the youth camp. The focus on listening in this context uncovered both tensions and possible solutions which confirmed my confidence in this method of building contextually relevant solutions to common problems in new ministries.

The process outlined in the listening circles workshop resembled the building of a fire. First one clears the ground, and then places dry leaves, then twigs and small sticks, followed later by logs. This meeting was the beginning of that process and began in a simple way. The young people and their leaders gathered into small groups of three people, with at least one person whom they did not yet know. They answered some

questions and we collated their responses as a whole group. This process started with stories about Jesus, then characteristics of Jesus, then the Church's mission and finally a group assessment of how well the Church is succeeding in its mission among young people in our context. This exercise provided the basic building blocks of the proposed youth conference.

The community chaplain then explained that the conference would be shaped around the needs of young people. This would enable their friendships and fellowship, and give them opportunities to encourage one another across boundaries of culture and geography. They discussed a series of meetings that would build on this first workshop: a prayer and worship gathering in February 2018, a feast in April 2018, then the youth conference in June 2018 followed by a reunion in the Cathedral in August 2018 where the young people could celebrate and declare to the Church what they want to say.

The meeting lasted almost two hours. Many of the young people speak English as a second language (in particular the Karen People from Myanmar and the South Sudanese) and more time would have been beneficial, as it would enable more listening and discussion. Since this team is organizing an event that is created by young people for young people the role of the leadership team in this instance is mostly that of administrator-coaches, which means that substantial time needs to be allocated so that all voices can be heard. The young people in the meeting responded positively to the opportunity. Interestingly, when asked about the Church they characterized it as lacking in creativity and "slow," meaning unable to compete with the pace of culture and life for teenagers in that society.

There was insufficient time for a full listening circle process but that method will be tested further in early 2018 both in Australia and the Pacific, building upon this initial experience. There was an obvious desire in this group to be heard and a willingness to engage in the process. The second gathering is expected to be larger, so there will be new people to listen. Although the primary focus of this process is a youth conference and public service in the Melbourne Cathedral, it is more accurately a listening process so that young people shape the youth ministry in Melbourne Anglican Diocese. Experienced leaders will support the emerging leaders among the youth, serving as coaches and guides for this process, cheering them on as they team up to achieve success.

The information gathered in this meeting was written up by the Archdeacon and is being implemented by the community chaplain. He sent a report to the churches invited to the meeting along with invitations to the events planned for 2018. A special effort will be made to enfold Anglo-Saxon youth and Chinese youth as these more dominant groups may not naturally participate in multicultural events such as a worship event, feast or youth conference. Many people stay within their cultural groups so there is a need to cast vision for the Kingdom of God and a coming together of people from all nations.

#### Potential Sites and Applications for Testing the Listening Circle Method

YFC Tonga has gone through a period of transition and there is some danger of losing momentum. After Woolwine left Tonga a volunteer National Director was appointed but his primary role is youth pastor in one church and this affected his availability. There is a strong board and a great chairman though they do not often meet. The listening circle activity would help them assess their options and consider the path

forward and will expose new options and opportunities by giving a wider pool of people a voice in the process.

Manasa, the National Director of YFC Samoa will complete three years as leader in March 2018. He was asked to consider a move to the role of Pacific Regional Director. However, the process stalled. A fresh conversation with the YFC Samoa Board and key staff in that nation could generate some new ways forward. This could assist with creating a better process for succession in Samoa and in the Pacific Region, a process that fits with island culture and is less formal than those often used by YFC International.

Eli Tyler, the Pioneering Coordinator of YFC Cook Islands is working on setting up a new national YFC program in this nation. Once key relationships with community and church leaders have been renewed or established, a listening circle could be useful to bring them together and explore what is needed by way of youth ministry and how it can proceed.

Papua New Guinea is a target nation for YFC International and YFC Pacific. Initial contact has been made with several youth leaders and in April 2017, I visited the capital Port Moresby as well as the Christian Leadership Training College in the highlands near Mt. Hagen. The college has requested a trained youth worker to study there and start a youth ministry. I have been invited back to train youth workers and plan to use the listening circle method during a youth camp and during leadership training. Used together with the Serendipity Baseball Diamond, it could help connect people into a group and assist them to articulate a vision for cooperation in initiating an appropriate national youth ministry program.

Assessment of these potential listening circles will be immediately possible by observation of their effect and the insights, conversations, relationships, opportunities and decisions that emerge from them. However, the best assessment takes place over time as was demonstrated with the success in Tonga and American Samoa with the DBS, T4T and Serendipity model and the limited success in Vanuatu, Nauru and Kiribati regarding the DBS and T4T training.

Field-testing of the first three practices or interventions was successful. It demonstrated their suitability for the Pacific Islands' contexts and their effectiveness in supporting progress towards potential multiplication movements. DBS and T4T are simple and powerful. The Serendipity model was equally effective in the one nation in which it was tried. Listening circles can be tested in 2018. All four practices can be formally written up to enable wide use in the Pacific Islands by YFC International and by other organizations. It is likely they will also be useful interventions in other regions of the world. I will recommend them to YFC International suggesting that these four practices be implemented as mechanisms for bringing unity and also for supporting or facilitating new multiplication movements globally.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### **Summary**

YFC faces an enormous challenge: how to reach young people in a multitude of nations, many of which lack the financial resources and educational institutions to support staff in YFC ministries. This challenge is compounded by the fact that it is not enough simply to share the Gospel and create converts. In order to fulfill the Great Commission, YFC ministries must help converts become disciples who are able to disciple others and create a multiplication ministry.

This doctoral project has outlined the theological basis for multiplication ministry and some of the existing principles and tools for creating vibrant movements in a variety of contexts. It also has described YFC's attempts to implement these principles and tools in various nations throughout the Pacific Islands over a period of five years. Many lessons have been learned during the process, which are useful both for YFC Pacific, YFC International and the wider Church. In an increasingly global and mobile world, people can expect to encounter differences between cultures and generations wherever they live. It is essential that the Church, in particular, does not allow these differences to distract it from the need to fulfil the Great Commission.

Hundreds of teenagers in the island nations of the Pacific Region have decided in the past couple of years to follow Jesus Christ and be his disciples. Many of them, particularly in Tonga, are being discipled by other young people who also recently became Christians. Those young Christians were actually introduced to Jesus Christ by young people who had only been following Jesus for a few years. They became followers

as a result of a small group of young people in Vava'u who in August 2013 were trained in how to make disciples who can make disciples. This multiplying effect is a significant phenomenon, partly because of the fourth generation and partly because of the speed. This project asserts that reproduction of this kind and pace is possible and generally ideal.

The Great Commission, originally given to the Apostles 2000 years ago, has resulted in billions of people following Jesus Christ as his disciples. It was intended and expected that multiplication of new disciples would be a natural occurrence, as it is in population growth. When people in Western societies imagine Christian ministry, they more often think in terms of addition, such as adding members to a church. With some reflection and re-examination of God's mission in the world, Christians can envisage multiplication of disciples. The Pacific Islands offer lessons in this shift of expectation.

### **Summary of Outcomes and Insights**

This paper concentrated on the Great Commission and the need to multiply new disciples. That focus generated several theological insights that can inform Christian mission. Theories concerning multiplication movements revealed further insights and principles. The use of imagination and "imaginaries" were discussed, particularly in relation to strategic planning and organizational change.

Eleven clear and practical statements were made about YFC ministry and these can be used to induct people into YFC ministry and also to evaluate the outcomes of their ministry. These statements can be used as a form of plumb line in the design and building of new YFC ministries. In recent decades YFC has focused on vision, mission, objectives, values and other unifying elements to enable the global movement. This

research project identified the need to go beyond these intrinsically Western approaches and introduce practices into YFC that would have a greater cross-cultural and cross-generational impact, and increase unity, alignment and progress in its mission.

Four key practices were recommended for adoption and integration by YFC worldwide. Examples of their implementation in the Pacific islands were briefly discussed. It should be noted that there are many ways to implement the practices and that the examples are not prescriptive, but illustrative. The four strategies tested were: the Serendipity Baseball Diamond, Discovery Bible Study, Training for Trainers and listening circles. The important common features of these methods were the need to create opportunities to hear from a variety of perspectives; the need to empower and equip every new Christian with the tools to grow in their faith, share the Gospel and disciple others; and the need to trust new Christians with leadership roles in order to create a culture of multiplication ministry.

### **Analysis of Impact and Lessons Learned for the Future**

I concluded my service as YFC Pacific Regional Director in October 2017 and my successor is yet to be recruited. At this time, YFC Samoa and YFC American Samoa are flourishing and strengthening youth discipleship across their respective nations. In part, this is due to their ministry being fully contextualized, with mature indigenous leadership, good governance, appropriate processes and support from church and community leaders. YFC Tonga continues to report amazing progress in disciple-making and multiplication in several locations and denominations. It has a strong board but has not yet established the local fundraising strategies that would enable it to support a

national leader. YFC New Zealand and Cook Islands are in the pioneering phase. YFC Kiribati has closed, mainly because YFC was unable to establish adequate church partnerships and local financial support. YFC Fiji is preparing for a re-launch with a new board and in time a new National Director. It is starting afresh with cooperation from the leaders of several denominations. YFC Australia is strongly focused on running “Jesus Schools” and is seeing a good number of new disciples being made. Papua New Guinea is what YFC International terms a target nation in which it would like to start a national YFC program. General invitations to YFC Pacific from countries such as New Caledonia, Marshall Islands and Nauru come in from time to time. YFC does not have the resources to respond to all of these requests but often it can start with a small, targeted initiative. For example, once funds are raised, YFC Samoa hopes to send a mission team to Nauru in response to an invitation from some Nauruan churches.

The next YFC Pacific Regional Director will have an exciting and challenging role, and he or she may find this research project useful in informing the next few years of ministry in the islands. Invitations to pioneer YFC in new countries offer a solid reason to think carefully about the structure of national ministries. It is best to design a ministry to multiply, and avoid building structures that restrict, more than support, the making of new disciples. The four practices and related strategies could bring further momentum to the region by unifying ministry priorities and sharing learning. There are also opportunities to influence the Asia Pacific Area and the other three areas that comprise YFC International.

## **Implications**

As a result of this project and the implementation of its recommendations, YFC will be aligned not only in purpose but also in practice. While methods and programs will greatly vary, as is fitting for a global youth movement, there will be key drivers that are common to all countries. Young people will create new imaginaries. They will discover Christ and what it means to follow him today. They will learn to love God, love others and make disciples. They will do that in a way that makes disciples who can make disciples so as to facilitate faithful reproduction.

Strategic developments are extremely important for the sustained growth of any movement. However, YFC's experience in Australia and the Pacific emphasizes the need for this strategy to evolve contextually and organically if it is to be effectively implemented. Planning that is based on prayerful discernment of local constraints and conditions and makes use of patterns in local interactions leads to the sense of community and purpose that creates momentum and commitment.

## **Next Steps For YFC**

There are some steps that would build on this project. These include: publishing the key theological conclusions of this project as a YFC International discussion paper, promoting in YFC the eleven statements presented in this project, proposing to YFC International that it consider challenging YFC nations to implement the four key practices, outlining each of the four recommended strategies so that others can experiment with using them, considering alternative methods of introducing the four key practices into YFC, compiling a resource list on the topics of Serendipity, DBS, T4T and

Listening Circles, listing some of the factors that seem to increase the chances of success in implementing DBS and T4T, identifying the key activities that comprise the making of disciples rather than propagating T4T as a package, re-envisioning YFC as a volunteer movement in contexts where pastors and other community leaders are not paid a salary, writing a role description for hosts and facilitators of listening circles, and testing learning circles in one or more island nations.

### **Implications for the Wider Church**

The implications of the Great Commission apply to churches as well as to YFC. All disciples of Christ are called to make new disciples. To do that properly, discipleship processes must include showing Christians how to make new disciples. Further, disciples can learn how to make new disciples who make new disciples. This process can continue for generations beyond the four generations witnessed recently in Tonga. It is a matter of intention, forethought and design.

Churches have a deep responsibility to enable the multiplication of new disciples. While there are many concerns and hindrances to such a venture, they are responsible to rise above those challenges and play their part in the Great Commission. Not that this is their sole focus, for Christ is the center of all things and he alone owns that position of being first, but to the extent that churches can plan and align their efforts with God's plans and efforts, they should aim for reproduction of disciples. Each Christian should follow Jesus and help others become followers of Jesus. The quality of that reproduction is affected by being clear about the Gospel, offering genuine relationships, particularly

true Christian fellowship, and teaching new disciples to love God, love others and make disciples.

Once a local church has clarified its reason for existence and stated its commitment to and participation in the Great Commission, it must consider its strategy and allocation of resources including effort. Its activities should support its primary purposes and most obviously should make new disciples at a faster rate than population growth. This is necessary in order to give sufficient people at least one opportunity to make an informed decision to become a follower of Jesus Christ. Further, it must take seriously the need for multiplication movements since populations grow exponentially. Logical components of multiplication movements are readily identifiable but need to be learned, since common ways to think about ministry are more static and aim for expansion through addition. That is, people most naturally design in ways that prevent multiplication yet nature shows us that reproduction is essential for life.

### **Conclusion**

A responsible use of resources requires that churches and organizations examine their theologies, strategies and practices. A commitment to respond positively to the Great Commission generates a demand for implementation of multiplication principles. The charge itself requires reproduction of new disciples as a priority, so this must be a core competency for obedient Christians.

Effective examples of evangelistic multiplication movements challenge existing practices and the tendency to default to planning for slow-paced addition of disciples. It is a simple step to build components of a movement into regular activities. However, a

shift of thinking is required. New imaginaries that draw on memories, hopes for the future and longings for good, call Christians towards natural reproduction. With careful thought the speed of reproduction can accelerate and continue to do so.

YFC needs more than a common vision, mission and values. It needs common practices derived from the Great Commission which are adaptable to a great variety of cultures. Common practices can generate momentum in a way that agreement to statements cannot. For example, no YFC program can deny the need to teach disciples to love God, love others and make disciples. This should not be left up to each nation to determine since the essential elements of following Jesus, such as praying for others, reading the Bible stories about Jesus and testifying to an experience of Christ, cross all cultural boundaries. These practices are vital to an evangelistic youth movement and should be demanded of all YFC nations.

This paper examined mission literature including the Bible, plus theories concerning multiplication movements and the place of imagination in enabling change in groups of people. It identified eleven statements about YFC that can become true of all national YFC programs. These can also be used to assess YFC ministries for strategic compliance. It articulated four key practices that could potentially be implemented in every YFC nation, and tested a simple strategy for each one and reflected on the results. Further testing is recommended but the reasoning is sound. For YFC to be an evangelistic youth movement, validating its existence with reference to the Great Commission, it must take multiplication very seriously and build multiplication principles into every national YFC program. Otherwise, YFC will, like most other ministries, default to addition and

ministry models that are not easily replicated and that therefore prevent more young people from hearing and responding to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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