6-2020

Engaging and Discipling Nones: A Missional Coaching Handbook

Jerry Davisson
jerry.davisson@comcast.net

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.fuller.edu/dmin

Part of the Missions and World Christianity Commons, and the Practical Theology Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.fuller.edu/dmin/429

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Theology at Digital Commons @ Fuller. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Ministry Projects by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Fuller. For more information, please contact archives@fuller.edu.
Doctoral Project Approval Sheet

This doctoral project entitled

ENGAGING AND DISCIPLING NONES: A MISSIONAL COACHING HANDBOOK

Written by

JERRY DAVISSON

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

has been accepted by the Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary

upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:

Dr. Cindy S. Lee
Doctoral Projects Administrator

Dr. Kurt Fredrickson
Associate Dean for Professional Doctoral Programs

Date Received: June 1, 2020
ABSTRACT

Engaging and Discipling Nones: A Missional Coaching Handbook
Jerry Davisson
Doctor of Ministry
School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary
2020

The goal of this project is to create a Missional Coaching Handbook that can be used by pastors and church leaders to coach parishioners on how to engage and disciple the Nones in their unique context toward holistic gospel flourishing. A gap exists between missional understanding and missional praxis in the churches of the Association of the Churches of God in Oregon and Southwest Washington. A new discipleship model needs to be implemented that utilizes coaching to equip parishioners to reach the Nones in their communities.

This study explores the history of the Association and the changing understanding of mission through the years. The project also examines the challenges facing the diverse communities that make up the Association in the wake of the disintegration of Christendom and the rise of the Nones. Through an examination of literature and the critical theology of the Missio Dei, a revised understanding of missional ecclesiology was deemed critical if the church hopes to reach the Nones.

This study used a coaching model to activate the missional imagination of those being coached and to help them develop “missional moves” into their neighborhoods in response to the handbook. A group of pastors in the Association was enlisted to coach parishioners through the content of the handbook. The goal of the project is to find a way to move parishioners from consumers of religious goods and services to true missionaries in their neighborhoods to help reach the Nones and bring kingdom flourishing.

A missional coaching approach was helpful in assisting parishioners to gain a better understanding of how they can impact their community. However, due to the small number of participants, more study is needed to see if this approach can be effective in bridging the gap between knowledge and practice over a long period of time.

Content Reader: Kurt Fredrickson, PhD

Words: 300
I want to begin by thanking my wife Kris for lovingly encouraging me throughout this project. Your love for Jesus and desire that others might know him are an inspiration. Thank you for being my partner through this crazy journey. I want to thank the churches in the Association of the Churches of God in Oregon and Southwest Washington for allowing me the space to write and experiment in ways to bring God’s kingdom to our neighborhoods. Thank you, Pastors Linda, Jon, Larry, and Nathan, for leading your parishioners through the handbook and giving me encouraging and essential feedback. Thank you to my editor James Hansen for pushing me to be a better writer. Finally, I want to thank my family and friends for believing in me and for helping to shape who I am.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iii

## PART ONE: MINISTRY CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION 2

CHAPTER 1: THE ASSOCIATION OF THE CHURCHES OF GOD IN OREGON AND SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON 10

## PART TWO: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW 39

CHAPTER 3: A THEOLOGY OF MISSIONAL SENDING 71

## PART THREE: MINISTRY PRACTICE

CHAPTER 4: MISSIONAL COACHING TRAINING AND IMPLEMENTATION 100

CHAPTER 5: MISSIONAL COACHING HANDBOOK 113

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION 122

APPENDICES 126

BIBLIOGRAPHY 164
PART ONE

MINISTRY CONTEXT
INTRODUCTION

I began my current role as District Pastor for the Association of the Churches of God in Oregon and Southwest Washington (hereafter, Association) on April 1, 2017. My wife Kris and I moved to Portland, Oregon after twenty-one years of ministering in Central California. I had been serving the church in Tulare, California for about twelve years and I was struggling with the way we were doing ministry. I did not have the language to articulate my uneasiness with our ministry approach requiring people to come to us to find Jesus. Nor did I have language for the changes I was seeing in our Western context at large and in the community I called home. I simply knew we were having little impact in our community and something needed to change.

While serving the First Church of God of Tulare, I was introduced to Reggie McNeal’s book, The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church. McNeal begins chapter one by stating, “The current church culture in North America is on life support. It is living off the work, money, and energy of previous generations from a previous world order. The plug will be pulled either when the money runs out (80 percent of money given to congregations comes from people aged fifty-five and older) or when the remaining three-fourths of a generation who are institutional loyalists die off or both.”¹ There it was. In a few brief sentences McNeal captured what seemed to be the trajectory the church was moving and her fate without some much needed change. Other authors such as Michael Frost, Lesslie Newbigin, Alan Roxburgh, David Bosch, Darrell Guder, Alan Hirsch, where also summoning the church to reimagine her missional calling.

Ministry styles in the 1990s, during the height of the church-growth movement, impacted my view of ministry and ecclesial success. In contrast to the missional movement, the church-growth movement focused its efforts on making the church and her programs attractive to those outside the church. According to Os Guinness, the church-growth movement sought the “renewal of the local church through the renewal of mission, as opposed to other priorities; and—importantly—to the renewal of mission through the employment of human sciences’ insights and tools to aid effective evangelism, particularly those borrowed from the fields of management, marketing, psychology, and communications.” For Guinness, the emphases of the church-growth movement were placed in the right areas, namely, “the centrality of the church, the priority of mission, the possibility of growth, the necessity of thinking of outsiders, the acknowledgement of culture and of cultures, the insistence on real results, and the wisdom of using the best insights and technologies proffered by the key disciplines of the human sciences.”

Many churches found success using the models espoused by the church growth movement. These models included best practices in sociology, business, and technology to attract outsiders to church services and programs which emphasized quality and were marketed to specific target audiences. One of the downfalls of the church-growth movement was the need to keep developing and growing programs to keep pace with an ever-changing Christian consumers’ appetite. McNeal would lament how “several decades of the church growth movement’s emphasis on methodologies have conditioned church leaders to look for the next

---


3 Ibid.
program, the latest ‘model,’ the latest fad in ministry programming to help ‘grow’ the church.”

If looking for the latest silver bullet which would help the church to grow was not challenging enough for the local church pastor, things were about to get even more complicated.

According to Phyllis Tickle, “Religion, whether we like it or not, is intimately tied to the culture in which it exists.” Western society is experiencing a period of rapid and discontinuous change. This should come as no surprise because, as Tickle further explains, “Every five hundred years, give or take a decade or two, Western culture, along with those parts of the world that have been colonized or colonialized by it, goes through a time of enormous upheaval, a time in which essentially every part of it is reconfigured.”

We are currently seeing seismic shifts in every aspect of our Western culture and the world. The Church finds herself at the very beginning of modifications that will leave Western society and the local expression of our gathering looking very different in the decades ahead. According to many scholars, such as David Bosch, Michael Frost, and Darrell Guder, we are now living in a postmodern, post-Christendom, post-Christian, post-everything society. Currently, much of the Western church is operating from an ecclesial model that is shaped by what has been labeled Christendom. Christendom is defined by Michael Frost as “the name given to the religious culture that has dominated Western society since the fourth century.”

This project will look extensively at what

---

4 McNeal, 95.


6 Tickle, 17.

Christendom is and how the post-Christendom culture in the West will require a paradigm shift in the way the church sees her mission.

According to George Hunsberger, “The current predicament of churches in North America requires more than a mere tinkering with long-assumed notions about the identity and mission of the church. Instead, as many knowledgeable observers have noted, there is a need for reinvention or rediscovering the church in this new kind of world.”

The missional movement, in contrast to the church growth movement, is centered on the *missio Dei*. The classic definition of this doctrine is, “God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit.” This idea was expanded to include the three persons of the Trinity sending the church into the world. Bosch explains, “In attempting to flesh out the *missio Dei* concept, the following could be said: In the new image mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God…It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfil in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church.”

With this understanding of mission, the church and her program-driven ecclesiology can no longer be seen as the focus of God’s Kingdom purpose in the world.

Changing from a program driven to a missional ecclesiology is one of the challenges faced by the churches in my ministry context. There are currently forty-two churches making up the Association I work with. Each church is voluntarily affiliated with one another and with the

---


10 Bosch, 400.
Church of God movement founded in 1888 by Daniel Sydney Warner. Each of the churches share a common doctrine, originating from the Wesleyan Holiness tradition. Most of the churches in our Association are in a state of numeric plateau or decline. Like many churches in the West, some churches found success using the models and methods espoused by the church-growth movement. However, with the rapid change we are experiencing in our context, many are struggling to survive, let alone thrive.

In a post-Christendom world, where the church has lost its seat of influence, many people, especially those under thirty, are no longer looking to the church for answers to life’s complex questions. According to James Emery White, “Nones” are now the largest growing religious group in America.\(^{11}\) White describes the Nones as persons who are “religiously unaffiliated. When asked about their religion, they did not answer ‘Baptist’ or ‘Catholic’ or any other defined faith. They picked a new category: none.”\(^{12}\) The rise of the Nones was documented by the Pew Research Center in 2012:

The number of Americans who do not identify with any religion continues to grow at a rapid pace. One-fifth of the U.S. public—and a third of adults under 30—are religiously unaffiliated today, the highest percentages ever in Pew Research Center polling. In the last five years alone, the unaffiliated have increased from just over 15% to just under 20% of all U.S. adults. Their ranks now include more than 13 million self-described atheists and agnostics (nearly 6% of the U.S. public), as well as nearly 33 million people who say they have no particular religious affiliation (14%).\(^{13}\)

If the church is going to thrive in this new world it is going to have to take a more missional posture and move out into the neighborhood. If the churches in our Association are

---


\(^{12}\) Ibid, 13.

going to make an impact in our communities for God’s Kingdom, we are going to have to be an incarnational presence. We must follow the example of Jesus, who “became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood” (Jn 1:14, The Message).

The challenge for the churches of our Association is to change the focus from an attractional ecclesiology to a missional-focused ecclesiology. This will require training, equipping, and coaching parishioners to engage their neighborhoods where God is present and at work. The purpose of my project is to create a Missional Coaching Handbook that can be used as a training tool to equip parishioners in our Association to engage and disciple the Nones, in their unique context, toward holistic gospel flourishing.

The average church member in our Association understands the world is changing at a rapid pace. They also realize the church is losing influence. However, many do not understand the implications these changes have for the church and how we must adapt and reimagine our paradigm of mission. Many of the churches in our Association practice some form of missional engagement in their communities. However, most leaders are frustrated with the lack of observable missional lifestyle change in their congregants. Part of the problem is that the church has made missional engagement into a church program and failed to help parishioners develop a missional lifestyle. The use of a coaching model to equip members of each church to engage the Nones in their local context will be essential to the developing missional practitioners.

Part One of this project explores the ministry context by looking at the history of the Association and some of the challenges facing our churches. This section will examine the unique complexity of engaging the diverse communities which are part of our Association. This section will explore the changing church demographics that have led to the decline or plateau of
many of our churches. Like many major denominations in the United States, the population of our churches is growing older. I do not have hard statistics to back this up, but as I visit the churches in our Association, I have observed a church population made up of senior saints. These observations are consistent with the report by the Barna Group referenced above as well as White’s observation in his book, *Meet Generation Z*, which shows in a recent survey, 36 percent of persons in the United States under thirty have joined the ranks of the Nones. In the final portion of this section, attention will be given to the cultural factors fueling the rise of the Nones and the implications of those dynamics for reaching these people with the gospel.

Part Two will examine literature and theology critical to an understanding of the missional sending of God’s people into the world. This section will explore the biblical nature of mission and will include a discussion of the holistic nature of the *missio Dei*. This section will also look at the essential components of missional ecclesiology as well as the objectives of mission. The mission of the church as seen in Scripture is not simply a matter of gathering to perform certain religious rituals and practices. Nor is the mission of the church simply a matter of the saving work of God in the life of individuals. The *missio Dei* includes such things as loving our neighbor, justice, hospitality, and seeking the flourishing of the places we inhabit. As church leaders it is imperative we provide a theological rationale for developing missional practitioners as well as developing the skills of coaching, which can lead to better missional engagement.

Part Three will look at the theological implications of missional engagement with the Nones in the diverse communities within our Association. This section will examine the method

---

used for recruiting, training, and supporting pastors in our Association to coach several key leaders in their congregation to engage and disciple Nones in their community. The pastors will be introduced to a theological rationale for coaching as a way of leading missional engagement. The training will be done in a group setting and will cover the use of the handbook, recruiting pilot participants, and the assessment tools that will be used.

This section will include a description of how the handbook was field tested and used by the participants and will contain a report on the results. This section will conclude with an evaluation of the degree to which the handbook succeeded in developing the practice of missional engagement within the various participants. The pilot group will include participants from urban, suburban, and rural communities and there will be an evaluation of whether the handbook’s content and practices transferred equally among the diverse communities it was field tested in. There will also be an evaluation of the effectiveness of the coaching model for improved missional engagement.

My hope for this project is that it will start a revolution of missional practitioners in our Association in contrast to the membership culture that exists in most of our churches. McNeal warns, “turning members into missionaries will precipitate a crisis, both in individuals and in congregations.” He goes on to explain how the values associated with God’s call to live on mission and the current church culture of consumer Christianity are at odds. I am convinced the risk of making this paradigm shift and joining the missio Dei are worth the cost. Our Association cannot expect to survive if we continue the trajectory in which we are heading.

---

15 McNeal, 65.
CHAPTER ONE: THE ASSOCIATION OF THE CHURCHES OF GOD IN OREGON AND SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

It is important to understand the social, political, and cultural context of a movement in order to understand how and why it began and how that beginning impacted its mission and direction. The Church of God reformation movement began in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in the midwestern United States of America. The movement was born in the period immediately following the American Civil War. It was a period of movement both westward to the Pacific coast and a move from rural areas to cities. According to Church of God historian John W. V. Smith, “In 1870 the population of the United States was about thirty-eight and a half million with 74 percent of the people living in rural areas and 26 percent in the cities. By 1916 the population was nearly 100 million people with only one-half of them rural.”\(^1\) This is significant for several reasons. The rapid development of business and industry post-Civil War caused a widening gap between the wealthy and the poor. It was a time of great innovation which saw such marvels as “Alexander Graham Bell’s telephone in 1876 and Thomas Edison’s electric light bulb in 1879 [which] ushered in a new age of advance in manufacturing and

---

People flocked to the urban centers in search of a piece of the wealth being generated by the opening of factories and growing retail establishments.

The growth of the cities was also fueled by the growing wave of immigration from Europe. “In 1882 over three-quarters of a million people crossed the Atlantic to make America their home, and by 1907 a half million more than that were arriving annually. Approximately one-third of these settled on farms and in rural areas and the rest crowded into the already teeming cities.”

According to Smith, the social, religious and cultural impact of all this change was vast. Advances in industry, science, (with the publication of Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*), entertainment, and consumerism led to many changes in the theology and practices of the Christian church. Smith recounts, “In older churches along the Atlantic seaboard a strong reaction against the revivalism of an earlier time had developed and was accompanied by more than a slight tendency toward a new liberalism in theology, with many basic beliefs being called into question.”

While this was happening along the seaboard, in the middle West there was a renewed emphasis on denominational distinctives and doctrinal purity that led to drawing sharp lines which separated different groups from each other. “Schism broke the ranks of some of the larger communions and a number of new competitors entered the field through this splintering process. This was indeed the heyday of militant sectarianism.”

---

2 Ibid., 19.

3 Ibid.


5 Ibid.
In this environment a seasoned holiness pastor and author by the name of Daniel Sidney Warner gave birth to the Church of God reformation movement. Warner had a passion for personal piety and called those who would follow to embrace a life of holiness. Equally important to Warner was the breaking down of sectarian walls and calling all believers to become part of the one true “Church of God.” According to Barry Callen, the Church of God became a movement with a resolution which declared:

That we adhere to no body or organization but the Church of God, bought by the blood of Christ, organized by the Holy Spirit, and governed by the Bible…. That we recognize and fellowship, as members with us in the one body of Christ, all truly regenerated and sincere saints who worship God in all the light they possess, and that we urge all the dear children of God to forsake the snares and yokes of human parties and stand alone in the ‘one fold’ of Christ upon the Bible, and in the unity of the Spirit.6

Callen goes on, “Here were elements of the rationale for a new movement, one intending to be truly transdenominational. Joined were the passion for Christian holiness, the dream of Christian unity, and the belief that the first enables the second only when free of the artificial restrictions of human attempts to organize and run the church.”7 This early movement fueled by the Holy Spirit and its charismatic leader attracted a following of like-minded practitioners. Among their ranks were hymn writers and authors led by Warner who published a holiness paper known as the Gospel Trumpet. A publishing company that went by the same name and the materials it published became the seeds for a movement.

The early movement gained momentum through the efforts of itinerant evangelists. These preachers went armed with their song books, Bibles, and of course copies of the Gospel Trumpet.

---


7 Ibid.
The early pioneers believed the church was in its last days and that God would be coming back soon. This understanding fueled the urgency to carry the message of Jesus as fast and as far as spiritually and humanly possible. Dubbed the “flying messengers,” these faithful followers of Warner used the newly completed rail system to take the message west, arriving by the “great iron horse at the train depot at Woodburn Oregon on October 30, 1893.”

Rev. John L. Green was the first pastor to arrive in Oregon and establish a Church of God congregation. Because of the Gospel Trumpet network, Green soon found and recruited other pastors and evangelists to help spread the message of holiness and unity across the state. Churches began to spring up in communities, and with the introduction of a camp meeting at Woodburn in 1895, a strong association of believers began to form.

The informal working relationship in Oregon was solidified by the desire to own and operate a campground to host the annual gathering. In formal minutes dated June 10-20, 1909, it was reported: “It was thought best by all that a corporation be formed, and that men from among the congregation be chosen by vote at the congregation to become the incorporators. And that the corporation be denominated ‘Oregon State Business Association for the Church of God.’”

The ministers met in 1910 to develop a ministers association to handle matters of credentialing. “The two bodies then, the State Business Association and the Ministerial Association, together became the forerunner of what is today the Association of the Churches of God in Oregon and Southwest Washington.”

---


9 Ibid., 119.

10 Ibid., 120.
The movement grew in size and scope in Oregon as Green and other itinerant evangelists went to rural communities and held revival meetings. According to Dunbar, “These meetings usually involved entering a community, renting a tent or other meeting house, distributing handbills advertising the meeting, and holding evening preaching services for two or three weeks at a time.”

The main emphasis of these meetings was to get people “saved” because again there was an understanding among the early movement leaders that the second coming of Jesus was imminent. In many parts of the country, the early years were filled with these “flying ministers” who sacrificed all to see the message of the Church of God advanced. According to Smith, “There were those who later called attention to the weaknesses of the ‘flying ministry,’ pointing out the obvious deficiencies of what sociologist Val Clear has called ‘guerrilla’ evangelism. This hit and run methodology covered a great deal of territory but did not always leave lasting results.” This does not seem to be the case in Oregon as many revival meetings led to the establishment of churches in small towns and communities. With the anti-denominational stance of the Church of God, the growing network of churches in Oregon has found a way to work together to see the kingdom of God expand and stay connected, this despite the autonomy of each individual church.

**Church Autonomy**

The Association currently has forty-two churches which choose to voluntarily partner together to further the mission and message of the Church of God. Because of the early

---

11 Dunbar, 19-20.

12 Smith, *The Quest*, 80.
movement’s resistance to denominational structure, congregations that affiliate with the Church of God are autonomous in their church governance, organization, and ecclesiology. Many have seen this as both a blessing and a curse. It is a blessing because each church is free to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit in how it chooses to reach the Nones in their community and how they work together to strengthen their local fellowship. The challenge comes in trying to coordinate a united effort to see the kingdom of God advance in Oregon and Southwest Washington and beyond.

The relationship between churches has largely held together by common doctrine, hymnology, and the General Assembly (a gathering of pastors and lay delegates), which meets biennially to conduct business. However, with the early resistance to creedal statements and books of order and discipline, developing doctrinal unity and a unified ministry strategy has been a challenge. The early pioneers of the Church of God movement were fond of saying, “We have no written creed but the Bible.”¹³ The *Gospel Trumpet* and the many books published by the Gospel Trumpet Company written by D. S. Warner, H. M. Riggle, and F. G. Smith became the authoritative voices for the movement. In 1925, R. R. Byrum wrote a comprehensive work titled *Christian Theology: A Systematic Statement of Christian Doctrine*, which has been revised and republished on several occasions. This has become a valuable resource for articulating Church of God doctrine. Since those early years there has been little written systematically outlining the doctrine or strategy of the Church of God.

---

According to Smith, one reason for the challenge is “The Church of God reformation began with an ‘open-at-the-top’ view of religious truth.” By this the early Church of God reformers believed in the need to strive to seek the Holy Spirit to bring each person into “all truth.” Smith explains, “the movement must be always pushing ahead and thrusting back its frontiers. To continue to wrestle with dead issues of days gone by can result only in a stagnation of message and a rejection of progress. To be a dynamic force in the world the movement must be continually alert to contemporary needs and be willing to adapt to changes in the religious climate both in local communities and in the world at large.” Smith continues: “The highest compliment which could be paid to the present leadership would be to say that this is still the case. In general, this is true, although it needs to be said that on at least a few occasions there have been strong tendencies toward putting on the lid and saying, ‘now we have it all, and no more will be accepted.’”

The church’s theological openness and autonomy has been challenged in the recent history of the movement which has a direct impact on the church's ability to reach the Nones, particularly in the urban centers of Oregon. The issue of LGBTQ marriage and the ordination of ministers who are LGBTQ has become a major issue among many mainline denominations in recent days. The Church of God is not exempt, causing Church of God Ministries, the national office, to produce a white paper in 2015, outlining who speaks for the movement. According to author Bob Moss:

14 Smith, *A Brief History*, 144.

15 Ibid., 156.

16 Ibid., 145.
From the earliest days of the Church of God, the Bible has served as our only rule of faith. We’ve listened to the Holy Spirit for direction, and called out “man-rule” in all its forms. As such, no one person has ever officially spoken on behalf of the movement. The Church of God is a group of loosely affiliated congregations that function independently by design and cooperatively by choice. As such, the General Assembly—comprised of Church of God credentialed ministers, representative lay delegates, and heads of our endorsed and affiliated agencies—is the only authorized voice of the Church of God. Church of God Ministries exists to serve the needs of the General Assembly, and does not speak independently of the General Assembly. One of the ways Church of God Ministries functions is to compile the records and report how the General Assembly speaks.17

Moss goes on to say, “On occasion, resolutions are passed by the General Assembly that address our common-held theological values and beliefs. Through this means, the Church of God speaks. Seldom do we speak with a unanimous voice, but we speak with the understanding that unity does not require unanimity.”18 The white paper highlights three resolutions passed by the General Assembly between 1993 and 2014, expressing the Church of God’s position against the practice of LGBTQ sexualities and marriage.

A survey of young people, both churchgoers and outsiders, done by David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons revealed 91 percent of outsiders and 80 percent of churchgoers described the church as anti-homosexual.19 This portrayal of the church and of Christians has a negative impact on the church’s ability to reach the None’s in our communities. There are those in the Association who want to make sure we hold tightly to the Church of God’s position on the issue. There are others who would rather hold an open posture while minimizing the proclamation of the doctrinal position. Because of the autonomy of the Church of God, each local expression of the church has


18 Ibid.

the ability to interpret the voice of the General Assembly and engage the community as they choose, making a united effort in ministering to the LGBTQ population and other marginalized groups challenging.

Unlike other denominations which have national strategies for ministries such as church planting, renewal, and evangelism, the autonomous nature of the Church of God makes implementing such programs difficult. The approaches for missional engagement are left to the individual churches to execute. As was outlined earlier, the Association organized largely due to a desire to own and operate a campground for its annual camp meeting. At times the Association has united to plant churches, purchase a campground to serve a youth camping program, build a state office, as well as create various commissions to develop programs centered around Christian education and social concerns. With a growing portfolio of ministry needs coming from the growing Association, the need for full-time leadership was addressed.

**The Role of Association Leadership**

From 1909, when the corporation was formed, the Association relied heavily on the strength of volunteers to staff and accomplish the work of the growing movement in Oregon. According to Dunbar, “in 1954 the Association decided to employ a ‘State Evangelist’ to devote full-time service to meeting the needs of the church.”²⁰ The Association employed Rev. Edgar Busch as its first paid leader. As Busch’s title would indicate, the primary duties were in the area of evangelism. An article written by Dr. A. F. Gray in the state paper described the desire of the Association and the duties of the leader. Busch was to “visit a number of churches to survey the

²⁰ Dunbar, 128.
needs and to give assistance where desired…in addition to his work of surveying the needs, Brother Busch will hold a few revivals. Our aim is first to strengthen the weak churches then to venture into new fields and establish new churches. We believe that through the services of Brother Busch the work in the State of Oregon will be greatly strengthened.”21 The position was funded by donations given by congregations across the state. Rev. Busch resigned his position to take a church in another state early in 1958.

Dwite Brown succeeded Busch as State Evangelist and “according to one state leader of that era Brown’s ministry focused largely upon assisting churches with the planning and construction of buildings because that was what was needed in the life of the church at that time, and also because Brown’s greatest ‘gifts and abilities’ were evidenced on that pursuit.”22 Brown concluded his leadership of the association in 1967 and a successor was not named. According to Dunbar the Association continued to carry out its ministry assignment largely due to the work of many dedicated volunteers.

Carrying on the challenging work of leading the ministry in Oregon with a volunteer staff proved too difficult. An article in the Oregon Echo dated July 1979 stated:

As a cooperative ministry, our state program has peaked out as to effectiveness under our present system, and we are faced with some unprecedented opportunities in Kingdom work. The opportunities we face will require special leadership. We need someone to facilitate the decisions made by the officers and General Council. Pastors need someone too, that they can turn to for counsel, encouragement and instruction.23

22 Dunbar, 135.
23 Ibid., 140.
In 1982 the Association hired Dr. Ray Tuttle to lead the ministry efforts. The title of the position was changed to State Coordinator to better describe the work to be done. Tuttle established an office in Salem, Oregon to serve as the ministry center for the Association. The goal of planting churches continued, and according to Dunbar, “a multiplicity of other programs were launched during the Tuttle administration.”24 Each of the programs was designed to help strengthen the churches in their sensitivity toward the needs of the changing communities. Tuttle served the Association until 1989 and in May of that year Sam Dunbar was hired. During Dunbar’s years of service two churches were planted and a permanent office was built in Salem. The mission of the Association remained very church-centric, focusing on starting new works and providing opportunities for church leaders to get together for training and fellowship.

Dunbar resigned in 1993 and the association hired Reverend David Shrout, who served the district for sixteen years. Once again, the title of the Association’s leader changed to District Pastor to reflect the goals for the position. The desire was to help strengthen churches and pastoral leadership. A house church was planted under Shrout’s leadership. This was a new approach for the Association which sought to seek a new model for church planting because only one of the three churches planted in the preceding twenty years had led to a viable congregation. During the years Shrout served as District Pastor the Association continued to bolster the programs developed to strengthen the churches around Oregon and Southwest Washington.

However, during this time, society was changing. The church in the West began to feel the effect of the decline of Christendom. Much of the Western church up until this time was operating from an ecclesial model shaped by what scholars have labeled Christendom.

24 Ibid., 142.
According to Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, “Christendom is the name given to the sacral culture that has dominated European society from around the eleventh century until the end of the twentieth. Its sources go back to the time when Constantine came to the throne of the Roman Empire and granted Christians complete freedom of worship and even favored Christianity, thereby undermining all other religions in the empire.”  

Christianity evolved from a movement of people on the margins of society to playing a central role in shaping culture. Frost and Hirsch further explain, “In the corpus Christianum (viz. Christendom), church and state became the pillars of the sacral culture, each supporting the other.”

In the Christendom world, the assumption was that if you were a citizen of the state, then you were concurrently a citizen of the kingdom of God. This has tended to be the understanding in America which is said to be a Christian nation in both its ideology and praxis. It was during this period in history that the church gradually moved from a dynamic, sent people to a settled institution. Despite the best efforts of the association to support discipleship and leadership development in Oregon and Southwest Washington many churches began to decline or plateau. The Association began to sense a change in culture but was slow to take any substantive action.

One example of the effects of the end of Christendom, especially in the city, was the downfall of the Holladay Park Church of God. In 1897 John Green moved his family to Portland to plant a church in the growing urban center. The establishment of a church in Portland proved to be challenging and took many years. In 1904 funds were donated to purchase two lots, build a missionary home, and begin both a church and outreach efforts in the city. The church went

\[\text{\scriptsize \cite{25} Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, \textit{The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church} (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 8.}\]

\[\text{\scriptsize \cite{26} Ibid., 8.}\]
through many challenges and changes trying to make disciples in Portland. By the 1970s Holladay Park had become one of the strongest churches in the Association. However, with the gentrification of the neighborhood and the growing secularization of Portland, the church began to decline. In 2018 the leadership of Holladay Park made the difficult decision to close and sell the property to a growing non-denominational church who was effectively reaching millennials in the city.

I was hired as the District Pastor in April of 2017. I was asked to provide visionary and strategic leadership for the Association to help our churches reach and disciple Nones in Oregon and Southwest Washington. The creation of a Missional Coaching Handbook has been a major priority of mine. My desire is to help pastors in our Association prepare their parishioners to move into their neighborhoods with the gospel. In the Christendom era, the church often took a “Field of Dreams” approach to reaching the Nones: “if we build it, they will come.”27 Here “it” means the church; if we simply provided the religious goods and services desired by those who were seeking God, then the lost would come. This approach may have worked in the era of Christendom, but in the post-Christendom West, this is no longer the case. James Emery White describes how the Nones are on the rise. He explains, “the number of nones in the 1930s and ‘40s hovered around 5 percent. By 1990 that number had only risen to 8 percent, a mere 3 percent rise in over half a century. Between 1990 and 2008—just eighteen years—the number of nones leaped from 8.1 percent to 15 percent. Then in just a few short years, it climbed to 20 percent, representing one of every five Americans.”28 If the Association is going to have an

27 Field of Dreams, directed by Phil Alden Robinson (USA: Gordon Company, 1989).

28 White, The Rise of the Nones, 16.
impact on the Nones, we are going to have to go to where they are instead of waiting for them to come to us. Reaching the Nones will require the Association to adopt a missional approach to local ministry.

When I took on the role of District Pastor, I assumed the pastors and churches in our Association were acquainted with the missional conversation and had the desire to make the changes needed to reach the Nones. As I traveled throughout the Association, I found few congregations who were familiar with the ideas behind the missional movement and fewer still who were engaged in any kind of missional practice in their communities. I spent much of my early work familiarizing our pastors and leadership with the understanding that we are living in changing times. I taught and preached about the end of Christendom and the need for a missional imagination to reach a changing world.

**Organization and Vision**

Before his retirement in December of 2016, Shrout did some significant restructuring of the Association’s organization and vision. According to the guiding policy document, the mission of the Association is as follows:

MP1.0 The District exists to a) assist the local Churches of God in Oregon and Southwest Washington discern and achieve their individual missions, and b) partner with them to minister together in ways that they cannot minister separately.

MP1.1 Component: Discipleship
The highest priority of The Association of the Churches of God in Oregon and Southwest Washington is to be and to make committed followers of Jesus Christ.

MP1.2 Component: Leadership
A significant and supporting priority of The Association of the Churches of God in Oregon and Southwest Washington is to establish an environment that recognizes people with leadership potential and comes alongside to nurture and develop that person.

MP1.3 Component: Relationship
A significant and supporting priority of The Association of the Churches of God in Oregon and Southwest Washington is to be an Association that is connected by more than just a name or a structure. We desire that our actions and interactions be instigated
through intentional covenantal relationships.\textsuperscript{29}

To aid in the fulfillment of the mission, the Association was broken up into eight geographic regions. Each region elects a represent to serve on the District Council. The regions are encouraged to meet bimonthly for support and connection. Participants in these regional gatherings are encouraged to communicate the needs of each church in the fulfillment of their individual mission. The regional representatives are encouraged to report their findings to the District Council.

The focus of the Association is to make disciples in accordance with the commands of Jesus found in the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 28:18-20). Unfortunately, with the rapid and discontinuous change we are facing in the West, much of the focus has been on how to preserve what we have and not on how to reach the Nones. Shrinking Association revenue has required significant cuts to the ministry budget and programing which was such a vital part of the Association’s past. In this environment it has become even more important for the Association to think creatively and missionally about ways to reach the Nones in each of our different communities. The autonomous nature of our churches makes implementing any comprehensive strategy difficult. Using the Missional Coaching Handbook with churches open to engaging their neighborhoods will be a catalyst for developing a more comprehensive strategy.

**Cultural and Ethnic Diversity**

According to Dunbar, “Oregon is made up of a rather vast geographical expanse encompassing over 96,000 square miles of terrain that varies from its scenic, rocky coast to

verdant mountain valleys to the sage brush and juniper of its high desert plateau.”

While much of the growth in the early years of the Association happened in the Willamette Valley and Portland, church planting efforts between 1918 and 1953 saw expansion of the movement into the rural areas of the southern coast to the plains of eastern Oregon. Each of these locations have distinct geography as well as distinct social, economic, and political diversity. Of the forty-two churches that currently make up the Association, ten are located in the city of Portland.

According to population data, Portland is the largest city in Oregon with a population of 667,000. The Association has ten churches in the Portland area. Six of the churches are primarily white and four are predominantly African American. The Association has four churches in cities where the population is 100,000 or above. Those include Vancouver, WA; Salem, OR; Eugene, OR; and Hillsboro, OR. There are five churches located in cities with a population of 50-100,000. There are four churches in communities where the population is below 4,500. The rural and suburban areas of Oregon and Southwest Washington tend to be conservative while the city of Portland and its metro area tends to be politically liberal.

In Oregon, especially in smaller communities, there is a growing racial diversity. A great example of this is Woodburn, OR. Woodburn was ground zero for the Church of God movement in Oregon. In 2014 the population was 24,734, a growth of 23.1 percent since 2000. Woodburn is 58 percent Hispanic, 38 percent white. Even though the population of the city is

30 Dunbar, 87.


33 Ibid.
predominantly Hispanic, the Church of God in Woodburn is made up mostly of aging white members. This poses another missional challenge for the Association.

According to Dunbar, “The work of the Church of God among ethnic minorities in Oregon is not an extensive story, but it is an extremely important one.”\textsuperscript{34} In 1923 a church was established as an outreach to a growing German-speaking population in Portland. My grandfather Edmund Bergler was among the leaders of this new ministry. In 1942 the first African American church was planted by “Otis Brown and his first cousin, Melvin Brown, both enrolled as students at Pacific Bible College.”\textsuperscript{35} Pacific Bible College was a Church of God school, established to prepare ministers for their work as pastors. In the next forty years three more African American congregations were planted.

With the growth of the Hispanic population in Oregon and Southwest Washington the Church of God has not been very active in reaching out to our brothers and sisters in this demographic. There have been a few Hispanic churches planted in Oregon since 1980, but only two Hispanic Church of God congregations are in existence. The Church of God has much to do to reach a growing, ethnically diverse population in Oregon and Southwest Washington. In my neighborhood in Gresham, Oregon, I have identified at least five different ethnic groups living on my street alone. Sixty-four percent of the population within a 5-mile radius of my home would classify themselves as Nones.\textsuperscript{36} If the Association wants to make an impact with the

\textsuperscript{34} Dunbar, 149.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.

Nones in the communities we are a part of, regardless of their ethnicity, we must rethink our missional approach.

**Changing Church Demographics**

Like many mainline denominations, the Church of God movement in the West is showing a decline in participation. A recent unpublished concept paper by the Pacific Coast Collective (a group made up of regional and national Church of God leaders) shows a marked decline in church attendance in the PCC states represented:

The growth in Washington and Southern California can be accounted for by the growth of a few churches who have grown exponentially and are currently serving over two-thousand constituents during their weekend worship gatherings. If those churches are removed from the equation, the churches in the PCC have declined by 7 percent over the last twenty-five years.

---

One of my roles as District Pastor is to travel to the churches in our Association when invited and speak, cast vision, and serve. While most of our churches do not keep very good records on the ages of their congregants, it is clear through observation that the constituency in our Association is getting older. I recently had a conversation with two pastors in our Association, and both indicated the average age of the persons who participated in their churches was over seventy. Most of those who are part of our congregations have been active in their respective churches for decades. Not only are our congregations aging, the pastors of our churches are aging as well. Of the forty-two churches in our Association, only two of our pastors are under the age of forty. In the past year, four of the five pastors who have recently been hired to serve in our association are over the age of fifty-five. Our aging pastors and their congregants pose several challenges for reaching the Nones.

Identity Crisis

One of the consequences of the aging of our pastors and their constituents is a lack of understanding of the changing culture and the resulting need to alter the way we see our mission. As stated earlier, one of the distinctives of the Church of God movement was our hymnology. With the “seeker movement” in the 80s, which largely focused on worship style to attract the person seeking God, the Church of God struggled to make sense of the need to change. The “worship wars,” as they were often referred to, were brutally painful. While most of the churches in the Association use “contemporary” worship music in their Sunday gatherings, there is still a longing for the hymnody of the past.

The change in worship style, as part of the church growth movement, has not resulted in the growth of the church in our Association, as the numbers above indicate. The church growth
movement has perpetuated the myth that there is a “silver bullet” which will lead to increased church attendance. There are many conferences and books selling the well-intentioned idea that if you apply one program or another or one style or another, then your church will grow. Even the missional church movement has been seen as another possibility in a long list of options to grow the church. This has led to a crisis of identity for many of the Association churches. While our doctrinal unity is intact, our ecclesiology and evangelistic focus are fractured. The Church of God as a whole lacks common language and common missional purpose, fueling our decline.

**Missional Moves**

Not all churches in the Association lack a missional imagination. While most are still operating within the framework of Christendom, there are those who have realized the need to move out into the community and partner with the religious and non-religious in order to model the kingdom of God and the way of Jesus. These churches have a desire to see their communities flourish and individuals come to experience Jesus as Lord. One example of this is the Mt. Scott Church of God in Portland. Mt. Scott is a congregation with a rich history. In recent years the leadership at Mt. Scott has seen the need to move from an inward approach to ministry to an outward focus. After completing a survey of the community, asking simply what the church could do to benefit the community, the church has decided to open the facility for the community. They currently hold a variety of classes including yoga for kids, art, and a class on the religions of the world, to name just a few. They are working on opening a coffee house which will be available to the public as a space to hang out and enjoy a good cup of coffee and free Wi-Fi, and serve as a venue for artists to display their art and perform their music.
Along with opening the facility, the leadership has developed a community action platform called neighbor-to-neighbor. This program pairs small groups of people with vulnerable neighbors in need. The program has caught the imagination of the city of Portland, the neighborhood association, and other church groups in the community. The desire of the church is to truly bring holistic gospel flourishing to the neighborhood and to demonstrate the kingdom where they exist. This is just one example of how missional imagination is taking root in the Association. However, most of our churches still are operating under an old Christendom model.

**Changing Community Demographics: The End of Christendom and the Beginning of a Post-Christian Reality**

Another major factor largely ignored or not understood by the churches in our Association is the fall of Christendom and the post-Christian reality we live in. As described above, Christendom came into being when Constantine rose to power in the Roman Empire and bestowed Christians complete freedom of worship and even privileged Christianity above other religions in the empire. With the secularization of Western society, the effects of Christendom have been weaning. The church has lost its privileged position in society to the extent that some label America as a post-Christian nation. Former *National Review* editor John O’Sullivan provides the following definition of post-Christianity. He states, “A post-Christian society is not merely a society in which agnosticism or atheism is the prevailing fundamental belief. It is a society rooted in the history, culture, and practices of Christianity but in which the religious
beliefs of Christianity have been either rejected or, worse, forgotten.” This certainly describes the cultural posture in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Pastor and author Andy Stanley explains the difference between a non-Christian culture and a post-Christian culture. He states:

In a non-Christian society, the majority may have never heard of the gospel and, therefore, have few to no preconceived notions about Christianity or the Bible. A post-Christian society is the opposite. In a post-Christian society, the majority have been exposed to Christianity (in our case, for generations) but are opting out for a different world view—a different narrative through which to make sense of the world. In post-Christian society, people know the stories. They just don't believe 'em. Or they don't believe ‘em anymore.

In this post-Christian environment, the churches in our association and in North America at large have lost their identity. According to Hunsberger:

Two things have become quite clear to those who care about the church and its mission. On the one hand, the churches of North America have been dislocated from their prior social role of chaplain to the culture and society and have lost their once privileged position of influence. Religious life in general and the churches in particular have increasingly been relegated to the private spheres of life. Too readily, the churches have accepted this as their proper place. At the same time, the churches have become so accommodated to the American way of life that they are now domesticated, and it is no longer obvious what justifies their existence as particular communities.

Most of the churches in our association still see themselves in the role of chaplain to the culture and have largely ignored or are unaware of the shift in attitude toward religion in their communities. Many in and outside the church see the church as a place where people practice

---


their own brand of spirituality rather than a people who are incarnating the gospel in their community. If the churches in our Association are going to reach the Nones, we must seek to identify ourselves as the people of God on mission in this changing environment. With this loss of missional identity, the church has largely become irrelevant and is no longer the primary place people go to find answers to life’s most important questions. In the post-Christendom, post-Christian West, with its consumer driven culture, the church is no longer the place people are going to get their spiritual needs met.

The Rise of the Nones

The Post-Christian West has given rise to the Nones. As stated above, “None” is the name given to those who mark the box “none” on a survey asking what religion they affiliate with. What is fueling this historic rise? According to White, “sociologist Peter Berger, among many others, has long suggested that the modern world is being shaped by three deep and fast-moving cultural currents: secularization, privatization and pluralization.”\(^{41}\) Secularization refers to the removal of religious institutions and symbols from the public square. White believes the influence of the “American educational system, the media of mass communication, and the upper echelons of the legal system” are at the epicenter of the secularization of Western society.\(^{42}\) It is easier to see this influence in Portland and Eugene (home of the University of Oregon) than in some of the more rural communities in our Association. However, the influence of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter has given rise to the secularization and

---


\(^{42}\) White, *The Rise of the Nones*, 47.
pluralization described by White as the rise of a staggering number of ideologies and faith options compete for the attention of society. When options abound, there becomes a buffet-style approach to religion where parts of Christianity are simply one of many options. Add privatization to the equation, where religion is relegated to the private sphere of life and influence, and you have the making of the post-Christian context we find ourselves in. According to White, “It is precisely this context that has compelled so many to move into the Nones. Religion is, if anything, a public sphere manifestation of faith, and yet we don’t want faith in the public sphere. Further, if we subscribe to a defined set of beliefs or historic links to orthodoxy, our private world faith is held accountable—which is exactly what is least desired.”

The removal of religion from the public square and into the private lives of those who would engage their spirituality has caused challenges for the church in the West and in our Association. Many millennials (born between 1980-1994) and members of Generation Z (those born between 1995-2010) see no value in the church, either because they have been hurt by the church or because they simply see the church as irrelevant in its institutional form. If the Association hopes to reach the Nones, whose ranks are growing among millennials and Gen Z, we must seek to understand them. According to White, millennials and Gen Z comprise 50.4% of the US population. Yet these generations are largely absent in our Association churches. Who are these Nones and why does it matter?

---

43 Ibid., 50.
44 Ibid., 49.
45 White, Meet Generation Z, 38.
Millennials and Succeeding Generations Fueling the Rise: Who Are the Nones and Why Do They Matter for the Association?

The internet and all that has come with this world-connecting, information-sharing technology has been the fuel which has accelerated the post-Christian rise in the West. With constant access to information and entertainment, younger generations are less likely to trust their parents, teachers, pastors, and the Bible or find any real value in the religion of their parents. According to White, “Many refer to the Millennials as being ‘digital natives’ due to their comfort and innate abilities with digital technology. But according to David Bell, professor of marketing at Wharton, Generation Z is the ‘Internet-in-its-pocket’ generation.” White goes on to say, “While Baby Boomers can’t remember a world without TV and Millennials can’t remember a world without computers, ‘Gen Z’ does not know a world without constant, immediate and convenient access to the web.” Instant access to information and the ability for anyone to post an opinion, academic or not, has made everyone think they are an expert. We now live in a world where reality and truth are determined by the majority. What challenges does this pose for our Association? According to White, “With such democratization of knowledge comes the democratization of truth, resulting in an evolution from the idea that ‘what is true for you is true for you and what is true for me is true for me’ to the new belief that ‘what is true for us is true for us.’” With the challenge to the authority of Scripture comes the questioning of the church’s purpose, and the Nones are searching for truth in other places.

---

46 Ibid., 41

47 Ibid., 42.

According to Stanley, “For post-Christians, science, philosophy, and reason are the go-tos for worldviews and decision making. Post-Christians, especially post-Christian millennials, have a low to no tolerance for faith-based answers to fact-based questions. At the same time, like most of us, they aren’t exactly on a truth quest either. They’re on a happiness quest.”

If the church and organized religion do not make them happy, then they are less compelled than previous generations to engage in religious activities. According to Kendra Creasy Dean, many young Nones subscribe to a religious outlook known as Moralistic Therapeutic Deism. The guiding beliefs of this religious belief system say:

A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over life on earth. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself. God is not involved in my life except when I need God to resolve a problem. Good people go to heaven when they die.

This religious belief system has infiltrated our churches and, according to Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, is “converting believers in the old faiths to its alternative religious vision of divinely underwritten personal happiness and interpersonal niceness.”

Dean goes on to argue this type of feel good religion is not simply a product of the young but has been handed down by their parents. What has been handed down according to Dean is the belief “that Christianity is not a big deal, that God requires little, and the church is a helpful social institution

49 Stanley, 269.


filled with nice people focused primarily on ‘folks like us’—which, of course, begs the question whether we are really the church at all.”  

This by no means implies the Nones are not interested in spiritual things. Many classify themselves as spiritual but not religious. White tells his reader to think of the Nones like this: “Spiritual” ‘Yes.’ God? ‘Probably.’ A specific religion? ‘Not for me.’ But at least seeking? ‘No, not really. Not a priority.’” The posture of the Nones makes it particularly difficult for the Association to come up with tactical solutions to reach them for Jesus. The churches of our Association can no longer continue to do ministry in the way it has traditionally been done in a Christendom world. We can no longer attempt to halt the decline of church attendance by doing what we have been doing for the past 130 years. We must follow the mandate of Jesus to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19). We must move back into the neighborhood with a posture of curiosity and humility, seeking to live among our neighbors as exiles and fellow travelers. If we hope to reach the Nones in our communities with the life altering message of the gospel, it will require us to learn a different way of being in the world.

Tod Bolsinger recounts the story of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark and the Corps of Discovery who were commissioned by President Thomas Jefferson to find a water route connecting the East Coast to the Pacific Ocean. What they discovered was not a water route but the Rocky Mountains. Bolsinger explains: “As he stepped off the map into uncharted territory, Meriwether Lewis discovered that what was in front of him was nothing like what was behind him, and that what had brought him to this point in the journey would take him no farther. Lewis

52 Dean, 12.

faced a daunting decision: What would he do now? Lewis and Clark and their Corps of Discovery were looking for a water route, but now they had run out of water. *How do you canoe over mountains?*" Bolsinger answers this question with the statement, “you don’t. If you want to continue forward, you change. You adapt.”

The Church in the West finds itself in a similar situation. What is behind us is not the same as what lies ahead of us. If the Association is to thrive, we are going to need to seek adaptive ways to reach the post-Christian Nones in our neighborhoods. It is my hope that the Missional Coaching Handbook will act as a field guide and equip pastors and leaders to engage the Nones with the holistic gospel.

---


55 Ibid.
PART TWO

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Much has been written about missional theology and the missional church, so to choose just a few texts posed a challenge. However, chapter two will review seven literary offerings in three areas of interest to this project. The first section will examine the mission of God and God’s missional sending nature and how this informs our ecclesiology and personal practice. With the end of Christendom in the West, the church needs to reexamine its paradigm of mission and discover new ways to engage people where they are on their spiritual journey. To this end this section will look at David J. Bosch’s work, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, edited by Darrell L. Guder, as well as *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* by Lesslie Newbigin.

The second section will look at the practical nature of living missionally with a look at *Exiles: Living Missionally in a Post-Christian Culture* by Michael Frost and *The New Parish: How Neighborhood Churches Are Transforming Mission, Discipleship and Community* by Paul Sparks, Tim Soerens, and Dwight J. Friesen. The final section will look at developing missional practitioners through the art of coaching. This section will examine two works, *Leadership Coaching: The Disciplines, Skills and Heart of a Christian Coach* by Tony Stoltzfus and
Exploring the Mission of God

*Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, by David J. Bosch

*Transforming Mission* is one of the primer volumes in the study of missiology. At just shy of 600 pages it is as intimidating as it is comprehensive. David J. Bosch is not only a scholar but also a practitioner, having served as a missionary in South Africa. Bosch’s stated thesis “is that it is neither possible nor proper to attempt a revised definition of mission without taking a thorough look at the vicissitudes of missions and missionary idea during the past twenty centuries of Christian church history.”¹ With this aim in mind Bosch takes the reader on a journey beginning with the New Testament through the emergence of the postmodern paradigm of mission.

Several sections in the book are of particular importance to understanding modern mission and to creating the Missional Coaching Handbook written for this project. The first is Jesus’s understanding of the reign of God and how that informed his missional understanding and practice. Bosch highlights two features in Jesus’s presentation of the reign of God and how those informed his understanding about his nature and purpose. The first is Jesus’s recognition that the reign of God is not to be understood as an exclusively future event but “as both future and already present.”² Jesus’s announcement in the Gospel of Mark that the time had come and


² Ibid., 32.
the kingdom of God had come near was a reflection of his understanding of the nature of his mission to the world (Mk 1:15). Jesus saw his mission as bringing the present reign of God to the people of the world. He accomplished this by healing disease, breaking down walls of exclusivity, and calling for justice and care for those who were social outcasts.

Bosch identifies “a second fundamental characteristic of [Jesus’s] kingdom ministry: it launches an all-out attack on evil in all its manifestations.”3 Bosch explains:

God's reign arrives wherever Jesus overcomes the power of evil. Then, as it does now, evil took many forms: pain, sickness, death, demon possession, personal sin and immorality, the loveless self-righteousness of those who claim to know God, the maintaining of special class privileges, the brokenness of human relationships. Jesus is, however, saying: if human distress takes many forms, the power of God does likewise.4

The two elements of Jesus’s understanding of the reign of God described above speak directly to the focus of my project, namely the announcement of the reign of God as the proclamation and demonstration that will bring about gospel flourishing as the people of God moves into the neighborhood and works to root out the strong holds of lovelessness and evil in our communities. Bosch agrees as he states, “now, as then, it should make all the difference to society if there is within it a group of human beings who, focusing their minds on the reality of God’s reign and praying for its coming advocate the cause of the poor, serve those on the periphery, raise up the oppressed and broken and, above all, ‘proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’”5

Bosch’s discussion of the missio Dei is extremely informative in the development of a missional understanding. According to Bosch, over the past half a century “the classical doctrine

---

3 Ibid., 33.
4 Ibid., 33.
5 Ibid., 35.
of the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit was expanded to include yet another ‘movement’: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world.”6 In this definition, God is by very nature a missionary God. Bosch continues to flesh this idea out by stating, “mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission. There is church because there is mission and not vice-versa. To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God’s love toward people since God is a fountain of sending love.”7 Because of God’s love, God sent Jesus into the world to restore the relationship of God’s creation with the creator (Jn 3:16). The mission of the church is to continue the ministry of reconciliation of all creation to God by the power of the Holy Spirit. We cannot simply see the mission in soteriological terms as the saving of individual souls. Nor can we see the mission as somehow enlightening persons to a Western understanding of life and Christianity. Gospel flourishing is about the restoration of all things under the lordship of Jesus. In this light Jesus must be our mode and our guide.

Another important contribution of Bosch to this project is his discussion regarding evangelism and mission. According to Bosch, evangelism over the centuries has been narrowed in its definition to refer to the saving of individual souls particularly in the West, while mission has been used to refer to ministry to persons in Third World settings.8 In recent days many have tried to link mission and evangelism as two sides of the same coin. However, Bosch sees “that mission and evangelism are not synonymous but, nevertheless, indissolubly linked together and

---

6 Ibid., 399.

7 Ibid., 400.

8 Ibid., 419.
inextricably interwoven in theology and praxis. For Bosch, mission is wider than evangelism. “Mission is the church sent into the world, to love, to serve, to preach, to teach, to heal, to liberate.” The purpose of the Missional Coaching Handbook is to prepare people to join God in God’s mission to love and to serve and introduce people to the kingdom of God. The task is larger than simply getting people saved.

Bosch also sees evangelism as contextual and therefore must be concerned with issues of social justice. For many in the West, conversion to Christianity means conversion to the social practices of the dominant culture one was evangelized by. According to Bosch, evangelism and conversion have been couched in “micro-ethical terms, such as regular church attendance, abstinence from alcohol and tobacco, and daily Bible reading and prayer.” Bosch views the call to follow Jesus as much broader than micro-ethics. It includes a commitment to seeing God’s kingdom come in the particular community one is located in. Bosch explains, “Evangelism, then, means enlisting people for the reign of God, liberating them from themselves, their sins, and their entanglements, so that they will be free for God and neighbor. It calls individuals to a life of openness, vulnerability, wholeness, and love.” The emphasis of the Missional Coaching Handbook on gospel flourishing aligns with Bosch’s desire to see mission and evangelism as broader than simply personal salvation and heaven when we die.

A final important contribution Bosch makes to the missional approach is his section on the importance of mission and dialogue. Bosch explores the importance of taking a posture of

---

9 Ibid., 421.
10 Ibid., 423
11 Ibid., 427.
12 Ibid., 428.
humility when approaching persons of other faiths and traditions. Bosch highlights two statements from the Vatican II documents that seem on the surface to be incompatible and yet lead to an understanding of the need for humility and reliance on the Holy Spirit. The statement he refers to says, “We cannot point to another way of salvation than Jesus Christ; at the same time we cannot set limits to the saving power of God.”

Bosch explains, “Such language boils down to an admission that we do not have all the answers and are prepared to live within the framework of penultimate knowledge that we regard our involvement in dialogue and mission as an adventure, are prepared to take risks, and are anticipating surprises as the Spirit guides us into fuller understanding. This is not opting for agnosticism, but for humility.” If we hope to see people from every tribe and tongue come into a relationship with Jesus and participate in the gospel flourishing of our communities, we will need to approach with a “bold Humility.”

*Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, edited by Darrell L. Guder

*Missional Church* is an important work about the condition of North American culture and how the culture affects the nature and mission of the church. The book is the product of a research project begun by the Gospel and Our Culture Network. “The Network emerged in North America in the late 1980s as the continuation, on this side of the Atlantic, of the Gospel and Culture discussion initiated in Great Britain during the publication of Bishop Lesslie Newbigin’s

---


14 Bosch, 501.

15 Ibid.
short monograph, *The Other Side of 1984: Questions for the Churches.*”

Newbigin chronicles the demise of Christendom in North America and the post-Christian nature of the current culture. During the era of Christendom in North America the church’s mission endeavor around the world was very “European-church-centered.” According to Newbigin; “the ecclesiocentric understanding of mission has been replaced during this century by a profoundly theocentric reconceptualization of Christian mission.” According to the authors, “mission is not merely an activity of the church. Rather, mission is the result of God’s initiative, rooted in God’s purposes to restore and heal creation.” The theological understanding of God as a sending God and how this concept affects the mission of the church is a major theme in the book.

Six of the leading voices in the missional conversation contributed to the writing of the book. The authors include Lois Barrett, Inagrace T. Dietterich, George R. Hunsberger, Alan J. Roxburgh, Craig Van Gelder, and Darrell L. Guder, who coordinated and edited the project. The authors probed the Scripture and the writings of theologians who they felt captured the missional challenge facing the church in North America which they saw as including both the United States and Canada. Each of the contributors were given the responsibility to draft specific chapters, and each chapter was critiqued by the other members of the team.

According to Guder and his colleagues, “the answer to the crisis of the North American church will not be found at the level of method and problem solving. We share the conviction of

---


17 Ibid., 4.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.
a growing consensus of Christians in North America that the problem is much more deeply rooted. It has to do with who we are and what we are for. The real issues in the current crisis of the Christian church are spiritual and theological.”20 With this understanding in mind the authors set out to explore the conditions in North America which make missional life challenging, highlighting the need for a renewed understanding of the missio Dei and how it should inform both ecclesiology and missional praxis.

The first three chapters of the book “provide, in broad strokes, a portrait of the North American cultural context and the formation of the church within that context.”21 Of particular importance to the conversation in our Association is the authors’ discussion of the move from a modern to a postmodern ideology in the West. The authors identify three trends in the postmodern condition that have direct implications to how the church engages the culture. The first trend is in spirituality. “The postmodern openness to perceiving life in a variety of ways has contributed to the reemergence of spirituality as a viable and necessary part of the human struggle for meaning today. People are very secular, but they are often spiritual secularists.”22

Like the Apostle Paul when he spoke to the people of Athens, the Association needs to find ways to capitalize on the spiritual hunger and point people to the reality of the kingdom of God (Acts 17:23-31).

Another condition brought on by the postmodern condition is the issue of nationalism. According to the authors, “the United States developed its story around notions of God’s

20 Ibid., 3.

21 Ibid., 15.

22 Ibid., 44.
providence and divine destiny.” The idea of America as a Christian nation has led to a sense of privilege for the church. This has made it difficult for the church in the wake of post-Christendom to rediscover its identity as a “social community in the midst of broader national community of communities.” This challenge can be seen in dramatic ways as our cities in Oregon and Southwest Washington become more culturally diverse. Guder and his colleagues explain how “Many U.S. citizens often view the increase in ethnic minority populations as a threat to the once dominant Anglo culture. At the same time that national policy continues to shift away from race as a basis for guaranteeing social rights, many whites exhibit a rising racist militancy.” The church must respond to this blatant offense to the gospel with a renewed emphasis on the reconciling power of the message of Jesus.

Guder et al. highlight the need for the church in North America to respond to the challenges of the postmodern condition with a renewed understanding and practice of the church as a representative of the reign of God. Jesus is the model for the church. “Jesus believed it was his mission to embody the reign of God by living under its authority. He was the willing subject of God’s reign. His baptism by John and anointing by the Spirit placed him under covenant obligation and promise.” The Missional Coaching Handbook highlighted in this project is designed to help develop leaders in our association to train others in participating in the reign of God as representatives of God’s kingdom in their communities. The goal is to form a people as an alternative society of Jesus who live as a foretaste of the not yet fully present kingdom of

---

23 Ibid., 44.
24 Ibid., 45.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., 103.
God. The elements of this way of life include reconciliation, love of neighbor, hospitality, and in the words of Stanley Hauerwas, cultivates a people who “can risk being peaceful in a violent world, risk being kind in a competitive society, risk being faithful in an age of cynicism, risk being gentle among those who admire the tough, risk love when it may not be returned, because we have the confidence that in Christ we have been reborn into a new reality.”

While it is beyond the scope of the Missional Coaching Handbook to develop a plan for creating missional communities, The Missional Church makes an important contribution to my project by highlighting what a missional community should include. Guder and his colleagues emphasize a common table, mutual accountability, spirit-filled deliberation, and hospitality as key elements of a kingdom-shaped community. Each of these essentials are either directly or indirectly addressed in the Missional Coaching Handbook and would be helpful in creating a community of missional practitioners.

*The Open Secret: An introduction to the Theology of Mission* by Lesslie Newbigin

One of the important contributions of Newbigin’s book to this project is his broad and sweeping history of the missionary understanding of the church throughout her history. Newbigin reminds the reader that “a great deal of the substance of the Western Christian tradition—its liturgy, theology, and church order—was formed during the long period in which Western Christendom was an almost enclosed ghetto precluded from missionary advance.” The development of Christian thought and praxis in a missional vacuum according to Newbigin was

---


largely a product of the Islamic movement and conquest of much of the Persian Empire, Syria, and the whole of the southern shore of the Mediterranean, the heart of Christendom at the time.\textsuperscript{29} When Western Christianity broke free of the bonds of the Islamic isolation, missions was part of an integral movement that included military, political, commercial, cultural, and religious components.\textsuperscript{30} With the Western expansion of the church came the importing of not only Western church ecclesiology but also Western culture.

According to Newbigin, with the end of Christendom, “mission will no longer work along the stream of expanding Western power.”\textsuperscript{31} The missional advance of the church will require a return to a more grass roots, neighbor to neighbor approach in our changing global environment. The Association needs to see our neighborhoods as mission fields and approach them with the mindset of a missiologist. We cannot wait for the government to provide for us the keys to happiness and success. According to Newbigin, if we are truly going to see gospel flourishing, then we must focus on “the Christian gospel of the reign of God” in our contemporary theology of mission.\textsuperscript{32} The emphasis on the reign of God must contain an element of personal and social reform. The two elements of the gospel are important in the implementation of the Missional Coaching Handbook. The use of the handbook cannot simply be about social reform but must also invite people to make Jesus lord of their lives as well. However, the call to “conversion” must come in relationship and from a posture of humility not conquest.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 3.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 5.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 6.
Newbigin reminds the reader of the need to define what the kingdom of God is and, if Jesus is Lord, be able to answer the question, “who is this Jesus?” He explains how many different religions from Hindu to Buddhism to Islam have a way of understanding who Jesus is. Newbigin asserts the mission of the church can only be understood through the lenses of a triune God. He sees the mission as threefold: as “proclaiming the kingdom of the Father, as sharing the life of the Son, and as bearing the witness of the Spirit.”

The proclamation of the kingdom of God is both hidden and uncovered and is seen in the words and works of Jesus. The kingdom is counter to the historic understanding of power and success because they find their apex in the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is not in conquest and control that the kingdom is revealed in the world; it is through sacrifice and humility.

According to Newbigin, while Jesus came proclaiming the kingdom of God, his life was a demonstration of love in action. He states, “the first generation of Christian preachers used a different language from the language of Jesus: he spoke about the kingdom, they spoke about Jesus…the kingdom, or kingship, of God was no longer a distant hope or a faceless concept. It had now a name and a face—the name and face of the man from Nazareth. In the New Testament we are dealing not just with the proclamation of the kingdom but also with the presence of the kingdom.” It is the people of God gathered who are to be the witness of the present kingdom of God in the world.

Newbigin insists the witness of the church is not simply tied to the proclamation and the presence of the kingdom. He explains, “the active agent of mission is a power that rules, guides,

---

33 Ibid., 29.

34 Ibid., 40.
and goes before the church: the free, sovereign, living power of the Spirit of God. Mission is not just something that the church does; it is something that is done by the Spirit, who is himself the witness, who changes both the world and the church, who always goes before the church in its missionary journey.”

It is by the Spirit of God that the people of God give evidence of the reality of the kingdom present and to the kingdom to come. One of the goals of the Missional Coaching Handbook is to equip followers of Jesus to listen to the Spirit and to become a partner in what the Spirit is up to in our neighborhoods in our post-Christendom environment. Newbigin masterfully highlights the power of God when the people of God find themselves in positions of powerlessness, disdain, and rejection. This is certainly the condition of the church in the post-Christendom context in the Pacific Northwest.

Newbigin highlights the holistic nature of the gospel and God’s saving purpose in the world. Salvation, according to Newbigin, can never be seen as simply individual but must always concern the whole of creation. He explains, “(1) I am never permitted to think of my own salvation apart from that of God’s whole family and God’s whole world; (2) at no point—not even at the point of death—am I permitted to turn my back upon my neighbors, upon that bit of the world’s life in which I have shared, which I have tried to serve, and without which I would not be a human being at all.”

In light of the holistic nature of salvation, Newbigin asserts, “that the church has been led by the logic of its own gospel to move beyond preaching into action of all kinds for the doing of God’s justice in the life of the world.”

---

35 Ibid., 56.
36 Ibid., 80.
37 Ibid., 121.
impact in today’s world it must be lived out in the praxis of all believers in their particular contexts.

The final two chapters are extremely important in understanding the posture Christians and the church must take when engaging the Nones in their community. Often the church has sought to participate in missional engagement of their community with the goal of growing the church. It is understandable for those who choose to follow Jesus as Lord to desire to introduce others to this Jesus. However, Newbigin once again asserts the importance of the Spirit in leading people to Jesus as well as deciding the ethical content of conversion. It is important for those participating in missional engagement with Nones and those of other religions to be willing to allow new converts to contextualize theological understanding. It is tempting for the one proclaiming the gospel to assume the right to interpret how the gospel is lived out in a particular context.

Newbigin challenges the reader to take a posture with the Nones and those of other faiths in which dialogue is encouraged. He quotes John Hicks who explains the difference between confessional dialogue and a truth-seeking approach:

At one extreme there is purely confessional dialogue in which each partner witnesses to his own faith, convinced that his has absolute truth whilst his partner’s has only relative truth. At the other extreme is truth-seeking dialogue in which each is conscious that Transcendent Being is infinitely greater than his own limited vision in the hope that each may be helped towards a fuller awareness of the Divine Reality before which they both stand.\(^{38}\)

According to Newbigin, there is no contrast between the two approaches if there is an openness to seeking truth. Newbigin states, “The ‘confessional’ stance implies that truth is to be

found in a life of obedient discipleship to Jesus Christ as he is to be known through a life lived in the community of disciples, in faithfulness to the tradition about him, and in openness to all the truth that may be discovered in the history of the human race.”  

He goes on to explain that a Christian must engage their neighbor on the basis of their relationship with Jesus firmly rooted in the gospel. As participants use the Missional Coaching Handbook to engage their neighbors, they must do so in a posture of humility and openness to the Holy Spirit’s leadership and with the understanding that God is already present and at work in the community. Newbigin’s is a key voice in the missional movement, and this volume should be required reading before we engage our neighbors with the message of Jesus.

**The Practical Nature of Living on Mission**

*Exiles: Living Missionally in a Post-Christian Culture* by Michael Frost

According to Michael Frost, “this book is written for those Christians who find themselves falling into the cracks between contemporary secular Western culture and a quaint, old-fashioned church culture of respectability and conservatism.”  

Frost’s audience is the same audience for which I have written my Missional Coaching Handbook. Frost begins by asserting Christendom has fallen. He defines Christendom as “the name given to the religious culture that has dominated Western society since the fourth century. Awakened by the Roman emperor Constantine, it was the cultural phenomenon that resulted when Christianity was established as the official imperial religion, moving it from being a marginalized, subversive, and persecuted

---

39 Newbigin, 165.

movement to being the only official religion in the empire.”

He goes on to explain that because of the fall of Christendom, Christianity finds itself in a similar situation to both the early Christians and the nation of Israel who found themselves in Babylonian captivity around 587 BCE.

Frost’s thesis is that because Christianity finds itself in a place void of the support given by the facade of Christendom, we must live as exiles. Frost uses Walter Brueggemann’s work to support his argument that we must redefine our future not as the majority voice but as exiles, requiring us to move into dangerous territory. He states,

Exiles are driven back to their most dangerous memories, their recollections of the promises made by Jesus and his daring agenda for human society. Exiles are prepared to practice a set of dangerous promises, promises that point to the Kingdom and are caught up with the prevailing values of the empire. Exiles will mock the folly of that empire by offering a dangerous critique of a society wracked by greed, lust, selfishness, and inequality. And finally, exiles will sing a repertoire of dangerous songs that speak of an unexpected newness of life.

Frost uses these four disciplines to highlight the need for a different way of practicing the Christian life in this hostile environment that does not want to hear the message of Jesus.

Each of the disciplines described by Frost have important applications for living out the mandates of the Missional Coaching Handbook. In the section on dangerous memories Frost describes the importance of living incarnational lives in the way of Jesus. For Frost this is lived out in four aspects:

1. Inactive sharing of life, participating in the fears, frustrations, and afflictions of the host community. The prayer of the exile should be, ‘Lord let your mind be in me,’ for no witness is capable of incarnationality without the mind of Jesus.

---

41 Ibid., 4.

2. An employment of the language and thought forms of those with whom we seek to share Jesus. After all, he used common speech and stories; salt, light, fruit, birds, and the like. He seldom used theological or religious jargon or technical terms.

3. His preparedness to go to the People, not expecting them to come to us. As Jesus came from the heavens to humanity. We enter into the ‘tribal’ realities of human society.

4. A confidence that the gospel can be communicated by ordinary means, through acts of servanthood, loving relationships, good deeds; in this way the exile becomes an extension of the incarnation in our time. Deeds thus create words.\[43\]

Incarnational living is the hallmark of the Christian life lived in exile. Frost highlights the importance of inhabiting third places, a prominent chapter in the handbook, as well as dialogue as a means of incarnational presence.

In the section on dangerous promises, Frost expresses the need for Christian exiles to be authentic. Frost explains, “In a world of hyper-reality, themed environments, false celebrity, and fake experience, exiles will live out the promise of being honest, genuine, and real.”\[44\] The lure of instant celebrity and Facebook reality has desensitized the world to the illusion produced by fake realities that come at us from every form of media. The world we are exiled in has a sensor built to detect the false claims even in the church. According to Frost, “Most new realists have what Hemingway once indelicately called a ‘built-in, shockproof crap detector.’ They can see the reality behind the saccharine smiles of fake, patronizing Christians.”\[45\] As exiles we must live out the most honest version of ourselves if we hope to make it through the detector in order to develop authentic relationships.

---

\[43\] Ibid., 55.

\[44\] Ibid., 81.

\[45\] Ibid., 96.
Frost sees exiles as promising to serve a cause greater than themselves as well as practicing generosity and hospitality. Not everyone is convinced the language of exile is the best descriptor of how we are to live in a post-Christendom West. David Congdon states,

The church needs to abandon talk of exile, and reclaim the possibility of being at home. Home is the cultural context within which the church already exists. Reclaiming home does not mean uncritically adopting whatever seems fashionable at the time. It means approaching cultural changes and developments with an attitude of openness and hospitality, with a readiness to embrace rather than exclude. Reclaiming home means obeying the biblical injunction to live wholly without fear or anxiety.46

While I appreciate Congdon’s assertion that followers of Jesus need to live in a state of non-anxious presence in our communities, and his call to openness and hospitality, if Christians do not see the need to return to Christendom, then the language of exile describes well the idea of demonstrating an alternative to life lived in the empire. Followers of Jesus are called to demonstrate life in the kingdom of God, a life of radical hospitality. The notion of inhabiting the world we find ourselves in with openness and hospitality was the way Jesus lived among the empire. Embracing our neighbors, even those who are hostile to the message of the kingdom, is a way in which we can help to bring gospel flourishing to our neighborhoods and to the world.

Frost’s discussion on the difference between community and communitas provides an important call for the church as an exiled people to not make a desire for safety central to our purpose. This is where Congdon’s idea of home might be problematic for some. According to Frost, “so called Christian community often is portrayed as an inwardly focused gathering of people committed to one another, to encouraging one another and building one another up. It is often referred to as a ‘safe place,’ a place where members can be open and vulnerable together

46 David Congdon, “No, the American Church Isn’t ‘In Exile,’” Sojourners (April 19, 2017), https://sojo.net/articles/no-american-church-isn-t-exile.
and receive support, understanding, and mutual care.”47 There is nothing wrong with this kind of community unless it becomes the focus. Mission, for exiles, requires what Frost describes as *communitas*. Alan Hirsch explains how liminality and *communitas* work together to propel mission forward. He explains:

The related ideas of liminality and *communitas* describe the dynamics of the Christian community inspired to overcome their instincts to ‘huddle and cuddle,’ and to instead form themselves around a common mission that calls them onto a dangerous journey to unknown places, a mission that calls the church to shake off its collective securities and to plunge into the world of action.48

When the people of God commit to the mission for the sake of others, *communitas* will be the by-product.

According to Pew Research polls cited above, people are leaving the institutional church in large numbers. Many of those who are leaving describe the perceived lack of purpose as the reason for leaving. A safe community is no longer drawing people to the church. There seems to be a desire to make a difference in the wider world. According to Frost, “liminal missional experiences contain the very stuff required for the transformation of the mainstream church.”49 Helping to coach and equip people to move out as exiles in the community will perhaps give them a purpose and provide liminal space to draw closer to God and those they serve with.

Frost’s call to radical hospitality is also informative to the things presented in the Missional Coaching Handbook. Sharing a meal with others is a great way to tear down walls of

47 Ibid., 111.


49 Ibid., 128.
resistance and build authentic relationships. Frost poses some important questions when it comes to eating and sharing meals with others. He asks:

Of all the meals we've eaten in our lives—around two hundred thousand by the time we're 40 years of age—how many of them felt sacred? How many of them felt like moments in which we connected with God, our world, and our table mates? How many of them were charged by gratitude, love, astonishment, and joy? And conversely, how many of them stand out as experiences of sheer indulgence and surplus meals at which we ate so much that we felt sick, guilty, and disgusted with ourselves?²⁵⁰

When providing hospitality as exiles, Frost suggests we take our cues from biblical exiles such as Joseph, Daniel, Paul, and Peter. Each teach us about equality, healthy eating, and relying on the Holy Spirit to give us the freedom and discernment to make the table an open space and not a place of division.

Frost’s section on dangerous criticism had some value for the project. He poses important ideas regarding justice, care for the earth, human rights, and the persecution of followers of Jesus. These topics are vital to humanity’s flourishing, and Christians need to be prepared to work alongside our host nation to deal with the abuses in each of these areas. The caution would be to not approach these issues from a political perspective only but to address them as followers of Jesus and work from a kingdom perspective, as exiles. We cannot stand idle on these issues, and they can provide opportunities to build *communitas*.

*The New Parish: How Neighborhood Churches Are Transforming Mission, Discipleship and Community* by Paul Sparks, Tim Soerens, and Dwight J. Friesen

I chose this book not because it was the most academic on the subject but because of its innovative, practical nature and its call to inhabit the “place” we find ourselves in. According to

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 159
the authors, the book is written in three parts to answer three distinct questions. The first question is “Why do we need a new parish?,” the second is “What is the new parish?,” and the final section deals with the question, “How do we practice the new parish?”51 The authors use the term “new parish” to distinguish what they see as a new model of parish life in the post-Christendom environment we find ourselves in here in the West. The authors state, “We are contrasting the new parish with lingering conceptions the church has carried since Christendom, when the institutional church more or less dictated the form of the neighborhood. The church that is emerging in the parish today is different in many ways.”52 One of the major differences is in the diverse expressions of church life we find today in the neighborhood, from missional communities to “simple” house churches.

To answer the question, “why do we need a new parish?, the authors cite two false narratives driving today’s consumeristic church expression. The two myths include individualism and living above place. Living as individuals above place “names the tendency to develop structures that keep cause-and-effect relationships apart in space and time where we cannot have firsthand experience of them.”53 Our communities have a tendency to ignore how our actions affect others. When followers of Jesus attend church outside their neighborhood, our church expression, according to Christena Cleveland, tends to become homogeneous and


52 Ibid., 31.

53 Ibid., 24.
consumer oriented. She goes on to explain: “Today’s churchgoers…tend to shop for churches that express their individual values and are culturally similar. We often drive by dozens of churches en route to our church, the one that meets our cultural expectations. American society has engaged in an evangelical spiritual consumerism that some scholars pejoratively call ‘Burger King Christianity.’”

By taking the posture of a consumer the average Western Christian fails to be fully present to their neighbor. Sparks, Soerens, and Friesen argue for the people of God to be incarnationally present in the neighborhood for the sake of and in solidarity with their neighbors for the flourishing of the community. They describe an incarnational presence as being both within a community and “in-with” the neighborhood. For the authors, “in-with may be understood as a form of missional collaboration with others who also care about your place.”

Part of the purpose for the Missional Coaching Handbook is to help connect people with their place and help them gain an imagination for living both within and in-with their neighbors. The book is a valuable resource for describing why we need a new understanding of parish life.

The second question, “what is a new parish?,” is answered by the authors as an ecclesial practice that includes an integrated focus on community, formation, and mission rooted in a particular place. It is often tempting to divorce any and all of these from a particular place. According to the authors, when we do that, we become fragmented beings. For the authors, “the dare of the new parish is that formation, community and mission can only be conceived of as Christian when integrated together as holistic worship; one worship life, three embodied

---


55 Ibid.

56 Sparks, Soerens, and Friesen, *The New Parish*, 47.
practices. The integration of these three aspects comprises the life of holistic worship or ‘faithful presence.’”57 The goal of the new parish is to practice this faithful presence in all of the arenas of life lived out in the neighborhood. The authors put these “common” arenas into four categories. These include education, civic life, economics, and the environment. When the church practices incarnational presence and seeks Jesus’s vision for the kingdom of God in our place, renewal and flourishing can be realized in each of these realms.

The final question, “how do we practice the new parish?,” is answered in the remainder of the book. The authors seek to give the reader practical ways of living out the faithful presence described above. Moving forward in faithful presence will take some new imagination for leadership. According to the authors, “The leadership task is first one of drawing people together for mutual listening, discerning and experimenting—not fixing. If ever there was a time to experiment your way into a fresh contextual expression of the church, this is it, not only because we’re living in an adaptive era but because experiments of faithful and communal presence are the best way to truly learn how to be the church in the everyday of life.”58 This type of leadership cannot be done in a vacuum; it must be complemented by a life rooted in the everyday, ordinary life of the neighborhood. When a leader is rooted in the neighborhood and connected to God and to the people in the community, the Holy Spirit can lead in new ways of bringing God’s kingdom to that place.

Sparks, Soerens, and Friesen write as practitioners of living the type of embodied presence hoped for in this project. They offer great insight into what must be done in order to

57 Ibid., 85.
58 Ibid., 120.
live out a new parish model. In our fragmented and individualistic church life, this type of life might seem unattainable, but their admonition to “discern a practice or two as a means of ‘trying it on’” and to experiment with others fits with the spirit and intent of the Missional Coaching Handbook and seems quite doable.\(^{59}\)

**The Art of Missional Coaching**

*Leadership Coaching: The Disciplines, Skills and Heart of a Christian Coach* by Tony Stoltzfus

This final section in this literature review deals with coaching as the method used to help people develop their capacity and skills to live a missional life. Tony Stoltzfus is a leading author and trainer of Christian coaches. He writes from the understanding that coaching is a very Holy Spirit led practice. He also believes that most people already know what the Spirit is speaking into their lives, they simply need some well-crafted questions to pull out of them what God is already doing in them.

Stoltzfus describes coaches as “change experts who help leaders take responsibility for their lives and act to maximize their own potential.”\(^{60}\) Coaching is different from other disciplines that seek to lead people into a better version of themselves. Stoltzfus explains, “a mentor imparts wisdom and opportunity to a junior; a counselor diagnoses a problem and suggests solutions; a discipler communicates the basics of Christian living and helps keep a new believer on track.”\(^{61}\) What sets coaching apart from these other disciplines? According to

---

\(^{59}\) Ibid., 188.


\(^{61}\) Ibid., x.
Stoltzfus, unlike counselors and mentors, coaches do not need to be an expert in their field.

“Instead, coaches are generalists: they’re change experts. The client supplies the change agenda, the goal, the solution and the action steps. What the coach brings to the table is an understanding of how change happens and the ability to create an optimal environment for growth.”

Coaching takes a unique set of skills which include listening and asking powerful questions. It also involves the skill of helping pull out of the client the desired outcome and goals and helps the client take responsibility for their own life and the change they desire to see in their lives.

Stoltzfus states five reasons for using coaching to help lead people into change. These are some of the reasons I chose to incorporate coaching into the Missional Coaching Handbook. These include experiencing more transformation, fast growth, unleashing and empowering people to act, developing leaders, and improving interpersonal skills.

Jesus gives us a great model to follow. He started with his love for people and his desire to see them reach their kingdom potential. His compassion for people often prompted him to ask questions that got to the heart of what they truly wanted. One example is Jesus’s question to the man by the pool of Bethesda: “do you want to get well?” (Jn 5:1-15).

The greatest benefit of this resource is Stoltzfus’ discussion of the seven elements of the coaching process. The coaching context provides three of these elements which include a relationship-based, client-centered, goal-driven process. According to Stoltzfus, “within that context, the coaching process is comprised of listening, asking, acting and supporting.”

---

62 Ibid., 22.

63 Ibid., 33.

64 Ibid., 82.
relational component of the coaching encounter is ideal for pastors as they seek to lead their people to engage their neighborhoods. These relationships need to be authentic and unconditional and both elements must be cultivated. Stoltzfus says, “authenticity doesn’t just happen. The coach must cultivate the ability to take relational risks and the discipline of going first at being real.”65 The coach must genuinely care about the growth of the client.

The element of the coaching context that may be challenging in the process of leading persons into the neighborhood for missional engagement is the client-centered agenda. In the handbook, there is a desire to move people to engage in an activity that may not be of the client’s choosing. However, believing that God initiates change and by relying on the Holy Spirit to lead the conversation, we can trust God to move the conversation and the action to a goal that will strike the heart of the one being coached. When we allow the Holy Spirit to lead, goals and activities can be established by the parishioner and not by the coach. This may take some persistence and patience. However, with the right training, the coach can be equipped to pull out of the parishioner God’s desire for them.

The final four elements of the coaching process—listening, asking powerful questions, creating actionable goals, and supporting the client—are all skills that the coach will need to develop in order to move the one being coached into life changing behavior. According to Stoltzfus, questions are “the bread and butter tools of a coach. They are the main tools a coach uses to focus a conversation, foster exploration, push the client to dig deeper and reach higher and ensure commitment. Much of what a coach says in a coaching conversation is in the form of

65 Ibid., 88.
questions.”66 One of the primary tasks of training leaders to use the Missional Coaching Handbook will be equipping them to ask good, open-ended questions.

A final element of the coaching relationship and process that cannot be neglected is holding the parishioner accountable for the action they committed to. Stoltzfus reminds the reader, “coaching works because it is a great relationship built on clear expectations about change. If either the openness in the relationship or the high expectations are eroded, you’ll lose effectiveness.”67 Grace is always appropriate, but it is important to not allow change and growth to be sacrificed. Training the coaches in the skills needed will be key to the success of implementing the Missional Coaching Handbook.

TransforMissional Coaching: Empowering Leaders in a Changing Ministry World by Steve Ogne and Tim Roehl

In the opening chapters of TransforMissional Coaching, Ogne and Roehl describe the cultural changes impacting the church and the postmodern culture influencing the need for a changing approach to leadership development. According to the authors, the church has moved through three epochs over the past 120 years. The paradigms for each of the three periods has moved from what Ogne and Roehl describe as “Traditional Evangelicals” (1900-1980) to “Pragmatic Evangelicals” (1980-2000) to “Young Evangelicals” or what they describe as the TransforMissional Church (2000-present).68

66 Ibid., 177.
67 Ibid., 275.
Of major concern to Ogne and Roehl in these paradigm shifts is the changing understanding of mission. For Traditional Evangelicals mission was typically seen as converting those on foreign soil, largely due to an understanding that America was a Christian nation. In the Pragmatic Evangelical age, “everything was about evangelism, both personally and corporately. The focus was on church growth, and the most effective means to achieve that growth was the ‘seeker service, a Sunday or weekend service solely focused on the attraction and conversion of the unchurched.’”69 The change from a modern to a postmodern culture has brought a different understanding of mission for the Transformissional Church. Ogne and Roehl state, “Transformissional Christians have a holistic worldview and a broad understanding of the kingdom of God. They do not hold to a dualistic worldview that separates Christians from non-Christians and the church from the world.”70 They go on to explain how the church is not in and of itself the kingdom of God but is the agent used by God to usher in God’s reign. Transformissional Christians “do not strategize to take people from the world and put them in the church: they engage the church in the world to represent the kingdom of God and His desire to reconcile the world to Himself.”71 This understanding of the mission of the church centering on ushering in the kingdom of God and being holistic in nature is consistent with the writings of Bosch and Newbigin.

According to Ogne and Roehl, “Consistent with postmodern values, today’s culture wants to experience relationships and evangelism in the context of spiritual community—where

---

69 Ibid., 12.

70 Ibid., 13.

71 Ibid.
people can experience Christ and Christians together in close, authentic relationships in the midst of normal, difficult lives." This new understanding of evangelism and mission has led to the need for leaders to adapt their leadership style from managers and CEOs to fellow practitioners and revolutionaries. Ogne and Roehl see the need to shift leadership development to coaching because for them “the traditional leader is driven by performance, success, and growth. The transformissional leader is motivated to encourage spiritual formation, to create authentic community, and to engage culture redemptively.” The Spirit-led, relational nature of coaching makes for a great model for preparing leaders to engage their communities.

Ogne and Roehl further explain how transformissional coaching is useful because “coaching is based on the life experience of the individual leader…. [and] because coaching is not model-specific; it can be useful in any context.” One of the values of this book to the project is Ogne’s working definition of coaching. He states, “coaching helps people develop their God-given potential so that they grow personally and make a valuable contribution to the kingdom of God.” The goal of the Missional Coaching Handbook is to unleash the missional potential that is dormant in many of the lay-people in our churches. This resource helps frame the coaching discipline considering the postmodern culture we are seeking to reach.

Another value of this book is the practical coaching strategies highlighted by the authors. The simple coaching approach developed by John Whitmore called G.R.O.W. will be one of the techniques used to train pastors in coaching their parishioners in using the Missional Coaching

72 Ibid.
73 Ibid., 17
74 Ibid., 19-20.
75 Ibid., 26.
Handbook. The G stands for goal. In a pure coaching relationship, the goal is set by the client. However, in coaching through the handbook there will be an assigned chapter or set of material that will be assigned before the coaching session. The goal will be to simplify and clarify what they hope to accomplish during their time together.76

Once goals are established, the coach and client move on to the R. The R stands for reality. The idea behind this part of the session is to discern where the Spirit might be leading in the person’s life in the area under discussion. The key in this segment is to listen, listen, and then listen some more. Asking open ended questions enables the coach to get to the challenges, obstacles, dreams and visions of the parishioner. Ogne and Roehl encourage the use of probing, using “words such as what, when, who, where, how many,” and encouraging the client to elaborate.77 The main goal is to get to reality. Reality is helping the person being coached think beyond their current understanding of what is and move them to discover what could be. Once they get to an understanding of what needs to be done, they are ready to explore options.

O stands for options. This is where the coaching rubber meets the road. The temptation at this point is to solve the problem for the person or tell them what they should do to engage their neighbors. Coaching is all about guiding the client to solve problems and come up with several possible options to live missionally in their context. Ogne and Roehl explain, “The goal of the O is divine creativity. What begins as only a few possibilities often becomes a list of eight to twelve options as you help the leader consider alternatives. Let the leader come up with as many


77 Ibid., 111.
options as possible.”  

A great question to keep the creativity flowing is “what else?” When all possibilities are on the table, they can move to the W.

The W stand for the question, “What WILL you do?” The goal of this question is to discern what specific action step will be taken. The key to a successful action step is to have the client come up with and own the action. A specific set of question are suggested by the authors to see that this happens. The questions include:

1. What option do you choose?
2. What steps do you need to take?
3. Where does this fit in your master plan?
4. Who needs to know?
5. When will you begin… complete this?
6. What resources will you need?
7. Who needs to do what to help you accomplish this?

The remainder of the resource is filled with practical and skills-based development tools that are helpful in preparing leaders who will be coaching their parishioners through the content of the Missional Coaching Handbook. Ogne and Roehl make the case for using transformissional coaching with postmodern young leaders and share some observations about why this is the case. They explain, “coaching is a relational process with a kingdom result. Coaching works because it is consistent with a postmodern value for relationship. Coaching is incarnational, which is consistent with the need for proximity. Coaching is contextual and flexible so that it bends and stretches for the diversity of postmodern ministry expressions.” Coaching is holistic and touches every aspect of the leader’s life. For these reasons I have chosen to use a coaching

---

78 Ibid., 112.
79 Ibid., 113.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid., 216.
approach to help leaders move into their neighborhoods and reach the Nones in the places they find themselves.

The post-Christian environment the people of God find themselves in here in the West has brought to the surface the need for the church to take a fresh look at her mission and purpose. The end of Christendom has moved the church out of the public square and has precipitated the need to move from a church-centric understanding of mission to a more missional approach. This missional approach will be full of challenges and new learning as the church moves back into the neighborhood. We must follow Jesus’s example as we go in a posture of grace and truth. Church leaders will need to lead the way and then coach others to reach out to the Nones and to help bring gospel flourishing to the places we find ourselves. If the Association takes seriously this call, we can hope to make an impact in the communities we inhabit.
CHAPTER THREE: A THEOLOGY OF MISSIONAL SENDING

Chapter three will examine the sending nature of God and how this nature informs our ecclesiology and personal practice. With the end of Christendom, culture in the West is moving away from organized Christian life. To prevent this retreat, the church needs to reexamine her paradigm of mission and discover new ways to engage people with a compelling gospel. The gospel Jesus came to proclaim was the good news of the reign of God. A theology of missional sending requires the people of God to understand they are sent by God to demonstrate and proclaim that the kingdom of God is present. The chapter will explore a holistic gospel and the nature of mission through the lens of the kingdom of God. The chapter will explore the nature of mission as search and rescue, hospitality, and justice. The chapter will also explore how to develop missional practitioners in the way of Jesus. It will lay out a theological rationale for using coaching as the main tool for training.

At the core of God is God’s sending nature. This simple statement holds the key to understanding the essence of the church and her vital mission. According to David Bosch:

During the past half a century or so there has been a subtle but nevertheless decisive shift toward understanding mission as God’s mission. During preceding centuries mission was understood in a variety of ways. Sometimes it was interpreted primarily in soteriological terms: as saving individuals from eternal damnation. Or it was understood in cultural terms: as introducing people from the East and the South to the blessings and privileges
of the Christian West. Often it was perceived in ecclesiastical categories: as the expansion of the church (or of a specific denomination).¹

The understanding of the mission of the church in soteriological and ecclesiological terms has led to a very narrow focus on the expansion of the church and the saving of individual souls from hell as the goal of missions.

The Church of God began as a movement focused on reforming the church and addressing the issue of personal piety. The two major themes of the early pioneers were holiness and unity. According to John W. V. Smith, “there was strong preaching, for example, about the necessity of a genuine experience of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, sanctification by the Holy Spirit, and holiness in everyday living. Beyond these individual doctrines, however, there was a major emphasis on what all of these implied regarding the nature and unity of the church.”² The passion for the message of holiness and unity drove the early pioneers to take their message to the world. Because of an eschatological understand that the return of Jesus was imminent, “almost all of the early preachers became traveling evangelists who went from place to place proclaiming the message of the Church of God.”³ The message spread in North America and Canada as well as to other parts of the world. As the message was received, those who accepted it began to meet in homes and build churches. By necessity, the growing movement organized and created structures to help spread their message. Missions became one program of the church among many. Many churches established missions committees focused primarily on


³ Ibid., 41.
funding missionaries serving abroad. Evangelism was seen in church-centric terms as getting people saved and involved in the life of the church. However, with recent developments in missional theology, the church must begin to reevaluate her understanding of her mission.

God by God’s very nature is a relational being. God created humanity to share in relationship. In Genesis 1:26-28 the writer explains:

> Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Humanity was created to reign with God in covenant relationship. However, humanity disobeyed God and sin entered the world. God has been pursuing the restoration of that relationship since then. According to Reggie McNeal, “God is on a mission. This fact was made plain from the very beginning in the Garden of Eden. God initiated the search for Adam to reengage with him after the fall. God came looking for Adam—not because he didn’t know where Adam was but because he was determined that the entrance of sin into the world would not destroy his relationship with humanity.”

God has not stopped pursuing a relationship with creation, even going as far as “entering time and space in the person of Jesus.” The Gospel of John beautifully describes the moment: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

---

4 Reggie McNeal, *Kingdom Come: Why We Must Give Up Our Obsession with Fixing the Church and What We Should Do Instead*, (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), 88.

5 Ibid., 89.
(Jn 1:14). Jesus’s mission was clear: to proclaim the good news that the Kingdom was here and to restore humanity back to God through his death and resurrection (Mk 1:15; Lk 4:17-21; 9:22).

According to Bosch, “the missio Dei has helped to articulate the conviction that neither the church nor any other human agent can ever be considered the author or bearer of mission. Mission is, primarily and ultimately, the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the church is privileged to participate.”6 Christendom, however, has greatly influenced the way the church in the West views its nature and mission. Darrell Guder asserts that Christendom has left the church virtually void of mission. He states, “Once the Christian religion had become the only allowed religion within the boundaries of Christendom, mission was not seen as the central task of the church. Rather, her theological definition gradually came to focus upon the care and tending of the salvation of her members, who were simultaneously citizens of Christendom.”7 With the end of Christendom, the church needs to reexamine her missional ecclesiology.

**Missional Ecclesiology**

The interplay between culture and the church cannot be taken lightly. The way the church sees herself in relationship to the world is crucial to understanding how ecclesiology affects mission. Missiologist Michael Frost explains how the Christendom “metanarrative defined not only church and state, but also all the individuals and social structures in its orbit of influence.

---


Members of this society were assumed to be Christian by birth rather than by choice.”

As Christendom fades, the church must reevaluate her activity both inside and outside her walls. According to Bosch, “in the emerging ecclesiology, the church is seen as essentially missionary. The biblical model behind this conviction...is the one we find in 1 Peter 2:9. Here the church is not the sender but the one sent.” In this verse, the people of God are seen as a royal priesthood, sent by God into the world to proclaim and demonstrate that the kingdom of God has come.

God has always desired to have a people who would be a witness to God’s activity in the world. God’s call to Abram recorded in Genesis 12 was an invitation to be a blessing and a witness to the nations (Gen 12:1-2). In the words of Bosch,

“The purpose of the election [of Israel] is service, and when this is withheld, election loses its meaning. Primarily Israel is to serve the marginal in its midst: the orphan, the widow, the poor, and the stranger. Whenever the people of Israel renew their covenant with Yahweh, they recognize that they are renewing their obligation to the victims of society….The entire history of Israel unveils the continuation of God’s involvement with the nations. The God of Israel is the Creator and Lord of the whole world. For this reason, Israel can comprehend its own history only in continuity with the history of the nations, not as a separate history.”

Jesus came into the world as the Messiah of Israel, to announce and demonstrate that the kingdom of God was here (Mark 1:15). Jesus established the church as the continuation of his kingdom agenda.

In the post-Christendom context the church finds herself in, it has become increasingly important for followers of Jesus to understand the nature of being the sent people of God. In Acts

---


9 Bosch, 381.

10 Ibid., 18.
1:7-8, Jesus highlights the mission ahead of the early disciples. In response to a question by his disciples of when the kingdom of God would be restored to Israel, Jesus said, “it is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Jesus made it clear that it was the responsibility of the disciples under the power of the Holy Spirit to introduce the kingdom of God as a new reality.

Followers of Jesus have been given a mandate to go into their neighborhoods and witness to the change that comes when a person becomes an apprentice of Jesus and practices the way of Jesus.

How does the understanding of church as witness affect how the church functions?

According to McNeal, “In a church-centric worldview, we confuse what the church does when it gathers—its worship, practice of sacraments, and teaching—as the core of its identity and role.” In a church-centric ecclesiology the identity of the church is tied to its practice. The mission for many churches in the twenty-first century is to develop such attractive, need-based programs that the Nones will come to the church in order to find salvation. In the post-Christendom world in North America, people are not looking for God in the church, assuming they are looking for God at all.

The Church of God movement is a great example of the church-centric focus in the era of Christendom. The early pioneers were dedicated to reforming the church and helping people live holy lives. The church’s focus on personal holiness and participation in church life left little imagination for addressing the conditions of the non-churched in the world. According to Smith, “The tremendous concern the pioneers had for calling people out of sectarian division, for

---

11 McNeal, Kingdom Come, 90.
proclaiming the unity of the church, and for preaching the necessity of personal holiness left little
time for giving major attention to such matters as improving social conditions, for ministering to
the underprivileged, or even extending their evangelistic effort among neglected peoples on the
North American continent.” 12 Like much of Christendom, the early pioneers of the Church of
God were motivated by a soteriology that focused on getting individuals saved and part of a local
church. The classic understanding of salvation as the “redemption of individual souls in the
hereafter, which would take effect at the occasion of the miniature apocalypse of the death of the
individual believer” became the narrow focus which fueled the mission effort. 13 When the
salvation of individual souls from hell in some future reality becomes the primary focus of the
mission of the church, there is little need to worry about the physical condition of the individual.
Jesus’s earthly life becomes a footnote in God’s salvific plan for the world. According to Bosch,
“we stand in need of an interpretation of salvation which operates within a comprehensive
christological framework, which makes the totus Christus—his incarnation, earthly life, death,
resurrection, and Parousia—indispensable for the church and theology.” 14 The church has
separated the life of Jesus from the primary message of Jesus. In order to truly understand the
missio Dei and the nature of the salvation Jesus came to offer, there must be a bringing together
of the life of Jesus with the message of Jesus.

12 Ibid., 107.
13 Bosch, 404.
14 Ibid., 409.
The Nature and Object of Mission: Mission as the Gospel of the Kingdom of God

At the heart of Jesus’s life and message stands the proclamation that the kingdom of God has come near. After Jesus was baptized and tempted in the wilderness, Mark shares for the first time the good news Jesus proclaimed: “The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mk 1:15). Early in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus finds his way into the synagogue and was given the scroll of Isaiah. Luke writes,

Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Lk 4:17-21)

Those who heard these proclamations would have understood them in their Jewish context. The people of Israel were waiting for the coming Messiah who would restore the kingdom back to Israel. What they were not expecting is the way Jesus demonstrated the nature of that kingdom.

Jesus came alerting the nations that God’s kingdom had arrived with his presence. He did not come to reform the Jewish religion. Jesus came to announce the restoration of the world order as God had created it in the beginning. In order to capture the heart and the minds of the Nones in our communities, the church is going to have to expand her understanding of the good news from simply being the promise of heaven when a person dies to include the kingdom of God here and now. Bosch wrote, “mission is more and different from recruitment to our brand of religion; it is the alerting people to the universal reign of God through Christ.”

---

15 David Bosch, Believing in the Future: Toward a Missiology of Western Culture (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1995), 33.
coming of the kingdom of God in Jesus is the mission of the church, rooted in the *missio Dei*.

According to Michael Frost,

> the practice and attitude of mission is rooted in a belief in the kingship of the Triune God. God reigns even if not one soul on the face of the earth acknowledges it. His reign is full and complete, an eternal and nonnegotiable reality, not enlarged nor diminished by the number of people who believe it and yield to it. Our mission then is to alert people to the irrefutable reality, by both announcement and demonstration. It can never be boiled down to simply giving people information on how to go to heaven when they die.¹⁶

But what is meant by the phrase, “kingdom of God?”

Reggie McNeal gives a simple but profound definition of the kingdom of God. He states,

> “The Kingdom of God is life as God intends it to be, his original blueprint for all of creation.”¹⁷

In the first account of creation recorded in Genesis 1, God created everything and declared it to be good. McNeal recounts the creation of human beings by writing, “when it came time to create humanity, [God] got his hands dirty; he became very intimate and personal with his handiwork. After molding Adam ‘of the dust from the ground,’ God did something extraordinary. He breathed into this new being ‘the breath of life’ (Gen. 2:7. God’s first gift to us humans is *life*—straight from himself!).”¹⁸ God intended life to be lived in harmony with creation. However, humanity disobeyed God and brought sin into the world, which McNeal defines as “anything that diminishes life.”¹⁹ God’s mission from the time of the fall has been to restore life as it was originally intended to be lived.

---


¹⁸ Ibid., 24.

¹⁹ Ibid., 26.
Jesus came proclaiming and demonstrating what this kind of life looked like. Some see the saving of individual souls as the primary focus of mission. However, there are others in the church who see the restoration of God’s created order, which includes such elements as justice, healing of the sick, and caring for the poor and the Earth as the priority for mission. According to Bosch, “there is in Jesus’ ministry no tension between saving from sin and saving from physical ailments, between the spiritual and the social.”20 An example of this is found in the Gospel of Luke. The writer recounts:

One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, “Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, “We have seen remarkable things today.” (Lk 5:17-26)

In this story Jesus saw no distinction between salvation from sin and salvation from disease. His mission was to proclaim and demonstrate what life looks like in the kingdom of God: relationship restored, sins forgiven, bodies healed.

The presence of disease and evil in the world brought many opportunities for Jesus to demonstrate that by his presence the kingdom of God was here. There was great tension between

20 Bosch, 34.
the powers of darkness and the light of Jesus. Bosch exerts, “It is in the demon-possessed, so
Jesus’ contemporaries believed, that Satan was able to prove beyond dispute that he was lord of
this world. So if Jesus, ‘by the finger of God’ (Lk 11:20; the parallel in Mt 12:28 has ‘by the
spirit of God’), drives out demons, ‘then the reign of God has come upon you,’” since the very
pillars on which Satan’s supposed reign rests are under assault.21 The mission of the church is to
demonstrate the kingdom of God is here by pushing back the power of evil by the same spirit
that resides in Jesus. This includes the release of the captive both spiritual and physical. The
church must advocate on behalf of the marginalized and the hurting. The good news of the reign
of God, if it is going to impact the Nones, must include the demonstration of the power of God to
restore life as God intended.

Jesus not only demonstrated the kingdom by his actions, but he also told stories and
taught about the nature of the kingdom. Examples include a mustard seed (Mt 13:31-32), a seed
that starts small but produces a large plant, showing the expanding nature of the kingdom. Jesus
talked about the kingdom as yeast that is worked through a lump of dough (Mt 13:33).
According to McNeal, “the presence of the Kingdom infiltrates and influences every aspect of
life.”22 Jesus described the kingdom as a great treasure found by a passerby (Mt 13:44). The
kingdom is of such value, it is worth selling everything one has in order to possess it. Each of
these are examples of the present reality of the kingdom. Jesus taught on many occasions about
the nature of kingdom life. One of the best examples is in Matthew 5-7 where he described the
upside-down way of the kingdom. He used statements like, “you have heard that it was said…

21 Bosch, 33.
22 McNeal, Kingdom Come, 30.
but I tell you” (Mt 5:21-22). He blessed those who were excluded by religious tradition at best or thought to be cursed at worst (Mt 5:3-12). Dallas Willard gives a way to frame and understand these teachings called the beatitudes. He explains, “They serve to clarify Jesus’ fundamental message: the free availability of God’s rule and righteousness to all of humanity through reliance upon Jesus himself, the person now loose in the world among us.”

The gospel Jesus came to demonstrate and proclaim was that the kingdom of God had come. The mission of the kingdom would take on many forms. Jesus’s mission included search and rescue, hospitality, and justice, always done in a specific place for a specific purpose. To gain a hearing with the Nones, the good news we share needs to include these elements as well.

Mission as Search and Rescue

Jesus came announcing his purpose and mission with the words recorded in Mark’s Gospel, “‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!’” (Mk 1:15). The next recorded event in the same Gospel is Jesus’s invitation to Simon and his brother Andrew to “Come, follow me…and I will send you out to fish for people” (Mk 1:17). Mark wanted to make it clear to the reader that Jesus came calling people to follow him into a new way of life. This new way of life required repentance, a changing of direction and a total commitment to Jesus the king. Paul explains how Jesus fit into the mission of God, stating, “For [God] has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Col 1:13-14).

---

Jesus’s rescue mission found its culmination in an unlikely place: on a Roman cross. Jesus’s death, burial, and resurrection are vital in understanding the gospel of the kingdom of God. It was in those events that Jesus was inaugurated as King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus came to rescue the captives from oppressive systems whether they were political, social, or religious. Bosch highlights the fact that Jesus came first and foremost to the people of Israel. Bosch states, “as…Jew [Jesus] understands himself as being sent to his own people. His call for repentance concerns this people… Precisely as Son of Man he has to fulfill the calling of the son of David: to liberate his people.”24 As the Messiah, Jesus would have been expected to bring liberation from Roman oppression and the establishment of a new Jewish kingdom for a select few. However, Jesus turned his attention to those who were Oppressed not only by the Romans but also to those oppressed by the Jewish establishment. According to Albert Nolan:

The people to whom Jesus turned his attention are referred to in the gospels by a variety of terms: the poor, the blind, the lame, the crippled, the lepers, the hungry, the miserable (those who weep), sinners, prostitutes, tax collectors, demoniacs (those possessed by unclean spirits), the persecuted, the downtrodden, the captives, all who labor and are overburdened, the rabble who know nothing of the law, the crowds, the little ones, the least, the last and the babes or the lost sheep of the house of Israel.25

Jesus came to set free those held captive by a variety of physical and social factors that kept the people from experiencing the kingdom of God. Jesus again states his mission plainly when his disciples were questioned by some religious leaders on why Jesus chose to eat and drink with one of the marginalized groups mentioned above. Matthew records the encounter:

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does

---

24 Bosch, 26.

your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” (Mt 9:9-13)

Jesus came to bring healing to the sick, to restore sight to the blind both physically and spiritually, and to rescue the lost and offer salvation to the people of Israel. Even though Jesus came to rescue the lost of Israel, the Gospels give us examples of his ministry to Gentiles as well.26 Jesus also made non-Jews the heroes of his stories. In Luke 10:25-37, Jesus tells the story of a man beaten by robbers and left for dead. Religious leaders walked by, but a Samaritan, who was part of an ethnic group loathed by many of the Jews in Jerusalem, helped the robbery victim.

The Apostle Paul, after his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, was given a call to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Rom 15:16). Paul was sent by the church at Antioch and spent most of his ministry planting churches in non-Jewish territories. According to Glasser, “from that time onward he consciously sought to be responsive to the leading of the Spirit. At times the Spirit checked his movements rather dramatically (e.g., Acts 16:6-7). There were also times of special revelation (e.g., Acts 16:9; 18:9-10; 19:21).”27 The mission of the church continues to be to announce and demonstrate the kingdom of God to those who are lost in sin. Reaching the Nones will require a renewed focus on the value of lost people. Jesus told stories of a lost coin, lost sheep, and a lost son and the value of those items to the one responsible for them (Lk 15). Jesus has entrusted his followers with the task of joining him in his rescue mission to the nations. In our post-Christendom world, rescuing the Nones will require a posture of

---


27 Ibid., 293.
hospitality and service, seeking justice for the marginalized, rather than a posture of power and domination.

Mission as Hospitality and Justice

Jesus came announcing the good news that the reign of God had come in his incarnational presence in the world (Lk 4:17-21). According to Bosch, two elements of the reign of God must be fleshed out if we are to understand the missionary nature of Jesus’s life and ministry. Bosch states, “first, God’s reign is not understood as exclusively future but as both future and already present. We today can hardly grasp the truly revolutionary dimension in Jesus’ announcement that the reign of God has drawn near and is, in fact ‘upon’ his listeners, ‘in their midst’ (Lk 17:21, NEB).”28 It is vital the church understand the importance of the present-and-not-yet element of the kingdom of God if we are to reach the Nones with the good news. The church must be a foretaste of the kingdom of God in this broken world, advocating for justice and offering hospitality to all. According to Bosch, the second fundamental characteristic of Jesus’s kingdom ministry was “an all-out attack on evil in all its manifestations.”29 A few symptoms of evil include injustice, poverty, disease, and broken relationships.

According to N. T. Wright, “every Christian is called to work, at every level of life, for a world in which reconciliation and restoration are put into practice, and so to anticipate that day when God will indeed put everything to rights.”30 Modeling the kind of love that brings about kingdom restoration and peace is how Jesus lived and died. According to Frost, “the essential

28 Bosch, 32.
29 Ibid., 33.
outworking of the gospel is peace: peace with God and with each other through Christ…this idea of *shalom* (peace) is central to the reign of God as confirmed by Jesus’ ministry and his commissioning of his earliest followers.”

After his resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples and spoke peace to them, authorizing them to bring that same *shalom* to the world. The disciples were to bring *shalom* through the empowering of the Holy Spirit, enabling the disciples to mediate the restoration of others to God through the forgiveness of sins (Jn 20:21-23). Frost further explains, “shalom means more than the English word ‘peace’ often conveys. It is more than an inner feeling of serenity and calm. It is more than the absence of conflict. It refers to that much-desired state where things are finally made right between us all. Shalom suggests a restoration of relationship between all peoples, as well as reconciliation between humanity and God.”

One of the ways Jesus accomplished his mission of restoration was by extending hospitality to all.

The nation of Israel placed a premium on hospitality, especially to the stranger. Leviticus 19:33-34 states, “when a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.” Jesus fulfilled that mandate by extending hospitality to outsiders and teaching on the importance of giving food, drink, and clothing and attending to those whom society has written off (Mt 25:34-40). Paul admonished the church in Rome to “be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality” (Rom 12:12-13). In each of these passages

---


32 Ibid.
is an underlying connection to the law of love. Jesus was asked which law was the greatest, to which he replied; “‘love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Mt 22:36-40). Love is at the heart of radical hospitality.

Lance Ford and Brad Brisco explain that the Greek word *philoxenia*, used in the New Testament for hospitality, “is a combination of two words: love (*phileo*) and the word for stranger (*xenos*). It literally means ‘love of stranger.’”\(^{33}\) Often in the world today, love is not the first response individuals have to those who are strangers. Fear and the desire to isolate and protect oneself from strangers are the norm. However, love requires presence, and presence almost always requires risk. According to Ford and Brisco, “We [humans] wrongly assume that one of the greatest needs in our lives is safety. But what we need most is connection and acceptance from other human beings. Locks and fences can never do for our withered souls what genuine friendships can.”\(^{34}\) In order to reach the Nones, there must be resistance to the temptation to allow fear to isolate oneself from them. Lonni Collins Pratt and Daniel Homan contend, “Hospitality is both the answer to modern alienation and injustice and a path to a deeper spirituality.”\(^{35}\) In order for the reign of God to be understood and to draw Nones to the kingdom of God, true *shalom* must be demonstrated by the church.

\(^{33}\) Lance Ford and Brad Brisco, *Next Door as it is in Heaven: Living out God’s Kingdom in your Neighborhood* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2016), 94.

\(^{34}\) Ibid., 99.

True shalom can only come through the gospel of justice as demonstrated and proclaimed by Jesus the Messiah. The most common Jewish understanding of the role of the Messiah was to bring freedom and justice to the oppressed. The Jewish nation had long been oppressed and was hungry for freedom. If the church is to rightly understand the way the Jewish people saw justice, then there needs to be knowledge of the social nature of justice. Frost explains, “shalom cannot just describe our individual relationships with God and others; it should also describe the emergence of a loving and just society at a more corporate level….Indeed, when the prophets of Israel and Judah dream of what the coming kingdom will be like, they never express it as some kind of individualized hope for eternal life.”

Western society is often fixated on the rights of the individual to the detriment of the whole of society. However, justice is not an either-or proposition.

The prophet Micah offers the church an excellent way to think of the progression from individual reconciliation with God to justice for everyone. Micah proclaims, “[God] has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Mi 6:8). The church in the West has focused much energy on helping people walk with God through a personal relationship with Jesus. However, salvation is never only personal. There is always an element of seeking the salvation of communities, nations, and the world. Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson describe the difference between mercy and justice. They explain how mercy “addresses individual symptoms of those outside the church and includes acts of kindness, giving people ‘fish’, shelter, groceries, clothing and medical care. Justice addresses causes that create symptoms, teaching people how to fish and

\[36\text{ Ibid., 108.}\]
how to own the pond, job training, business creation, livable wages, home ownership.” All three elements must be a part of the church’s mission in order to truly be aligned with the missio Dei. Jesus modeled each of these elements in his life and ministry, for example, by feeding and healing individuals (Mt 8; 14:13-21; Mk 6:30-44; Jn 9:1-7). Jesus also challenged the religious system of the Jews that oppressed and excluded the poor and the sick from the religious community making them outsiders. Jesus drove out the money changers who were exploiting the poor (Mt 21:12-13). He also healed on the Sabbath, challenging the Jewish leaders to think differently about their exercise of religion (Mk 3:1-6).

Hospitality and justice require a relationship, both with God and with the people we are living in close proximity with. In order to reach the Nones in our communities, the church will need to come alongside them and partner with them in helping to see the kingdom of God come. The Nones might not recognize how working for justice and offering hospitality are acts, demonstrating the reign of God, so it will require moments of proclamation as well. The gospel and social action go together.

Mission as Contextual

The Gospels tell the good news of Jesus’s entry into the world in a specific time and a specific place. The Gospel of John states, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only son, who came from the Father full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14). Eugene Peterson translates the verse, “The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-

---

37 Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson, Externally Focused Church (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2004), 137.
kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish” (Jn 1:14, The Message). It was not by accident that Jesus entered the world when he did. The religious, political, economic, and social environment was ripe for the invasion of the Messiah. According to Bosch, “the religious climate into which Jesus was born was a time of sectarianism, fanaticism, of religious traffic between East and West, of merchants and soldiers carrying home new ideas, experimenting with new faiths.” Jesus fully understood the world he had entered and understood his role in it. Jesus’s incarnational presence as the Messiah, the one who would usher in the reign of God, was clear in his teaching.

Jesus’s announcement that the kingdom of God was here and his call to follow him were dangerous. The region was under Roman occupation, and allegiance to Rome and her leaders was expected. Those who rejected Rome were met with sure and swift punishment. Glasser asserts, “Those who heard the good news of the Kingdom and who became concerned to receive the forgiveness God offered to its sons and daughters were pressed to make an immediate decision of repentance and faith. “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Lk 9:23). This involved the renunciation of all other loyalties, the unconditional acceptance of the will of God (Mt 16:24-26), and active participation in the task of recruiting others (Mt 4:19).” Jesus’s incarnation, “moving into the neighborhood,” serves as a model for the church today. The churches of the Association must be willing to move into their neighborhoods in order to call the Nones into relationship with them and with the one who reigns: Jesus, Lord. According to Michael Frost, “Incarnational mission means moving into

38 Bosch, 26.
39 Glasser, 186.
the lives of those to whom we believe we’ve been sent. Living in one neighborhood, working in another, playing in another, and churching in yet another doesn’t model to people that Jesus is willing to move into their neighborhoods. It says that if Jesus’ followers don’t want to live here, neither would Jesus.”

One of the goals of the Missional Coaching Handbook is to help the church move out into their neighborhoods, get to know their neighbors, and partner with God in bringing God’s kingdom in that place. Presence matters. David Finch states, “Presence is the way Christ rules. His kingdom and his presence are inseparable.”

Faithful presence is the first step. As the people of God are present to their neighbors, they can begin to identify where sin and brokenness are rooted. The key to kingdom transformation and gospel flourishing is contextualizing the gospel for specific communities. Contextualizing begins by identifying the bad news at work in the specific communities the church finds herself in. Only after identifying what bad news is at work can the church hope to truly proclaim and demonstrate the reign of God in that place. For one of the churches in our Association, the bad news was that neighbors near the church could not take care of their homes. Difficult and sometimes tragic circumstances had led to the neighbors’ inability to maintain their property. Because of city ordinance violations, some of these residents were in jeopardy of losing their homes. Hope was lost. For the people of the church, these were stories of an anti-gospel at work. According to Finch, “the gospel is the announcement that God has fulfilled the promise of Scripture to make the world

---

40 Frost, The Road to Missional, 123.

41 David Finch, Faithful Presence: Seven Disciplines that Shape the Church for Mission (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2016), 37.
right in Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:1-11).”42 The world was not right in Jesus in the lives of these neighbors. A group in the church decided to bring the gospel to these neighbors. Coming alongside the residents in humility and service, the members of the church began first to build relationships with their neighbors. They followed the lead of the homeowners and offered help where it was needed.

Rather than just a project to be taken on and finished, the people of the church saw their neighbors as people to be loved and cared for. Among the residents, projects have been accomplished, fences built, yards cleaned, city ordinance violations addressed. But more important than finishing projects has been the privilege to proclaim good news in the neighborhood. The good news is Jesus is Lord, and wherever his reign is acknowledged, flourishing is experienced.

The churches in the Association each find themselves in unique settings. Some are in urban settings with the unique set of challenges that environment brings. Other churches are in rural or suburban locations. Each of these surroundings presents different issues, and it is imperative for the churches in those communities to incarnate the gospel in their neighborhoods. Wherever Jesus was present, he identified the anti-gospel at work. The bad news took the form of disease, hunger, spiritual isolation, religious arrogance. Jesus proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and brought shalom to those affected by evil. Frost asserts, “to follow Jesus’ incarnational example is to take seriously his message and his modeling that we are sent into a broken, unruly world, in which his reign is not fully understood nor acknowledged. We are sent

42 Ibid., 97.
as his agents of shalom in a world of anger and violence.”43 Being rooted in a community helps the people of God be able to address the unique ways in which the church can partner with neighbors to bring about gospel flourishing in that place. In the post-Christendom environment of the West, the churches in the Association will have an impact in their community and can hope to lead the Nones into a relationship with God only if each church is willing to connect with the unique needs of their community and work alongside their neighbors to see God’s kingdom come.

**Developing Missional Practitioners: Equipping for Mission**

As demonstrated above, God is a missionary God, and the people of God are called to partner with God to bring *shalom* to their communities. During the era of Christendom this mission was thought to be accomplished best by inviting neighbors to church and getting them saved. The mission was centered on the personal salvation of individuals. The assumption was *shalom* was possible only when individuals became good Christians and lived lives of holiness. According to John W. V. Smith, for the early Church of God leaders, “holiness was defined as a life under the complete direction of the Holy Spirit. Negatively it was defined as nonconformity to the world.”44 One of the main focuses of followers of Jesus became avoiding the world and anything that would jeopardize their holy standing before God. In today’s post-Christendom context, the model for mission needs to shift from a church-centric, world avoiding model to a kingdom-focused, incarnational model. This will require a new style of leadership development.

---

43 Frost, *The Road to Missional*, 128.

44 Smith, *A Brief History*, 32.
The type of training used in this project is a missional coaching approach. Missional coaching is a process of asking questions to help pull out of the one being coached the things God is already speaking and moving in their life. A coach comes along side to help develop the God-given potential that lies in each disciple of Jesus. There are many benefits of using coaching. According to Steve Ogne and Tim Roehl, coaching is relational, hands-on, practical, and holistic because it “touches on the calling and character of the leader as well as the life of the faith community and its place in the culture.”

Ogne and Roehls further state, “coaching is useful with leaders of changing churches because coaching is not model-specific; it can be useful in any context. Because coaching is ‘on the job.’ It ensures implementation. Coaching provides guidance and accountability to help leaders successfully implement new learning into the life of the church so that real change is accomplished.”

Missional coaching takes into account what the Holy Spirit is doing inside the person and in the community where the one being coached lives. It is helping the one being coached to get in touch with what God is up to in their neighborhood and to help them to partner with God in those activities.

Coaching at its core is about relationship. If coaching is to be effective, then there will need to be a high degree of trust between the coach and the one being coached. According to coaching expert Tony Stoltzfus, “the first element of the coaching methodology is that it is relationship-based. Two words that describe a great coaching relationship are authentic and unconditional. Authentic relationships are ones in which we are real: we don’t have to maintain


46 Ibid., 20.
different public and private faces. Who we are inside is who we are outside.” Stoltzfus explains that unconditional “means that as a coach you offer full acceptance and unqualified belief to your client, independent of performance. This agape concept comes straight from the gospels.

Stoltzfus cites Luke 6:35-38 where Jesus says:

But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Authentic and unconditional relationships do not just occur by chance; they must be developed. It is up to the coach to take the lead and model transparency.

A second element of good coaching is asking good questions, which is key to the success of the coaching relationship. Becoming compassionately curious and turning that curiosity into well-developed, open-ended questions will help to pull out of the one being coached what the Holy Spirit desires to do in and through them. Jesus was a master at asking the right questions that got to the heart of the person’s desire and motivation. It is recorded in Scripture that Jesus asked over three hundred questions. Jesus asked questions to get to the heart of the person. Mark records an exchange Jesus had with a blind man along the road. Mark writes:

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.”

---


48 Ibid., 90.
Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.” “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road. (Mk 10:46–52)

To those observing the situation, Jesus’s question might have seemed obvious. However, the question placed the responsibility of the direction of the interaction into the hand of the one being asked. Bartimaeus had to own his desire and the faith that Jesus could do something about his situation. A well-crafted question addressing the wants and desire of the one being asked causes them to take ownership of the solution. According to master coach Terry Walling, “What a person or group discovers, they own. Whatever someone owns, they are more prone to implement. Whatever someone implements they will take responsibility for on a long-term basis. The reverse of this is also seen: When someone is told the answer, ownership is often short-circuited causing them to not have responsibility for the implementation and the responsibility of change.” Assuming to know what someone wants or imposing a solution on them often leads the conversation in the wrong direction.

The Missional Coaching Handbook is designed to help the reader think differently about the issues addressed and decide how they are going to act on the information. The role of the coach in the process is to enable the reader to discover for themselves what the Holy Spirit is stirring in their hearts and how they will respond. If done well, the person being coached will be eager to own the action and results. The action should be concrete and achievable for there to be follow-through. This, however, is not the end of the coaching process. There must always be a time to get together again and debrief the action step. This provides a level of accountability that

---

49 Terry Walling, *IDEA Coaching Pathway: Coaching the Person Not Just the Problem* (Leader Breakthru, 2015), 22.
makes implementation of the action step more probable. After Jesus sent his followers into the surrounding villages with instructions to share the good news of the kingdom of God, he brought them back together to debrief the outcome of their mission (Lk 10:1-23). This is often one of the pieces that is missing in true transformation and missional engagement. Releasing the church for ministry to the Nones will require coaching that involves relationship and accountability in order to see real change.

The church finds herself in challenging times. The post-Christendom environment in the West will require the Association to rethink her mission and to recapture an imagination for the missio Dei. The Association’s aging congregations and shrinking numbers are one symptom of the need for such a change. The churches of the Association must address the growth of the Nones in their communities. The proclamation and demonstration of the present-but-not-yet-fully-realized kingdom of God will be required. Evangelism and social action cannot be separated. Michael Frost asserts:

If mission is the alerting of people to the reign of God through Christ, our mandate is to do whatever is required in the circumstances to both demonstrate and announce that kingship. We feed the hungry because in the world to come there will be no such thing as starvation. We share Christ because in the world to come there will be no such thing as unbelief. Both are the fashioning of foretastes of that world to come, none more or less valid or important than the other.

It seems to me then that a core question for all missional Christians is to ask, what does a reign of God through Christ look like in my neighborhood? If the Kingdom of God has come and is overlapping with a broken world in which I live, how can I alert people to it? What does it look like? Where do I see the evidence of it? In fact, it occurs to me that this is a far more legitimate and creative question to ask than the usual questions about how we can attract people to our church programs.”

---

50 Frost, The Road to Missional, 28.
The questions posed by Frost will be key to helping coach and release the people of God in the Association into their communities to work toward gospel flourishing and to usher in the reign of God in their neighborhoods. Ultimately it is God’s mission to the world that followers of Jesus are commanded to participate in. Missions is not just one of many programs the church has to offer, it is the purpose. The leaders in the churches of the Association must coach and release the people in their churches to demonstrate and proclaim that the reign of God is here because of Jesus. The goal is to see Nones acknowledge Jesus as Lord and to work together for justice and the flourishing of our world.
PART THREE

MINISTRY PRACTICE
CHAPTER FOUR: MINISTRY PLAN:
COACHING TO EQUIP MISSIONAL PRACTITIONERS

Like most denominations and movements in the twenty-first century, a majority of the churches in the Association have been introduced to the missional church movement. This has led many churches to develop “missional” outreach programs. These programs, while helping to impact the communities for the kingdom of God, have done little to develop everyday missional disciples who are making a kingdom impact in their own neighborhoods. The influence of Christendom, while weakening in the West, still has a hold on the imagination of the church and her mission. The church is seen as a place where religious things happen. According to George Hunsberger, “this view of the church as a ‘place where certain things happen’ locates the church’s self-identity in its organizational forms and its professional class, the clergy who perform the church’s authoritative activities. Popular grammar captures it well: ‘you go to church’ much the same way you might to a store.”¹ As the church moves into a post-Christendom world, the reintroduction of the missio Dei will be imperative. The church will need to be the sent people of God and not simply a place where religious things happen.

The goal of creating the Missional Coaching Handbook is to give pastors and church leaders a tool to help equip the parishioners in their churches to become missional practitioners. It is designed to help frame the current cultural situation and to alert readers to the need to be active participants in God’s mission to the world. That mission as outlined in the handbook is to introduce Nones to the reign of God through the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. This chapter will look at the theological implications of missional engagement with the Nones and the rationale for a missional coaching approach. The chapter will also explore the theological implications of the holistic nature of the gospel and how this informs the church’s practice and engagement with the Nones. This chapter will also look at the different components included in the handbook. The next chapter will look at how the handbook was field tested and will conclude with an assessment of the success or failure of the handbook in accomplishing the goal of equipping the people of God for the work of ministry (Eph 4:13).

Coaching to Equip Missional Practitioners

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he gave his disciples the mandate to make disciples and to witness to the power of the reign of God through his death and resurrection (Mt 28:18-20; Acts 1:7). During the era of Christendom this mandate was largely seen as an ecclesiological exercise. The church was the place where disciples were made. Discipleship was largely an educational pursuit. According to Ogne and Roehl, in the church, discipleship and leadership “training has focused on the accumulation of knowledge, with some emphasis on personal spiritual formation.” Information would produce transformation. In a postmodern world filled

---

with information, more information does not necessarily equate to more or better disciples. Ogne and Roehl explain, “there is no statistical difference in moral behavior between persons in churches and those outside. In the past fifty years we have failed to win even 2 percent of the population to Christ—and that includes our own children.” In light of the growing population of Nones, a new discipleship paradigm is needed.

This project advocates for a missional coaching approach. Coaching is first and foremost about personal transformation. Coaching can help to draw out of the person being coached the transformation the Holy Spirit is leading them into in life and in mission. Coaching also provides a level of accountability that is absent in many of the church’s discipleship programs. Ogne and Roehl assert that coaching is a useful approach in today’s postmodern climate for the following reasons:

1. Coaching is relational, which is consistent with the postmodern value for relationship and community.

2. Coaching is incarnational because it is hands-on, person-to-person, face-to-face, and it functions in the realm of shared experience beyond knowledge.

3. Coaching is practical because it deals with the real and immediate issues in the life and ministry of the leader.

4. Coaching is holistic because it touches on the calling and character of the leader as well as the life of the faith community and its place in culture.

5. Coaching is contextual because every coaching conversation starts and ends in the life and ministry of the leader rather than starting from a specific model, or even from the coach’s external point of reference.

6. Coaching is missional to the degree that the coach helps the leader understand and engage the culture through missional activity and significant personal relationships with secular people.

---

3 Ibid., 8.
7. Coaching is *flexible* and is an especially useful approach to ministry during this time of changing paradigms. It is “just in time” and can keep pace with rapid change.

8. Coaching is *cross-cultural* because it is centered in the context of the leader and not the coach. It empowers the leader to contextualize ministry principles to his or her culture. Coaching is a powerful way to develop disciples who are sensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit and who truly are equipped to partner with God in God’s mission to the Nones.

The use of a handbook to begin the conversation and to stir the missional imagination of the one being coached is strategic. It is the goal of the handbook to help the coachee begin thinking about the *missio Dei* and how they might partner with God in this venture. God is present and at work in neighborhoods and communities throughout the world. Just as God pursued Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, God is pursuing the Nones. The handbook is designed to bridge the gap between theory and practice and to challenge the coachee to move out into their neighborhood and engage the Nones who live there. At the end of each chapter of the handbook is an example of how the reader can take a practical step into their community. The objective of the coach should be to help establish a concrete response to the material and to the Holy Spirit’s leading and hold the one being coached accountable for the completion of the stated goal. The hope is that the one being coached will begin to build relationships with the Nones in their sphere of influence and have the opportunity, in time, to engage in dialogue about the importance of living in harmony with Jesus.

**The Holistic Nature of the Gospel**

Another goal of the handbook is to expand the reader’s understanding of the gospel and how that informs their participation with the Nones in their community. As stated above, during

---

the time of Christendom the church saw the salvation of individual souls from sin and hell as the primary ecclesiological mission. In the post-Christendom context in the West there is a great need to rediscover a holistic understanding of the gospel as announced and demonstrated by Jesus. Jesus came preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. He announced the kingdom was here because he had come into the world (Mk 1:14-15). Jesus demonstrated the good news of the kingdom of God by healing the sick (Mk 1:40-45; Jn 9:1-12), breaking down social barriers (Jn 4:4-42) and setting captives free (Jn 8:1-11). The good news Jesus brought was about the restoration of relationships, including a person’s relationship with God, with fellow humanity, and with the natural world. In order for the churches in the Association to reach the Nones, there must be a renewed focus on the gospel as proclamation that the kingdom of God is here as opposed to the narrow gospel of salvation from sins, church attendance, and heaven when a person dies. Although these are elements of the gospel, they are not the whole gospel. The average None is not interested in organized religion and does not have a desire to be part of a faith community, even though many do believe in a God.

According to White, “what is most important to understand about the average *none* is that most are not atheists. In truth, most still believe in God, and many pray on a daily basis. They consider themselves spiritual, or at least open to spirituality. The real mark of a *none* is not the rejection of God but the rejection of any specific religion.”

The average None is no longer seeking out the church for answers to life’s questions or for spiritual guidance. It is up to the people of God to meet them where they are. According to White, during the era of Christendom it could be assumed the average person in the West was an eight on a ten-point scale in terms of

---

belief or unbelief in Jesus and his kingdom message. They accepted some of the tenets of Christianity but were not yet followers of Jesus. In our post-Christendom context, the average person in the West would most likely be a three on this same scale, the position White places most Nones. White states, “Today the typical unchurched person is not simply unchurched, but…more than likely he or she is in the *none* category.”

What are the implications of this for the Association in reaching the Nones with the gospel of the kingdom of God? There is a need to meet the Nones where they are spiritually. It is vital that congregants in the churches in the Association see their neighbors as people created in the image of God and not as projects. Followers of Jesus cannot assume that every None sees the world the same way they do or that they understand Christian language. It is crucial that followers of Jesus take a posture of humility and listen to where their neighbors are spiritually and culturally.

The kingdom narrative is about the restoration of relationship. It is imperative for the churches in the Association to move into and incarnate the neighborhoods surrounding their churches. Lance Ford and Brad Brisco describe how “national surveys reveal that less than half the American populace knows most of their neighbor’s names. It is sad to consider that many people live for years in an apartment complex or neighborhood without so much as knowing their neighbors.”

Jesus revealed that the key to a kingdom life was love for God and love for one’s neighbor (Mt 22:35-40). How can we truly love our neighbors if we do not know them? How can we bring the good news of the kingdom of God to our community if we do not know what their struggles are? One of the goals of the missional coaching handbook is to help the

---

6 Ibid., 91

7 Lance Ford and Brad Brisco, *Next Door as It Is in Heaven: Living out God’s Kingdom in your Neighborhood* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2016), xv.
reader contextualize the gospel for their neighborhood and community and embody the gospel in that place. Frost asserts:

Mission consists not only in incarnating the message of Jesus, but in embodying the means by which he presented that message. This moves beyond simply contextualizing the message or aiming at greater cultural relevance. It invites the missionary to live as Jesus lived, to represent his presence with others, not in the hope of gaining Jesus’ approval or winning his favor, but as a response to his grace and mercy to us. It is our non-negotiable missional lifestyle. As rock singer Bono says, “love has to become an action or something concrete…. There must be an incarnation. Love must be made flesh.”

The gospel Jesus proclaimed and modeled must be the same gospel lived out in the neighborhoods occupied by our Association churches in order to gain a hearing with the Nones.

According to White, most young Nones are interested in making a difference in the world even though they resist being part of a community. White states, “only 28 percent say that belonging to a community of people with shared values and beliefs is important to them. Yet they do believe that churches and religious organizations bring people together and help strengthen community bonds (78 percent), and a similar number say religious organizations play an important role in helping the poor and needy (77 percent).” White goes on to say the church “may have lost the opportunity to talk to [the Nones] and do life with them, but we haven’t lost the opportunity to do good to them, before them, and with them—good that will then open their ears and hearts to the message of the gospel.” One key to reaching the Nones in the Association will be to engage with them on issues they care about, such as care for the earth, care for the poor, and equality, all of which are part of the holistic gospel of the kingdom of God. As the

8 Frost, The Road to Missional, 126.
9 White, The Rise of the Nones, 100.
10 Ibid.
Nones see that the church cares about the same things they are concerned about, bridges can be built to introducing them to Jesus the King.

**Components of the Missional Coaching Handbook**

The Missional Coaching Handbook was designed with the understanding that pastors and leaders in the Association would coach the readers through the content. Each chapter was written to address a specific component of missional life to help the reader partner with God in the *missio Dei*. The desired goal is for each participant to create a plan to “move out” into their neighborhood and community as a response to the chapter read. The intent is to move the congregation from consumer to participant in what God is doing already in the neighborhoods they are a part of. As the leader moves into the neighborhood, they would begin to introduce their neighbors to the kingdom of God and partner with them to bring about gospel flourishing for all. Reggie McNeal reminds his readers, “Jesus certainly calls us to a radically different way of life in the Kingdom. It is a call to be people of blessing, to live lives of generosity and grace, service and sensitivity; to be positive examples of joy and contentment in a culture awash in negativity and anxiety.”

The chapters in the handbook were designed to give the reader an imagination for this kind of life in the kingdom.

The introduction of the handbook familiarizes the reader with the cultural shift happening in the West. It presents the concept of the cultural shift from Christendom to post-Christendom and the implications that shift has on the understanding of mission. It also introduces the reader to coaching as a way for leaders to develop missional disciples who help bridge the gap between

---

11 Reggie McNeal, *Kingdom Come: Why We Must Give Up Our Obsession with Fixing the Church—and What We Should Do Instead* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2015), 13.
theory and practice. The introduction also acquaints the reader with the Nones as the focus of missional engagement and the need to expand the church’s understanding of the gospel to a holistic gospel of the kingdom of God.

Chapter one introduces the reader to the “rise of the Nones” and lays out an argument for getting to know the neighborhood and community where the reader lives. The goal would be that the reader listens and learns what the good news is for that place and discovers where God is already at work and how the reader can join God in bringing reconciliation and flourishing to the neighborhood. The chapter also introduces the idea that the church finds herself in a similar place as the nation of Israel while they were exiles in Babylon, and how the church and individual followers of Jesus should respond to this idea.

Chapter two explores the lost art of neighboring and how suburban living and the mobility of society has impacted the neighborhoods and communities the reader lives in. The chapter introduces the reader to the concept of biblical hospitality as a way to begin to see the Nones as people to be loved. According to Hugh Halter, “hospitality is not a fringe idea. In fact, as we watch Jesus, we can pick up on a secret that He was trying to teach: social space creates spiritual space. In other words, when people feel acceptance, they move toward God much more easily.”\(^\text{12}\) The chapter points out how the simple act of sharing a meal with a None can be a potent missional strategy.

Chapter three introduces the reader to the importance of doing missional life with others in community. Jesus often sent his followers out in teams of at least two (Mt 10:1-42; Mk 6:7-13; Lk 10:1-23). The early followers of Jesus lived in close fellowship as they practiced life and

mission together. Mike Breen explains, “The early church gathered in what the New Testament Greek called *oikos*. This word, meaning ‘house’ or ‘household,’ included the householder’s family, slaves and, through their network of relationships, friends, neighbors, and even business associates.”¹³ This chapter challenges the reader to do missional life with others and challenges Western culture’s notion of individualism.

Chapter four deals with the subject of missional posture. Many of the Nones in our communities are skeptical of religious institutions. The post-Christendom environment has led to the need to create open spaces outside the walls of the church to have spiritual conversations with Nones. Jesus was an expert in creating these spaces and for having an open posture toward those who had questions or who lived questionable lives. The chapter identifies a couple of changes needed in order to engage Nones in conversation. One change would be a move from expert to learner. The people of God need to take the posture of a missionary, asking questions about the culture of the neighborhood and learning the cultural language of the community. The church can no longer assume that Nones understand the insider language of the church. In order to reach the Nones, the church will need to balance grace and truth, following Jesus’s example by taking a posture of love.

Chapter five introduces the reader to the concept of the third space. Sociologist Ray Oldenburger identifies three spaces that humans occupy. The first space is our home, where we live. The second place is where we work. Oldenburger explains, “before industrialization, the first and second places were one. Industrialization separates the place of work from the place of residence, removing productive work from the home and making it remote in distance, morality,

and spirit from family life.” The third place, according to Oldenburger, is the place of informal gathering and includes cafes, bookstores, pubs, or hair salons. Third places are any common spaces where people hang out and spend time relaxing and enjoying the company of others. The chapter challenges the reader to identify a third space where they can have access to and begin to create relationships with Nones in their community.

Chapter six deals with the gospel’s connection to reconciliation. The chapter explains how humanity was created to be in relationship with God and all of creation. Living missionally requires partnering with God in God’s mission to bring *shalom* to our communities and neighborhoods. The chapter challenges the reader to begin the process of reconciliation among those they already have relationships with before tackling the challenges of the neighborhood. However, the chapter further challenges the reader to find an area in their community where broken relationships are evident and look for ways to contend for peace and wholeness in that place.

Chapter seven asks the question, what is the gospel for the reader’s community? For many who grew up in evangelical churches, the gospel is about sin management and the need to seek forgiveness for a sinful life in order to gain heaven when a person dies. Too often the gospel story begins with the fall of creation (Gen 3) and not the creation narratives (Gen 1-2) which describe creation’s goodness and humanity’s partnership with God in caring for what God created. The chapter introduces the idea put forth by White that the rise of the Nones requires a

---

14 Ray Oldenburger, *The Great Good Place: Cafés, Coffee Shops, Book Stores, Bars, Hair Salons and other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1999), 16.
shift in how the gospel is presented. The people of God must begin where the Nones are in their understanding of the world.

Many in the West understand that the world is not as it should be. There is a great desire among millennials to make a difference in the world. White contends for an evangelistic approach that begins with a cause such as human trafficking, immigration, or poverty in order to engage the neighborhood with the gospel. God designed the world for good and for human flourishing. The chapter invites the reader to listen well to their neighbors and to seek common ground. As the people of God work alongside the Nones, there must always be a connection to the kingdom of God, to Jesus, and to taking up the cause.

The final chapter of the Missional Coaching Handbook identifies a path to holistic flourishing through discipleship to Jesus. Jesus gave his disciples instructions on how they were to introduce the gospel and develop people into followers of his way. The steps included going to where not-yet-followers-of-Jesus lived, worked, shopped, and played. It was not enough to simply wait for those far from Jesus to come to them. They were also to lead them to a place where they were ready to belong to this society of Jesus through the ritual of baptism. Finally, they were to teach these new followers how to practice the ways of Jesus.

The chapter challenges the reader to see discipleship as a process that begins before the None has made a commitment to Jesus. The chapter calls for a center set approach to discipleship rather than a bonded set approach. Discipleship must be seen more in terms of degrees and less about a moment in time. Discipleship must not simply be about sharing information about Jesus but must also be about modeling the life of Jesus for the apprentice. The model suggested in this chapter is the “relationship triangle” used by Mike Breen to describe
three elements of Jesus’s discipleship process. The three elements include an UP, IN, and OUT dimension.¹⁵ In this model the “UP” dimension is one’s connection with God. The “IN” component describes the way Jesus invited others into deep relationship. The “OUT” element is calling the one being discipled to partner with God in bringing the kingdom of God to the neighborhood. Each of these elements are vital in moving a person closer to a life committed to Jesus. The challenge of this model is spending enough time with Nones so they can see and experience the way of Jesus in our lives.

The goal of the handbook is to help those being coached to see their community through the lens of the kingdom of God and to begin to understand the Nones in their context. It is the hope that each participant in this process will identify ways to faithfully engage their community and to see mission as a way of life rather than a program. The key to achieving these goals is to train leaders who will take people through the handbook and coach for action and not simply to gain more information.

¹⁵ Mike Breen and Steve Cockram, *Building a Discipling Culture* (Pawleys Island, SC: 3 Dimension Ministries, 2009), 64
CHAPTER FIVE:
IMPLEMENTATION, ASSESSMENT, AND RESULTS

The writing of the Missional Coaching Handbook took the better part of a year to complete. I had several people read through the manuscript to give feedback including some pastors in the Association as well as a missionary and former professor of biblical studies at Warner Pacific University. I incorporated their feedback, and the handbook was completed in August of 2019.

The process of recruitment had been going on throughout the writing of the handbook, and after it was completed, an email was sent out to the pastors who had expressed interest in the project as well as to the rest of the senior pastors of the Association. From that email and personal contacts eight pastors expressed interest in walking a group of their lay people through the handbook. After further communication, five pastors agreed to participate. Of those five who agreed to participate, two pastor churches under fifty, two pastor churches of over one hundred and one co-pastors a house church in the Portland metro area. At the end of the time allotted to take people through the handbook, one pastor communicated that he had been too busy and was unable to fulfill his commitment to participate. In all, four pastors coached sixteen parishioners through the handbook.
Training the Coaches

After the coaches were identified, a video meeting was set for November 26, 2019. All five pastors participated in the training. The meeting began with sharing the goals of the handbook, which are to bridge the gap between missional theory and practice for the average person in the church as well as to help the participant build relationships with their neighbors and connect with the Nones in their community. It was explained that the Missional Coaching Handbook would refer to the Nones as the target of the participant’s missional engagement efforts. The participants were given James Emery White’s definition of Nones. According to White, the Nones are “religiously unaffiliated. When asked about their religion, they did not answer ‘Baptist’ or ‘Catholic’ or any other defined faith. They picked a new category: none.”¹ There was a common understanding among the pastors of who the Nones were and the importance of targeting them for missional engagement.

Next, the training moved to a discussion regarding the use of a coaching approach. The question was asked, Why coaching? It was explained how coaching is a relational process where the coach helps the one being coached to discover what the Holy Spirit is stirring in their heart and what they will do about it. According to master coach Terry Walling:

- What a person or group discovers, they own.
- Whatever someone owns, they are more prone to implement.
- Whatever someone implements they will take responsibility for on a long-term basis.²

---


² Terry Walling, IDEA Coaching Pathway: Coaching the Person Not Just the Problem (Leader Breakthru, 2015), 22.
In the training, there was a discussion about the difference between pure coaching and mentoring and how it was important for the implementation of the handbook to use a combination of coaching with some occasional mentoring. Pure coaching allows the one being coached to set the agenda. In this process the various chapters in the handbook would set the agenda for the coaching conversation and would require some mentoring by the coach.

The training continued with an explanation of the IDEA coaching process. The process includes:

- **IDENTIFY**: Identify with the person and clarify the core desire
- **DISCOVER**: Uncover the backstory and surface the challenges
- **EVALUATE**: Discern the Spirit’s leading and pinpoint the issue
- **ACT**: Chart the next steps and affirm the takeaways

There was some discussion on how to ask open-ended questions and how to coach in a group setting.

The training concluded with a discussion of the content of each of the chapters of the handbook, highlighting the importance of helping the participant identify an action step that coincided with the content of the chapter. The pastors were asked to recruit participants and take them through the handbook. They were asked to complete this task and have all evaluations returned by the end of February 2020.

**The Evaluation Tools**

The chosen method of evaluation for the project was a ten-question survey administered through Survey Monkey. The full survey with results is included in Appendix C. The survey was

---

3 Ibid., 19.
anonymous to ensure open and honest feedback. In all, ten people took the survey and completed it in its entirety.

The first two questions ask respondents to evaluate the handbook’s success at increasing the participant’s knowledge about the cultural changes happening in their neighborhoods and their understanding about engaging missionally in their context. Question one is a self-evaluation, asking respondents whether “I have a better understanding of the changing culture around me.” The participants were asked to respond with strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, neither agree nor disagree, or other. If other was checked, the respondent was prompted to explain their answer. Seven respondents (70 percent) marked agree. Three (30 percent) responded strongly agree.

Questions two asked participants to respond to the question, “I have a better understanding of what missional engagement looks like in my neighborhood?” The participants were asked to respond in a similar fashion as question one. All ten (100 percent) responded by marking agree.

The third question asked the participants to evaluate their feeling of preparedness to engage their neighbors and community. This question was designed to help evaluate whether the handbook had accomplished the stated goals of helping bridge the gap between theory and practice. The question was, “I feel better prepared to engage my neighborhood and community?” Again, participants were asked to use the five-point scale in their response. Three (30 percent) responded with strongly agree. Six (60 percent) marked agree. One (1 percent) responded neither agree nor disagree.
Question four dealt with the question of coaching. The question was designed to evaluate the benefit of a coaching model in developing missional practitioners. The question stated, “I feel the coaching I received was helpful in moving me out into my neighborhood and community?” The five-point evaluation scale was used for this question also. Eight (80 percent) responded with agree. One (10 percent) responded strongly agree. One (10 percent) marked other and added the comment, “I was the coach.”

Question five asked participants to evaluate their preparedness to disciple Nones in their sphere of influence. The question was designed to evaluate the handbook’s success at helping those who were coached to help Nones in their circle to move closer in their relationship with Jesus. The question asked, “I am better equipped to disciple the Nones I have a relationship with?” The five-point scale was used. Seven (70 percent) marked agree. Three (30 percent) answered strongly agree.

Question six asked participants to evaluate their participation in identifying and carrying out a “missional move” in response to each chapter. This simple yes or no question stated, “I fully participated in identifying and carrying out a ‘missional move’ for each chapter?” The question was designed to identify whether participants took some action or simply used the handbook to gain more information. This question is key to the evaluation of the handbook because one of the main goals is to encourage missional practice. Six (60 percent) marked no. Four (40 percent) marked yes.

Question seven asked participants if they had identified others who they could partner with on mission. This question is important because Jesus’s plan is for missional practice to be done with others and not simply alone (Lk 10:1-23). The question was, “I have identified others
who I can walk this missional journey with?” The five-point evaluation was used here as well. Seven (70 percent) answered agree or strongly agree. Three (30 percent) answered neither agree nor disagree.

Question eight asked if the participant had identified an area in their community where they could bring shalom. This question is key because another goal of the handbook was to help the reader think differently about the gospel and the good news of the kingdom of God for their neighborhood. The question asked, “I have identified an area in my community that I can proactively work to bring holistic gospel flourishing and shalom?” The five-point scale was used for this question. Six (60 percent) participants marked agree or strongly agree. Three (30 percent) marked neither agree nor disagree. One (10 percent) marked other and responded, “in process.”

Questions nine and ten were open-ended questions. Question nine asked participants, “What was the most helpful and the least helpful chapter in the handbook?” This question was designed to help with the future implementation of the handbook. Responses varied. For example, three (30 percent) said chapter seven was the most helpful while two (20 percent) said it was the least helpful.

Question ten simply asked, “Is there any additional feedback you would like to provide?” It was important to give participants the opportunity to give feedback on the handbook and the process. There were many different responses to this question. Some felt the term “None” should not have been used to designate those being targeted. However, there was no alternative suggested. There were a couple comments about the academic nature of the handbook and the need to simplify some of the content or language for wider use in the church. One comment appreciated the emphasis on building relationships with the target audience. This sentiment was
echoed during a debriefing session with one of the coaches. One comment emphasized the need for more time to fully engage in the missional moves.

Additional feedback was sought from the pastors who coached participants through the content of the handbook. It was important to identify areas of strength and weakness as well as whether these pastors felt the handbook accomplished its stated goals. Interviews were set up with each pastor and they were asked to give open and honest feedback on the handbook. They were asked about the coaching process and whether they would use the handbook in the future to coach others toward missional living.

One of the participating pastors coached his leadership team through the content. He chose to take four weeks and assign two chapters per week. He stated that this approach was not ideal because there was enough content in each chapter to warrant dedicating at least a week for each chapter. He also explained that approaching it this way left little margin to coach his team into a “missional move” for each chapter. Most of the coaches expressed how the content in the handbook had opened some important conversations around missional engagement in their communities.

Analysis

As is evident by the data, the handbook accomplished its goal in helping the participants better understand the post-Christendom landscape found in the West. The handbook also gave participants a better understanding of how to missionally engage their neighborhoods. There was also a strong sense that a coaching approach was helpful in accomplishing these goals. However, according to the coaches, it was too soon to tell whether there would be a long-term effect on the
lives of those who had been coached. Several factors may have contributed to areas where the handbook and the feedback could have been improved.

One of the challenges evident in the overall success of developing missional practitioners was the limited time given to coach people through the handbook and the various ways the coaches accomplished this objective. The coaches were given three months from the date of the training to recruit participants and work through the material with those who agreed to take part. One of the coaches chose to condense the material into a four-week period, assigning two chapters each week. This approach proved less than desirable because participants were not given adequate time to process the material and identify and execute a “missional move” for each chapter. Even those who only assigned one chapter a week expressed the need for more time to accomplish the goals set to engage their context. The data showed most of the participants who filled out the survey (60 percent) did not fully participate in the “missional moves.” Various factors could have attributed to this. However, the survey did not ask why.

Another challenge that may have contributed to the difficulty faced by the coaches in seeing more missional engagement was the age of the participants. Although this was not one of the questions on the survey, many of the coaches reported that most of those who were coached through the handbook were over the age of sixty. At least three participants were over the age of eighty. Coaches reported the challenge in getting their older participants to fully participate and to fill out the online survey. The academic nature of parts of the handbook were mentioned by one coach as being challenging for some of the older participants.

Finally, there seemed to be a different level of participation between those who came from a traditional ministry setting and those in the house church setting. According to the
coaches interviewed, for many in the traditional setting the concepts presented in the handbook were new to the participants. For those in the house church, who daily participate in the lives of their neighbors, the concepts were familiar. Even though there were varying degrees of knowledge about the concepts in the handbook, all the coaches praised the handbook for opening dialogue surrounding the idea of missional engagement.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The hope for this project was that it would be a catalyst for starting a revolution of missional practitioners among the participants in the Association and beyond. The cultural landscape is changing from Christendom to post-Christendom. This changing landscape has created the necessity for the churches in the Association to move from an ecclesiology of consumption to a focus on becoming a band of missional practitioners. The declining attendance at many of our Association churches has also given rise to a need to be reintroduced to the missio Dei as defined by David Bosch and others. The growing number of Nones in our communities requires the churches in the Association to equip her members to be missionaries in their neighborhoods and communities.

The stated purpose of this project was to create a Missional Coaching Handbook that can be used as a training tool to equip parishioners in the Association to engage and disciple the Nones, in their unique context, toward holistic gospel flourishing. The assumption behind this project was that the parishioners in the Association’s churches understood that the world is changing but needed to comprehend how it is changing and what is required of them to make a difference in the lives of the Nones in their communities with the gospel. According to the feedback from those who participated in the project, one of the big wins was helping participants better understand the post-Christendom environment they live in. There was consensus that the handbook opened much needed space for dialogue surrounding missional concepts.

One of the disappointments surrounding the implementation of the handbook was the relatively small number of participants. This could be attributed to several factors. The time of year for recruitment and implementation could have played a role. The season between
Thanksgiving and the start of the New Year tends to be a slow time for programing, except for holiday themed events, in the life of the church. Given this reality, the period for implementation for those who coached persons through the content of the handbook was tight. Additionally, several pastors I attempted to recruit cited busy lives and schedules for not wanting to participate. Although these pastors saw a need for this kind of engagement with their parishioners, the demands of ministry keep them from participating. Despite this disappointment, several important learnings emerged from this project.

The first was the importance of a coaching model for successful missional engagement. According to the assessment tool, all coachees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I feel the coaching I received was helpful in moving me out into my neighborhood and community.” The importance of asking good questions and holding persons accountable to an action proved to be key. However, old paradigms are hard to change, and some of the pastors expressed frustration with the lack of full participation. One pastor expressed concern that some of the participants approached the study as they would with other book studies that focused on gaining knowledge without requiring much action.

Several factors could help to increase the level of participation and the overall effectiveness in developing missional practitioners. One would be a slower and more deliberate approach to the use of the handbook. As stated earlier, the compressed timeline left little margin for identifying and completing the “missional moves” in the handbook. More time to develop an understanding of the concepts in the handbook and an imagination for how to embody the material could help with the success.
Another factor that could lead to success in developing long-term missional practitioners would be to view the handbook as a primer, understanding it as simply an initial step toward missional engagement. It would be naive to think that after eight weeks, fully equipped missional leaders would emerge. Using the handbook as an initial step toward a comprehensive strategy on the way to a missional life would be beneficial. Future development of the Missional Coaching Handbook could include a final chapter with discussion of plans for continued participation in the *missio Dei*.

Another component that could help with the success of developing missional leaders could be the coaching of individuals. All the coaches that used the Missional Coaching Handbook used it in a group setting. There are benefits to this approach as it provides a variety of perspectives from those being coached. The amount of creative energy often increases as people dialogue both with the material and with each other. However, there may also be a benefit of using the handbook in a one-on-one setting. The amount of time for personal processing and the identification of a “missional move” could be beneficial. This theory would need to be tested further and may undermine the desire to have people participate in missional engagement together.

A second learning from the feedback received was the need to perhaps rework some of the handbook to make it less academic and to include more stories and examples. Because of the academic nature of this final project, there was an expectation among some of the participants that the handbook would include some academic language. However, at least two comments in the feedback suggested a less academic approach would be helpful. If the handbook is to be useful to a constituency with a wide-ranging academic makeup, it may be important to choose
language in future iterations that is more accessible to all. The inclusion of stories and examples could also help to engage readers in the handbook.

A final learning was that there is a deep need for resources and spaces for those in our Association to explore missional concepts and to engage in missional practices and experiments. While the Missional Coaching Handbook created for this project has its limitations, there was a consensus among those who participated in the project that it was a valuable tool for creating space to imagine ways to participate in the *missio Dei*.

One of the coaches told the story of inviting the group being coached through the handbook to hold one of their group sessions at a local coffee shop. The coach brought some cards with simple conversations starters on them. The coach used these cards to engage the group in dialogue. After doing this for a while, the coach asked the group to look around at the other patrons and imagine what it would be like to engage them in this type of activity and to get to know them, to truly listen to their stories. The coach challenged the group to find a third space in the community and do that very thing. This is a great example of the type of creativity that is needed from the leaders and the churches in our Association in order to engage the Nones in our community with the holistic gospel of Jesus. The Missional Coaching Handbook holds some promise in opening space for dialogue and moving the Association forward on mission.
APPENDIX A

OUTLINE OF THE MISSIONAL COACHING HANDBOOK

Missional Coaching Handbook

Introduction
- A Post-Christendom world.
- The sending nature of God, the missio Dei.
- The art of coaching.
- The rise of the Nones.
- Holistic Gospel flourishing.
- Becoming a missional practitioner.
- Sample coaching questions.

Chapter 1: Living in a Post-Christendom World
- Engaging a post-Christendom world.
- Understanding our communities.
- Exegeting your neighborhood.
- Who are the Nones in your neighborhood?
- Missional Moves: Do some neighborhood exegesis. Take some time to simply walk around your neighborhood and observe. Take a look around with fresh eyes. What do you see, hear, smell, feel and taste?
- Sample coaching questions.

Chapter 2: The Art of Neighboring
- Seeing your neighbor through Jesus’ eyes.
- The lost virtue of hospitality.
- Make your home a (Pub)lic place.
- Missional Moves: Fill in your neighborhood Tic-Tac-Toe grid. Invite some neighbors into your home for a meal.
- Sample coaching questions.

Chapter 3: Don’t Go It Alone
- The importance of partnering with others on mission.
- Creating a missional community.
- Missional Moves: Invite two people to explore the possibility of starting a missional community. One person should come from your faith community and the other from the community.
- Sample coaching questions

Chapter 4. Posture Matters
- Rethinking the approach to sharing the “good news.”
- The need for openness not judgment.
- Jesus is our model.
- The power of asking not telling.
- To err on the side of grace.
• Missional Moves: Interview someone from a different faith tradition or sexual orientation or someone who identifies as a None, with the intent to learn as much about them as you can. Include questions about their spiritual pilgrimage.
• Sample coaching questions.

Chapter 5: The Space We Occupy
• The three places we occupy in our community.
• The importance of Third Places.
• A description of a Third Place.
• How to utilize a Third place.
• Looking for responsiveness (People of Peace).
• Being Holy Spirit led.
• Missional Moves: Choose a Third Place (pub, coffee house, park, café) and become a regular.
• Sample coaching questions.

Chapter 6: Be a Champion of Reconciliation
• The truth about reconciliation.
• Reconciliation begins at home.
• Partnering for justice in your neighborhood.
• Missional Moves: Find a person or group you need to reconcile with and meet with them. Find a place where justice is being withheld in your community and have a conversation with someone affected by the injustice.
• Sample coaching questions.

Chapter 7: What is the Gospel for your Community?
• Making the gospel culturally relevant.
• The gospel is not just about heaven when I die.
• Leading with a cause.
• Identifying the gospel for your community.
• The gospel as holistic flourishing.
• Missional Moves: Write out the gospel for your community and share it with a None.
• Sample coaching questions.

Chapter 8: The Path to Holistic Flourishing
• The need to know where we are going and leading others.
• The goal of discipleship.
• Developing a discipleship pathway.
• The relationship triangle (UP, IN, OUT).
• Center set discipleship.
• Missional Moves: Create a picture of a discipleship pathway and share it with a friend.
• Sample coaching questions
APPENDIX B

SELECTIONS FROM THE MISSIONAL COACHING HANDBOOK

a missional coaching handbook:
Practicing the way of Jesus in our neighborhoods

By Jerry Davisson
INTRODUCTION

There has been a great deal of literature written about the missional church over the past twenty years.¹ Many pastors and church leaders have bought into the theological concepts presented in the volumes produced. However, there has been little traction in developing missional practitioners who are equipped to engage their community with the transforming message of the Gospel. The handbook you hold in your hand is an attempt to bridge the gap between theory and practice. It is my desire to provide some tools to understand both the changing culture we live in and our call as disciples of Jesus to help others become followers of Jesus. This handbook should be used as a guide to not simply think better about missional theology but to help move you out among people who need the life changing message of Jesus in their lives.

One of the significant cultural shifts we face in the West is the demise of Christendom. Missiologists Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch describe what Christendom is: “Christendom is the name given to the sacral culture that has dominated European society from around the eleventh century until the end of the twentieth. Its sources go back to the time when Constantine came to the throne of the Roman Empire and granted Christians complete freedom of worship and even favored Christianity, thereby undermining all other religions in the empire.”² Christianity evolved from being a

---

¹ See authors such as Leonard Sweet, Michael Frost, Alan Hirsch, David Bosch, Darrell Guder, Reggie McNeal for more information on the missional church.

movement of people on the margins of society to playing a central role in the shaping of culture.

Christendom has greatly influenced the way the church in the West views her nature and mission. According to Darrell Guder, Christendom has left the church virtually void of mission. He states, “Once the Christian religion had become the only allowed religion within the boundaries of Christendom, mission was not seen as the central task of the church. Rather, her theological definition gradually came to focus upon the care and tending of the salvation of her members, who were simultaneously citizens of Christendom.”

In many parts of the Western world, Christianity as a religion has lost, or is losing, its position as the prominent voice in the shaping of culture. Fewer people are seeking answers for life’s biggest issues from the church. Instead they are looking to other religions or no religion at all. Where once it was enough to build a church and provide religious services and people would come, this is simply not the case anymore. The post-Christendom landscape has led to the need for the church to take a fresh look at her purpose. The church needs to explore the sending nature of God and to see again how God’s nature informs our missional practice.

In the era of Christendom, the church saw sending as part of the church’s program rather than part of its nature. Most of the time, this involved sending missionaries to foreign lands to convert nonbelievers to Christianity. However, according to Guder, “Mission is not something the church does, as part of its total program. No, the church’s essence is missional, for the calling and sending action of God forms its identity. Mission

---

is founded on the mission of God in the world, rather than the church’s effort to extend itself.” Missional is not another word to describe a church growth strategy. Missional encompasses the very essence of who God is and what the church is called to be.

At the very core of God is God’s sending nature. This simple statement holds the key to understanding the essence of the church and her vital mission. According to David Bosch,

During the past half a century or so there has been a subtle but nevertheless decisive shift toward understanding mission as God’s mission. During preceding centuries mission was understood in a variety of ways. Sometimes it was interpreted primarily in soteriological terms: as saving individuals from eternal damnation. Or it was understood in cultural terms: as introducing people from the East and the South to the blessings and privileges of the Christian West. Often it was perceived in ecclesiastical categories: as the expansion of the church (or of a specific denomination). This understanding of the mission of God has led to a very restricted focus of evangelism as the saving of individual souls from sin. This has left out other important Gospel issues such as justice, human flourishing, and the restoration and care of God’s creation.

Missional theology has been influenced by the important doctrine known as the missio Dei. The classic definition of this doctrine, according to Bosch, is “God the Father

---


6 The Greek word eudaimonia can be defined as well-being or flourishing. It is a term used by Aristotle to describe a person who lives a virtuous and moral life. When I use the term human flourishing or gospel flourishing in this handbook, I am referring to a life of shalom or peace where the well-being of everyone is sought after. This type of shalom can only be achieved as a person lives a life of discipleship to Jesus. Gospel flourishing comes as we learn to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves (Mt. 22:35-40).
sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit." This idea was expanded to include the three persons of the Trinity sending the people of God into the world. Bosch further explains, “In attempting to flesh out the missio Dei concept, the following could be said: In the new image mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God…It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfil in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church.”

In a post-Christendom context, it has become increasingly important for followers of Jesus to understand the nature of their “sentness.” In Acts 1:7-8 Jesus explains this nature to his disciples. Jesus said, “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” As followers of Jesus have been given a mission is to go into their neighborhoods and witness to the change that comes as they apprentice themselves to Jesus and practice his way of inhabiting the earth.

As the church is moved to the margins of society, it has become vital for pastors and church leaders to enable those they influence to live as missionaries in their neighborhoods, communities, and the larger world. In this handbook I am advocating for a coaching model to develop missional leadership. Why use a coaching approach when

---

7 Bosch, 339.
8 Ibid., 400.
9 All Scripture quoted is from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.
attempting to develop missional practitioners? I am a firm believer that Holy Spirit-guided coaching can be a great tool for leaders to develop missional practitioners. Coaching is a technique of asking questions to help pull out of the one being coached the things that God is already speaking and moving in the coachee’s life. A coach comes along side to help develop the God given potential that lies in each disciple of Jesus.

There are many benefits of using coaching. According to Steve Ogne and Tim Roehl, coaching is relational, hands on, practical, and holistic because it “touches on the calling and character of the leader as well as the life of the faith community and its place in the culture.”10 In this handbook I will be providing some sample coaching questions for each section that can be used as a starting point for the coaching conversation. The quality of the coaching will be directly tied to the quality of the questions being asked. I encourage leaders who want to help parishioners grow in their missional capacity to develop their coaching skills and repertoire of great coaching questions. I love the quote by Tony Stoltzfus, who says, “Questions have the power to change lives. They can jump-start creativity, change our perspective, empower us to believe in ourselves, push us to think things through or call us to action.”11 My prayer for this handbook is that it opens up the imagination of God’s people for their own discipleship and the flourishing of their communities.

---


Ogne and Roehl further state, “Coaching is missional to the degree that the coach helps the leader understand and engage the culture through missional activity and significant personal relationships with secular people.”\(^{12}\) In this Missional Coaching Handbook I will be referring to the Nones as the target of our missional engagement efforts. According to James Emery White, Nones are the “religiously unaffiliated. When asked about their religion, they did not answer ‘Baptist’ or ‘Catholic’ or any other defined faith. They picked a new category: none.”\(^{13}\) The pluralistic culture we live in and the changing context full of religious and non-religious options has led to a growing segment of the population moving away from institutional forms of religion. According to the Pew Research Center report titled “‘Nones’ on the Rise: One in Five Adults Have No Religious Affiliation,” released October 9, 2012,

The number of Americans who do not identify with any religion continues to grow at a rapid pace. One-fifth of the U.S. public—and a third of adults under 30—are religiously unaffiliated today, the highest percentages ever in Pew Research Center polling. In the last five years alone, the unaffiliated have increased from just over 15% to just under 20% of all U.S. adults. Their ranks now include more than 13 million self-described atheists and agnostics (nearly 6% of the U.S. public), as well as nearly 33 million people who say they have no particular religious affiliation (14%).\(^{14}\)

Since this poll was released, the number of Nones has increased exponentially, particularly among younger generations. Understanding what is driving this trend is

\(^{12}\) Ogne and Roehl, 28.


important and has implications for how we engage those needing to be reached with the gospel. Many of these implications will be fleshed out in this handbook.

As Bosch asserted above, the church has often seen her mission as simply getting people “saved.” In Christendom, individual salvation and church participation made up much of the mission of God for the church. While these are both important parts of the mission, they are not the whole. This handbook will look at the holistic nature of the gospel and how that informs our missional engagement. It is important to understand there is more to the gospel than personal salvation and heaven when we die. Jesus came proclaiming the kingdom of God was near (Mt. 4:17).\textsuperscript{15} Participating in the kingdom of God requires “repentance,” a changing of allegiance from self-rule to God-rule in our lives and world. This new life comes as a person proclaims Jesus as Lord of their lives and should lead to gospel flourishing. The word “gospel” can simply be translated “good news.” The gospel of Jesus not only includes the restoration of an individual’s relationship with God through his life, death, and resurrection. It also includes the flourishing of communities and the natural world as well.

As followers of Jesus seek to live missionally in their communities, it is not enough to be concerned about the salvation of individuals. We must be equally involved with issues of justice, hospitality, reconciliation, and care for the planet. Becoming a missional practitioner is about living in the way of Jesus. It requires engaging the world

\textsuperscript{15} Arthur Glasser explains the kingdom of God as the rule and reign of God over creation. He states, “God’s rule is both universal and covenantal. Since God created the heavens and the earth by his word and the first human couple in his image it was inevitable that from that time onward God would exercise a loving and providential care over his creation.” Announcing the Kingdom: The Story of God’s Mission in the Bible (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 22.
in such a way that others will want to experience the same flourishing we are experiencing as followers of Jesus. Michael Frost says the lives of Christians ought to be as intriguing to others as a movie trailer. Frost says, “Trailers are tasters, short film versions of the soon-to-be-released feature, and they usually include the best special effects or the funniest scenes or the most romantic moments, depending on the film, of the forthcoming feature…if the church does its job well, people will see what it does and say, ‘I want to see the world they come from.’”16

At the end of each chapter in this handbook you will find examples of “missional moves.” Missional moves are practical suggestions for putting into practice the things you are learning. These are just suggestions. As you engage with the content of this handbook, be open to what the Holy Spirit has to say to you. Ask, how can I engage my context in a way that will lead to gospel flourishing? Allow your coach to help you to be creative in exploring ways to live out the gospel in your specific context.

This handbook is designed to move beyond the excitement of theory into the challenging work of practice. This is not an easy transition. However, as you give yourself over to the work of the gospel and to the Holy Spirit, your life will be transformed. This transformation should lead to a desire to see God’s Kingdom come where we live and lead us to be catalysts for gospel flourishing among our neighbors.

---

SAMPLE COACHING QUESTIONS

What are some signs of the demise of Christendom in your community?

How have you experienced the challenges the end of Christendom has on your church or personal life?

How would you define missional?

In as few words as possible answer the question, what is the gospel?

Describe your level of missional engagement in your neighborhood.

What is your faith community doing to reach the Nones in your area?
CHAPTER 1

LIVING IN A POST-CHRISTENDOM WORLD

In my work as District Pastor I hear stories from many of the pastors and leaders in our movement. Frequently the stories are of declining or plateauing church attendance and the struggle to keep and attract young attendees. Millennials are leading the charge away from the church as just one symptom of the post-Christendom world we live in. “Millennial” is the name given to the generation born between 1980 and 1996. This generation makes up a large segment of the Nones, many of whom were formerly connected to a church or religious organization as children. Seventy-six percent of Nones have a church background and, according to David John Seel’s understanding of the situation, the church is helping to grow the number of millennials who are leaving the church.¹

Whether you agree with Seel or not, it is important to understand what is fueling the rise of the Nones. Much of it has to do with the perception of the church in the eyes of the world. According to James Emery White, the church is under fire because of the view that Christians are “overly entangled with law and politics, filled with hateful aggression, and consumed with greed.”² These attitudes were documented in a survey done by Gabe Lyons and David Kinnaman and published in their book, Unchristian. Lyons and Kinnaman surveyed a large group of young “outsiders,” described as “those looking at the faith from the outside. This group includes atheists, agnostics, those affiliated with a


faith other than Christianity (such as Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Mormonism and so on), and other unchurched adults who are not born-again Christians.”³ They found these young outsiders were not interested in what the church had to say because, in their words, the church is “antihomosexual, judgmental, hypocritical… old-fashioned, too political, out of touch… insensitive to others, boring, not accepting of other faiths, [and] confusing.”⁴

I recently had a conversation with a young millennial who explained how the church he attended for many years had lost him because of their rigid stance on some of the theological issues he was struggling with. He said the church would not allow him the space to ask questions without calling into question his desire to follow Jesus. In general, millennials are not closed to spiritual things including following Jesus, but they are finding other places, they perceive as safe, to ask their spiritual questions.

In our post-Christendom world, the church no longer enjoys a place at the center of the community square. In fact, we are living in what many sociologists refer to as a post-Christian culture here in the West. The church has been pushed to the margins of society, or worse, is now looked at as part of the problem facing our culture. Consequently, as followers of Jesus move out into their neighborhoods on mission to help introduce people to Jesus, we are in for a cold reception by many.

In this post-Christian, pluralistic environment, how are we to engage our neighbors? In the time of the prophet Jeremiah, the nation of Israel found itself in

---


⁴ Ibid., 28.
Babylonian captivity. Many false prophets had predicted the exile would not last long and Israel would be rescued by God and return to Jerusalem very soon. Amid these optimistic predictions Jeremiah spoke on behalf of God and said:

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ‘Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.’ Yes, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ‘Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them,’ declares the Lord. (Jer. 29:4-9)

There are those in our world today who feel the church in the West is in the same situation as the nation of Israel. We may not find ourselves in a foreign land, but culture has changed at such a rapid pace that it feels like we are. According to Michael Frost, “The experience that faced the Jewish exiles mirrors the church’s experience today. In fact, the biblical metaphor that best suits our current time and faith situation is that of exile. Just like Jewish exiles, the church today is grieving its loss and is struggling with humiliation.” Frost cites Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann as warning exiles of the danger of becoming so preoccupied with self and our survival that we fail to look outside ourselves to the larger reality and mission before us. It is challenging to know how to respond as exiles.

---


How has the church responded? According to Michael Frost and Christiana Rice, “For the past half century the church in America has put its culture-shaping energy into a broadly two-pronged approach of planting and growing churches, and entering the political process, particularly on certain moral ethical issues.” There has been an attempt, particularly from conservative Christian groups, to seek to influence the post-Christian culture through political means. The idea is that if “Christians” simply pass the right legislation or elect the right candidate, then we will return to our former Christian values as a nation. Clearly this strategy has not been effective as the research above indicates. This strategy has fueled the rise of the Nones as they have become skeptical of the church’s political involvement.

Frost and Rice further explain how others have called for the withdrawal of the church from society. However, they note,

The exiles were called neither to fight Babylonian culture, nor to retreat from it. They were urged to inhabit it… it’s a third way between fighting and retreating. We believe it is not time for the church to retreat, but to lean into the rhythms of the societies we are an integral part of, recognizing our shared humanity with others. Only then can we truly be catalysts for transformation and, like salt and light, shift the cultural values slowly but surely as a participatory community of grace, love and mercy.

Missional engagement is about developing an understanding of the culture which surrounds us and the communities of which we are a part. It requires us to know our neighbors and to be able to articulate the gospel in our neighbor’s context. What might

---


8 Ibid., 22.
the good news look like to the Nones in our neighborhood? It might begin with an offer of hospitality to a neighbor who has just moved into the neighborhood.

The place to begin our missional engagement is the community where we live. Place matters. It is no accident you find yourself living in the city or town where you currently reside. Perhaps you found yourself there because of proximity to family, work, or school. Just like the nation of Israel, God has a purpose and a plan for the community you reside in. God has positioned you in this place to help bring gospel flourishing to your neighborhood. If you want to be part of what God is up to, it is important to get to know all you can about your community.

Getting to know your community starts with asking the right questions. As the Sesame Street song asks, “Oh, who are the people in your neighborhood?” What is the ethnic make-up? What is the economic standing of your neighbors? What is the religious history of your neighbors? Most importantly, what is their story? If we hope to have an impact in our neighborhoods and move people toward gospel flourishing, we are going to need to do some neighborhood exegesis. What is that, you might ask? “Exegesis” literally means a critical interpretation and is most often used to describe a way of looking at a passage of scripture. Exegeting our neighborhood is a way to describe the act of taking a careful look at our neighborhood and identifying where God is present and at work in the lives of those around us. Exegeting our neighborhood is about listening to our neighborhood with a sensitive ear, listening to God for clues to where God is moving and where God would have you press into the people and places you see.

---

As with any exegetical undertaking, you must approach the neighborhood with a posture of learning. Regardless of the amount of time you have lived in your neighborhood and community, you must take a new look with a fresh set of eyes. As we seek to connect with the Nones in our neighborhood, we need to find out where they live, where they spend their time and what type of interaction they have with their neighborhood. Spend some time observing their rhythms. We all have a natural flow to our lives. See if there is any difference between your rhythm and theirs. If we are to have an impact in our neighborhood and to be a catalyst for Kingdom flourishing, we must understand the place where we live. We need to ask, what is the “good news” for the people who live in this place? Where is God already at work? And how can I join God in the work of reconciliation in my community?
MISSIONAL MOVE

Do some neighborhood exegesis. Take some time to simply walk around your neighborhood and observe. Take a look around with fresh eyes. What do you see, hear, smell, feel, and taste?

SAMPLE COACHING QUESTIONS

How have you experienced the millennial migration from church?

What are some of the challenges and opportunities living in a post-Christendom world?

Who are the people in your neighborhood? What is their ethnic and religious make-up?

What difference does the post-Christendom context make in your faith journey?

Reflect on Jeremiah 29. What are some of the similarities and some of the differences of the situation you find yourself in?

In what way do you feel like an exile?
CHAPTER 2

THE ART OF NEIGHBORING

To get to know my neighbors, I did a neighborhood assessment audit. The task was to interview eight of my neighbors to identify what assets they brought to help our neighborhood be a place of peace and safety for all. At the time of the project I had lived in my neighborhood for about a year and a half. During that time, not one of our neighbors had tried to get to know my wife and me in any tangible way. I decided to break the ice with an easy question. I asked, “What are the things that make for a great neighborhood?” Every one of the neighbors I spoke with answered the question in a similar way. They said, a great neighborhood is a place where you know your neighbors and can rely on them in a time of need. I found their answers fascinating because as I stated earlier, none of them had made any attempt to get to know Kris and me. Incidentally, we had made little effort to get to know them as well.

To say we have lost the art of neighboring is an understatement. Part of the issue is the design of our modern suburban living. According to Lance Ford and Brad Brisco, “In recent years, critics of the modern suburban model have pointed to the lack of elements that foster natural interaction among residents. Besides the push indoors for air conditioning, television, and the internet, neighborhoods suffer from a lack of commercial enterprises, sacrificed on the altar of zoning laws.”¹ In my neighborhood, the nearest retail space is two miles away. This

¹ Lance Ford and Brad Brisco, Next Door as It Is in Heaven: Living out God’s Kingdom in Your Neighborhood (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2016), xiv.
necessitates the need to drive in order to shop or enjoy my favorite beverages at the local pub or coffee shop.

Besides the logistical issues mentioned above, followers of Jesus have, in many instances, failed to take seriously the imperative of Jesus to love God and love our neighbor. Loving our neighbor requires us to see them as Jesus sees them, as people created in God’s image, dearly loved by God, regardless of class standing, nationality, or religious connection. When Jesus was pressed by a religious scholar as to who his neighbor might be, Jesus responded with a story that made the action of neighborliness to the vulnerable the criteria for identifying and becoming the type of neighbor God desires us to be (Lk. 10:25-37). In this story, Jesus highlighted the importance of hospitality and care for our neighbor as the key to neighboring.

Christine D. Pohl reminds us that “vulnerable strangers in need of welcome are usually marginal to the society because they are detached from significant human relationships and social institutions; often they are overlooked and undervalued by people more centrally situated.”

Jesus tells several stories about the kingdom of God. In one story he tells of the Son of Man’s return and the separation that will take place based on the actions of hospitality done to or withheld from one’s most vulnerable neighbors. He talks about the hungry and thirsty, the homeless and the cold, the sick and the prisoner (Mt. 25). He makes the criteria of his judgment how a person responded to the needs of these neighbors. Jesus makes a telling statement at the end. He says, “Whenever you failed to do one of these things to someone who was being

---

2 Christine D. Pohl, Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 105.
overlooked or ignored, that was me—you failed to do it to me” (Mt. 25:45, The Message). In what way do you see the most vulnerable in your community as Jesus? What difference might that make?

A word of caution is needed at this point. When talking about offering hospitality to those on the margins, it is easy to approach the subject from a position of power and weakness. It is easy for those who have resources to give them in a manner that diminishes the value of the one being served. Pohl reminds us, “There is a complex dance between recognizing our own need, ministering to those in need, and recognizing their ministry to us. The helper must also be able to receive—especially from those who look like they have little to offer.”³ Pohl goes on to remind the reader, “Many of us are situated so centrally that we have to make conscious decisions to experience marginality in our lives.”⁴ Allowing ourselves to be vulnerable is a key to true hospitality and recovering the art of neighboring.

The term hospitality often brings about visions of dinner parties and entertaining guests in our home. When we think of hospitality in these terms, the focus is on ourselves as the one offering hospitality. We fail to extend hospitality because of the inconvenience and vulnerability it might cause us. We use excuses like “the house is a mess,” or “we are too busy.” However, as Lonni Collins Pratt points out, “hospitality does not focus on the goal of being hospitable. It is

³ Ibid., 119.
⁴ Ibid., 123.
not about the one offering hospitality. Instead, it is singularly focused on the object of hospitality—the stranger, the guest, the delightful other.”

In ancient Israel, hospitality was not an option for the faithful follower of Yahweh, it was a moral obligation. The offer of food, water, and lodging was a fulfillment of the covenant with Yahweh. An example of this type of hospitality is found early in the book of Genesis. Abraham was visited by the Lord. He was approached by three strangers and was moved to action. He bowed before them, offering water and something to eat (Gn. 18:1-15). In our modern world, full of social graces, we have taken the spiritual dimension out of the equation.

It is easy to offer hospitality to those who can repay the gesture. It is more difficult to offer hospitality to the stranger. Hospitality begins as we see people as Jesus did, people to be loved regardless of social positions. There are many examples of Jesus’s posture toward those whom society condemned, including the sick, broken, outcast and “unclean.” Jesus’s invitation to allow Zacchaeus to host him at his home was a significant gesture of love and openness. Zacchaeus was a chief tax-collector, a hated member of society’s upper class in the ancient world. Jesus looked past his occupation and social standing and saw a human being made in the image of God.

An offer of hospitality begins by seeing another person as a fellow human being. Hospitality is a spiritual practice that combats our tendency to see others as less than human. Hospitality says, *I see you and it is my spiritual obligation to acknowledge your humanity.* It is to

---

combat the cry of the stranger, who in the words of Pratt, shouts, “I am not a street person. I am not a token of my race or creed. I am not a divorcee. I am not an AIDS patient. I am not a sex object. I am not a laborer. I am not an ‘at risk’ kid. I have a mind. I have a heart. I have a soul. I have a dream. I feel. I care. I am a human being.”

As stated above, Jesus taught the importance of biblical hospitality in the parable of the sheep and the goats. Read carefully the words of Jesus, who said:

Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Enter, you who are blessed by my Father! Take what’s coming to you in this kingdom. It’s been ready for you since the world’s foundation. And here’s why:

I was hungry and you fed me,
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,
I was homeless and you gave me a room,
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,
I was sick and you stopped to visit,
I was in prison and you came to me.’

Then those ‘sheep’ are going to say, ‘Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?’ Then the King will say, ‘I’m telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.’ (Mt. 25:34-40, The Message)

Jesus explains to the listener that the degree to which a person lived the kingdom life he came to usher in would be evaluated. The need for hospitality and care for those in need is a critical component of the kingdom life.

Collins Pratt is correct when she states, “Hospitality is both the answer to modern alienation and injustice and a path to a deeper spirituality.” Where do we begin? I believe

---

6 Ibid., 42-43.
7 Ibid., 43.
hospitality, particularly sharing a meal with someone, is a remarkable missional strategy. In the Gospel of Luke, it is said of Jesus; “The Son of Man came eating and drinking” (Lk. 7:34). To the religious leaders of the day this was not a compliment. According to Eugene Peterson, “Early on people noticed how frequently Jesus was seen at meals with people who were outsiders, men and women not considered acceptable in the religious circles. Our term would probably be ‘the unsaved.’ He got a reputation for eating and drinking outside conventional settings and for not being very particular with whom he ate: ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’” (Lk. 7:34).\(^8\) Jesus did not care about his reputation, he cared about introducing people to the Kingdom of God.

Hugh Halter states, “Hospitality is not a fringe idea. In fact, as we watch Jesus, we can pick up on a secret that He was trying to teach: social space creates spiritual space. In other words, when people feel acceptance, they move toward God much more easily.”\(^9\) Pause for a moment and let that sink in. Read it again. How have you experienced this reality in your own life? Maybe it was a conversation around the dinner table. The dinner table is one of the best places to start. Most of us eat at least twice a day. Sharing a meal is a great way to offer hospitality to those you hope to get better acquainted with and could lead to some important spiritual breakthroughs.


As we attempt to reach the Nones in our communities, it is important for us to recapture a radical hospitality. It will need to be a hospitality that is not concerned with self but a hospitality eager to make connections with the other. It cannot be about me and what I can get out of the exchange as is often the motivation. It must be about loving God by loving our neighbor as our self.
MISSIONAL MOVE

Let me give you two suggestions as you practice the art of neighboring and hospitality. The first suggestion is to have an open table night in your home. Simply invite some of your neighbors who you know are not yet followers of Jesus for a meal. Don’t fuss over whether your house is immaculate or the table service matches. Remember: true biblical hospitality is about the other. It’s not about you. Keep it simple. Brad Brisco and Lance Ford tell the story of some friends of theirs who have a weekly cornbread gathering in their home. The rules are simple:

You can bring anything or anyone you like.
You don’t have to bring anything or anyone.
You can bring a bottle or a dish.
No program and no agenda. Just eat, talk, laugh and trade stories.
No RSVP’s necessary.
ALL are welcome.10

The second suggestion is to do a tick-tack-toe neighborhood exercise. Draw a tic tack toe board and place your house in the middle. Next try and fill in as much information as you can for the eight houses that fill out the board. Try filling in the names of your neighbors followed by any other information you have about them. How did you do?

---

10 Ford and Brisco, *Next Door as It Is in Heaven*, 119.
SAMPLE COACHING QUESTIONS

What would it cost you to open your home to a stranger?

How have you practiced radical hospitality in the past month?

What are the some of the ways you imagine offering hospitality in the next few weeks?

Who will you invite to have a meal with you this week?

How does social space create spiritual space?
APPENDIX C
SURVEYMONKEY REPORT

Question 1
I have better understanding of the changing culture around me?
Answered: 10 | Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 2

I have a better understanding of what missional engagement looks like in my neighborhood?
Answered: 10 | Skipped: 0

![Pie chart showing 100% agreement]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 3
I feel better prepared to engage my neighbors and my community?
Answered: 10 | Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

156
Question 4
I feel the coaching I received was helpful in moving me out into my neighborhood and community?
Answered: 10 | Skipped: 0

Other response: I was the coach
Question 5
I am better equipped to disciple the Nones I have a relationship with?
Answered: 10 | Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Strongly agree                | 30.00%    | 3  
| Agree                         | 70.00%    | 7  
| Neither agree nor disagree    | 0.00%     | 0  
| Disagree                      | 0.00%     | 0  
| Strongly disagree             | 0.00%     | 0  
| Other (please specify)        | 0.00%     | 0  
| TOTAL                         |           | 10 |
Question 6
I fully participated in identifying and carrying out a "missional move" for each chapter?
Answered: 10 | Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 7
I have identified others who I can walk this missional journey with?
Answered: 10 | Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>Responses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 10
Question 8
I have identified an area in my community that I can proactively work to bring holistic gospel flourishing and shalom?
Answered: 10 | Skipped: 0

Other response: In progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 9

What was the most helpful and the least helpful chapter in the handbook?
Answered: 10 | Skipped: 0

- I think the most helpful chapter is Chapter 3, Don't Go It Alone. The least helpful chapter is Chapter 7.
- Chapter 5 - The Space We Occupy, was the most helpful chapter. The missional move for this chapter (and the one before it) was very challenging and important. Chapter 7 - The Gospel for Your Community, was the least helpful. It seemed to me to be too much of "bringing the gospel" to the neighborhood, as opposed to "discovering the gospel" in the neighborhood.
- Most helpful: 4 Posture Matters Least helpful: I found something helpful in all of the chapters but chapter 2 was more difficult to apply in our specific context because the church and most of our people are rural and aren't in a typical "neighborhood."
- chapter 7 most chapter 1 least
- The first chapter explaining the nones and that the church organizations have in some ways been instrumental in creating the nones because of our approach of being all knowing and just concerned with the sinner prayer with out baptism or only up to baptism and not focused on a personal relationship with Jesus.
- 5. Very interested in seeking out "3rd Space" to build relationships in our community.
- One of the most helpful was chapter 7 "What is the Gospel for your community?" Also, Chapter 5. I'm supposed to come up with a least helpful-and I can't find an unimportant one.
- Chapter 7 was the most helpful. Really increased my understanding of 'nones' and the idea of fighting for a cause was very evident when looking at the culture around me. Chapter 8 was also extremely helpful as laying groundwork and understanding of what discipleship looks like.
- Chapter 2 most Chapter 8 only because we were further along in doing this work
- least - chapter 8 most - chapter 1
Question 10
Is there any additional feedback you would like to provide?
Answered: 9 | Skipped: 1

- If it were me, I wouldn't refer to the unchurched as the "Nones." It is too divisive a word. We are all just people who are all children of God, and some of us just don't have a relationship with Him yet. Also, God has already been at work in my neighborhood, long before I got there. I am just here now to continue His work.
- The categorization of the "nones" is totally understandable. However, it felt rather patronizing as in our neighborhood it is not just the "nones" who need to meet Jesus, but also some of those who are already churched.
- I engaged in many of the missional moves. To engage fully in them would require more time.
- Interesting study
- The language used in the manual was at times a little collegiate rather than geared toward the common person
- I like the process put forth in Missional Coaching and the emphasis on relationships. We have to be flexible and creative to build relationships with the "nones".
- Many good concepts. If this handbook is meant for the general church population, I would suggest editing it so it sounds less academic, and more
- At times a bit academic (for obvious reasons) We did this in a group in a compressed time frame. I would like to coach a few leaders thru it in one's or two's over a longer period. The missional move were for the most part big leaps instead of small steps and maybe not in the best order. I would report significant progress in becoming more aware of our neighbors/neighborhoods and some ways of influencing.
- No
BIBLIOGRAPHY


