AGAPE **EQUIP** MISSIONAL COMMUNITY TRAINING

A FAMILY OF MISSIONARY SERVANTS



Jesus. Mission. Community.

**This material was produced by the team at Soma Communities in Tacoma, Washington. Learn more about Soma School at somacommunities.org/learners/soma-school/
See also https://www.saturatetheworld.com
Connect with Agape at www.agapehood.com

WHAT SHAPES THE CHURCH?

How Should We Define the Church?

Many people define the Church primarily by what it does, not who it is. Unfortunately, this leads to an understanding of the Church that defines it not by God's work, but by man's work, leading to a view that man builds the Church instead of Jesus.

With this understanding, anybody who simply implements the forms or activities of "church" can call what they do the Church of Jesus Christ. This is "church" based upon works of man and not Church based upon the work of Jesus Christ. Jesus said he would build his Church, not us. This sometimes stems from a man-centered Gospel (*It is my decision – my work – that saves me*) OR can lead to a man-centered church (*It is all about what we do that defines us, not what Jesus has done*).

> ***We must remember: We Are Who We Are Because of What Jesus Has Done and Is Doing…Our Being comes out of His Doing…and Our Doing Proceeds from Our Being in Christ***

However, we should define the Church by what God has done, what He saved it to be and what He saved it to do. In this case, the Church is a confessional people primarily, but not an obedient people who do what God commands and displays what God is like.

We need to define the Church in light of: 1) Who God Is and What God has done; 2) Who He has made the Church to Be; and 3) What He has saved and created it to do.

Think about it in Familial terms…Do we define a family based only upon what they do? *"We are a family because we sleep in the same house, eat together, do dishes, share a budget, etc…"* (Defined by activity). By who they are? *"We are a family because we have the same parents, the same last name, belong to one another, etc…"* (Defined by being). Or because of how we came into being? *"We are a family because our parents gave birth to us or adopted us"* (Defined by Origin). A Healthy family would be defined in all three ways: 1) Our parents birthed us or adopted us – so we belong to them. 2) We are all related and share identity – so we belong to each other. And, 3) We do what families do together – life lived together defined by love.

The same is true of The Church: 1) We are the Church because the Father has made us His Children through the life and work of Jesus giving us new birth by His Spirit. 2) We have a new identity as Children of God. 3) We live out lives of love and good deeds because we are His Children who are deeply loved.

We aren't defined by what we do. We are defined by what God has done in the person and work of Jesus Christ. What we do is based upon and motivated by what God has done and who God has made us to be. This is all the outworking of faith in God. We must distinguish between defining a Church based upon what God has done and Who We Are because of His work AND describing how a Healthy Church lives out God's purposes showing herself to be God's Chosen and Redeemed People.

> ***The Church is God's People** (who we are) **saved by God's Power** (what He has done and is doing) **for God's Purposes** (the good works he created us in Jesus Christ to do)*

GOSPEL MESSAGE

The Power of God

Romans 1:16-17

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

THE STARTING POINT: THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

A Gospel-Centered Missional church doesn't first ask the question, *"What works best?"* Instead, it asks, *"How do we fulfill the mission of Jesus to make disciples who believe and live out the Gospel by displaying and declaring who God is and what He has done in and through Jesus Christ, teaching and training others to do so as well?"*

Our goal is not to convert people to our church. Our goal is to see them converted and discipled to Jesus through the gospel so that they can BE THE CHURCH on mission that truly declares and demonstrates the gospel in all of life.

Our starting point in thinking through what our churches should be like must be informed by the gospel: The Power and Purpose of the Gospel

TWO GOSPEL PERSPECTIVES

You can read the Bible across the grain (Thematically) and you can read it with the grain (Storyline). Each one is necessary and each one leads to a different way of seeing the gospel.

1. Thematically

The MEANS of Salvation – The Gospel Power

God	Sin	Jesus	Faith

In this case, the *Good News* is that God, in and through the work of Jesus Christ and the power of His Spirit, accepts us, empowers us and is changing us.

We *have been* saved from the penalty of sin, *are being* saved from the power of sin and *will be* saved from the presence of sin because of God's power and work, not our own.
(Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 1:27-29; 2:6-7; Philippians 2:12-13; 1 Peter 1:3-5)

Luther said that the first commandment is the gospel – *"You shall have no other gods before me"* is the same as, *"You shall have no other justification for your life, your righteousness, your significance, your security etc... other than me."*

How is your life reflecting that you believe Jesus did enough to save you at the cross?

Where in the leadership or life of your church are you demonstrating that God is the power and authority for ongoing life change?

How or where is this not being demonstrated?

2. As a Story

Here we come to know the REASON for salvation – The Gospel Purpose

Creation → Fall → Redemption → Restoration

In this case, the *Good News* is that God sent his Son to redeem the world and create a new humanity. Eventually the whole world will be renewed. Death, decay, injustice, and suffering will all be removed. God is saving a people and sending them out for His Mission so that Christ will be glorified in all things.

The Church has been saved BY God's work FOR God's work (Ephesians 1, 2:10,14-22; 2 Corinthians 5:15-21; Revelation 21).

The Gospel is not just about my individual happiness or God's plan for my life. It is about God's Glory and His plan for the world.

There is a movement afoot. God is doing something and we have been called to His purposes. The people of God are participating within God's redemptive plan by being a display people offering a foretaste of what the future will be like under God's rule.
(Jeremiah 29; Matthew 5:3-16; Luke 6:20-36; 1 Peter 2:9-12)

We are like a trailer to a movie…giving a foretaste of the kingdom fully consummated by Jesus that makes people long for the future redemption of all things under Jesus as King…the difference is that unlike a movie trailer we are a poor reflection of a far better future.

How is your church or ministry living out the purposes of God in salvation?

How is the leadership modeling this?

And how is the part of the Body that you lead regularly sending believers out for the mission of the Gospel?

WHO'S STORY IS IT ANYWAY?

Everyone is part of the story and is walking out this story in their lives. The real question is whose story is it?

We either see the story primarily as God's Story or primarily as Our Story. Our point of view is directly connected to our belief in the gospel.

GOD'S STORY

If we believe it is primarily God's story…

- **Creation** – He is the Creator and Originator of all things – I exist because of Him
- **Fall** – We rebelled against Him and His word stands – we really die
- **Redemption** – He saves us by His work and we put our faith in Him to save by grace
- **Restoration** – He has work for us to do which He prepared and enables us for

OUR STORY

If we believe it is Our Story…

- **Creation** – I become what I actualize or determine to be – I believe I am god
- **Fall** – I am good and others are evil OR I am not good, but it is not my fault: it is because of some outside influence – not my rebellion and sin – in this case I am deceived/dishonest
- **Redemption** – It is through my work that I am saved, healed, made acceptable – I must perform – in this case I or someone else I determine is savior
- **Restoration** – I can fix me and this place if I will just work harder and more effectively – in this case I am all wise and almighty

WE NEED BOTH GOSPEL PERSPECTIVES

We must know the Gospel Means (God/Sin/Christ/Faith)…
…and the Gospel Story (Creation/Fall/Redemption/Restoration)…
…and see them both as God's story together – Synchronically and Diachronically

If we only focus on the Gospel Power, but do not know the Gospel Purpose (The Storyline of the Gospel – where it is going and what Jesus is doing through the Church), we will tend toward a Gospel that is only about saving individuals and miss the mission of the Gospel. In this case, the Gospel is ALL ABOUT us.

If we only focus on the Gospel Purpose, but miss the Gospel Power (The work of God in Jesus Christ to save), we will tend toward doing good works and acts of service without the power of God. We believe it is up to us to change the world AND we become more acceptable and significant to God by doing more. In this case, the mission of the Gospel is now DEPENDENT UPON us.

THE GOSPEL IS GOD'S WORK FOR GOD'S WORK

THE STORY IS ALL ABOUT HIM… IT'S NOT ABOUT US!

WHAT SHAPES THE CHURCH? **GOSPEL IDENTITY...**

AGAPE'S IDENTITY AS GOSPEL PEOPLE

Not too long into my journey as a new chapel community pastor we realized that we were doing a good job of calling people to the Mission and even seeing people actively engage in serving our community in tangible forms. However, we observed that many of our people were being driven to missional activity from non-gospel motivation. They were active because of guilt, shame, performance-driven hearts or based upon their belief that they needed to justify themselves before God or man (the leadership, their peers, the community). This dichotomy between the gospel message and our actual lives ultimately leads to burnout, disillusionment with the gospel, and outward moralistic actions, which lack any supernatural power.

This led us to take a closer look at how Paul motivated the churches he wrote letters to. In most cases, Paul (whether addressing a messed up situation or trying to encourage those who were being faithful) starts his letters with Who God Is, What He Has Done in and through the person and work of Jesus, and then moves on to Who We Are In Christ. He does all of this before he begins to instruct them on how they should live.

This is the pattern you see throughout the Scriptures. First comes the Indicative, which is followed by the Imperative (*You even see this in the very beginning - In the beginning was God...He creates...We have our existence as Image Bearers...then he tell us what to do*). The Eternal God and His work precede our existence and our obedience. Our Doing does not justify our Existence or give us identity. Rather His Work gives us our existence, identity and meaning - Our Being. Then, our Doing proceeds out of our Being which proceeds out of His Being and His Work.

This led us to clarify that we were not leading a church based upon a set of Core Values, but instead based upon our core Gospel Identities: Who We Are Because of Who He Is and What He Has Done. Our motivation for what we do must come out of Who He Is and What He Has Done or we will be leading people into lives that are not grounded upon, lived within and walking in line with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel Message leads to Gospel Motivation grounded in our New Identity in Jesus Christ. Then, out of our love and gratitude to God for Who He Is and What He Has Done and now Who He Makes us to Be, we work out our Gospel Methods.

As we looked at the very beginning of The Story and followed it through to the end we saw four key Identities stand out that we believe were all grounded in God and His Work: Family (Sons of God), Missionaries (Sent Ones of God), Servants (Belong to God for His Work) and Learners (Disciples of Jesus Christ taught by the Spirit of God).

What are people most motivated or implicated by: Core Values that tell us what we're committed to together or Core Identities that inform who we are based upon the gospel?

OUR GOSPEL IDENTITY: THE CHURCH IS A FAMILY OF MISSIONARY SERVANTS

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

The Church is a *Chosen Race* – the called out ones (FAMILY)

We are God's Family – His Children who are adopted and fully accepted and loved – we don't do good works to BE justified, we do them because we ARE justified (John 1:11-13)

When I believe the Gospel I know I have a perfect Father who loves me and accepts me not because of what I've done but because of what Christ has done. If I don't believe the Gospel then I try to find approval through connection to a church, a community, a group, my father who failed me, a charismatic leader, etc. I will prop them up as functional saviors who affirm and accept me - yet when they fail me, I will be devastated. And it is certain – every one of them will fail to deliver the love and acceptance that the Heavenly Father gives.

AGAPE'S FAMILY IDENTITY STATEMENT

Family – We are all children of God who care for each other as a family.

God has always desired a people–an earthly family–who would live in such a way that the world would know what he is like. Jesus said that those who live in his ways and obey his Father are truly his family. Through Jesus we believe we are Children of God and brothers and sisters with each other. As family we see it as our obligation to personally care for the needs of one another – both physically and spiritually. We disciple, nurture and hold each other accountable to this Covenant life together. We do this through regular celebration gatherings and consistent involvement in a DNA group.
(Genesis 12:1-3; John 1:12-13; Romans 12:10-16)

Where do we see this throughout the Story?

So, what does it mean for the Church to be the Family of God?

How would the life of the local Church you are serving with change if this identity was fully embraced?

The Church is a *Royal Priesthood* – the sent ones (MISSIONARIES)

We are God's Missionaries – His Ambassadors who have been reconciled and sent out to be agents of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17-21; John 20:21)

If I believe the Gospel, I no longer need a purpose to justify my existence. I have been justified through Jesus fulfilling his mission and purpose and I join him on the mission that is guaranteed to succeed. Our proof is the resurrection - nothing could stop him, not even sin or death. My justification is not connected to my success of the mission and yet, I am part of the mission that will succeed and the fruit of it is eternal. If I don't believe the Gospel, then I will dedicate my life to a lesser mission and purpose that is guaranteed to fail in the end because it will not overcome sin and death (i.e. A nice home, car, money will not go with me to the grave; a successful career could easily be taken away; a family with three lovely kids who grow up perfectly could end with my kids dying or then walking away from God, etc).

AGAPE'S MISSIONARY IDENTITY STATEMENT

Missionaries – We are sent by God to restore all things to him through Jesus Christ.

God sent his son, Jesus, to Earth to take on human form and live within the culture. He worked, ate and interacted among the people; living in such a way that those around him could see and experience what God was truly like. Jesus came so that all people, places and things could be restored to a right relationship with God. In the same way, we believe we are missionaries sent into our culture to restore all things to God through Jesus. We live this out through involvement in a missional community.
(John 1:14; 20:21; Colossians 1:19; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21)

Where do we see this throughout the Story?

What does it mean for the Church to be the Missionaries of God – The Priest of Shalom?

What would change if your missional community or entire local Church were to embrace this identity?

Why don't we live as the missionary people of God?

What would need to change in you first in order to faithfully lead the people under your care in this identity?

The Church is a *Holy Nation* – Sanctified Servants

A holy nation that is an alternative city within a city to give a foretaste of what the eternal city will be like under the rule and reign of Jesus Christ. We belong to God and exist to bring Him glory.

We are God's Servants – His Possession who have been purchased and set free to serve others – not in bondage to sin and not as slaves to men – winning their approval (1 Corinthians 7:22-24; Galatians 1:10; Philippians 2:5-11)

If I believe the Gospel, I am being set free from slavery to false gods that keep me imprisoned, don't feed me and eventually beat me to death. All of us are serving a master or many masters. The question isn't "Am I a slave", but "Who am I a slave to?" When I believe and live out my gospel identity as a Servant of Jesus, he is my master and he sets me free to live life as it should be lived. I now belong to him as His Servant and whatever I do, I do as unto Him.

AGAPE'S SERVANT IDENTITY STATEMENT

Servants – We are servants who serve Him as we serve others around us.

Fully God–fully human, Jesus took on the posture of a servant. He gave his life, even unto death, so that others could experience salvation, peace and restoration. Jesus said, "I am among you as one who serves…" All those who follow Jesus are called to serve in the same humility. For us this means joyful submitting to God, leadership and to each other, as we serve whomever God brings into our lives. We do Whatever He leads us to do, Whenever He tells us and Wherever He wants us to do it (W3).
(Matthew 20:25-28; 25:31-46; John 13:1-17; Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Peter 2:16)

Where do we see this identity throughout the Story?

What does it mean for the Church to be a 'city within a city' – Sanctified Servants giving a foretaste of the full consummation of the Kingdom?

What would it look like in your community if the Church took seriously this identity? How would the people live differently?

Where and how do you need to begin personally living this out?

The Church is a *Community of Disciples* – called to equip and be equipped (LEARNERS)

We are Learners/Disciples of Jesus – His Disciples who are dependent upon His Spirit to teach and transform us into the image of Christ – not dependent on man alone to teach us and not conformed to this world (Matthew 28:18-20; John 16:13-15; Romans 8:28-30)

Everyone is looking to something or someone as their teachers (philosophies, books, media, etc). However, every one of them has both truth and error laced throughout. If I believe the Gospel and that Jesus is the Truth and has sent his Spirit into my heart to take what is Jesus' and show it to me, then I have THE Teacher who is THE Truth residing inside of me to direct me to truth in his word, show me Truth all around me and point out the lies and deceit. I can either believe the Gospel and Have the Source of Truth as my teacher or not believe the Gospel and turn to distorted views of the Truth.

Consider Genesis 1:28, 9:1, and Deuteronomy 6...

How was Israel supposed to live this one out?

The Church is called to equip for ministry and mission...fruitful multiplication of discipling ministers (Ephesians 4)

God has called and gifted people in the church to not only use their gifts for works of service and ministry, but to equip others for works of service. The Body of Christ will be built up as each person serves and equips others to serve.

The Church doesn't need more programs to do the work that people are called to do – the Church needs people to be faithful to their calling to develop and equip others. This responsibility needs to be placed back into the hands of the people who ARE the Church.

WE DON'T GO TO CHURCH. WE ARE THE CHURCH

AGAPE'S LEARNER IDENTITY STATEMENT

Learners – We are students of Jesus who take responsibility for our own development and the development of others.

As a young man Jesus grew in both height and wisdom. He learned from local religious teachers, by living in community, and through regular times of listening to God. Jesus called others to follow his ways, to be his disciples and live in obedience to all that God commands. He then sent these followers out to make new disciples. We believe we are also called to be followers of Jesus who take responsibility for our own development and the development of others. This includes both our personal time with God as well as involvement together in training provided by spiritual leadership.
(Luke 2:52; Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:11-13; 2 Timothy 2:2)

EVERYDAY GOSPEL RHYTHMS

THE ATTRACTIONAL-MISSIONAL CHURCH

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your souls. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. 1 Peter 2:11-12

What are we attracting people with and for?

Presently, we find ourselves having a polemical debate around Attractional vs. Missional Church, as mutually exclusive emphases. The issue really isn't about whether we are for or against attraction. The issue regards the source and means of the attraction.

> ***Who or what are we attracting people with and to?***
>
> ***Is the gospel attraction that we are displaying for people an event or the gospel people?***
>
> ***And for what purpose are they being drawn? To remain in the place they came or to leave the place equipped and sent, prepared for ministry and mission?***

The people of God have always been called to be a display people for God's Glory AND a sent people to the nations...

> ***Where do we see both Attractional and Missional throughout The Story of God?***
>
> ***In what ways were the people of God called to display the Glory of God?***

The People of God were supposed to be a display people for the nations in the everyday stuff of life so that the nations might see and experience the goodness and glory of God and be draw to Him. The attraction was never merely an event, but the glory of God being displayed in the everyday life of God's people.

> ***Church is not an event. It's a Community.***
> ***Mission is not an event. It's a Lifestyle.***
> ***We are called to live ordinary life with Gospel Intentionality.***
> Tim Chester

The forms and activities that the Church equips for and leads her people into must be the stuff of everyday life or the Church will merely be events and programs we attend as we fit them in and around the rest of life. This often leads to a *de-sacredization* of the majority of life, robbing our people of living the Gospel out in the everyday, OR to a life pack with "church" programs pulling people out of the missionary context.

Every believer is called to full-time paid ministry –
God just chooses to route our paychecks through different sources.

THE NORMATIVE LIFE

We are called and sent to BE the Church on mission for God's glory ALL the time whenever we gather, wherever we go and in whatever we do – every part of life is supposed to be dedicated to the ministry and mission of the gospel[1].

To walk in line with the gospel means that the truth of the gospel gets worked out in the stuff of everyday life – through everyday activities. Although it may seem strange to a world that is perishing, it should not seem strange or abnormal for us to live our lives with gospel intentionality on gospel mission because of our gospel identity.

Consider the Elder and Deacon Requirements...

These are not some high and lofty ideals, but rather what we would hope for everyone who is leading a home and growing in the gospel. It's the stuff of the everyday life.

How would the people in your Missional Community define full time ministry?

In what ways are you demonstrating that ministry is done in the everyday stuff of life?

How are your people living out the mission of God in the everyday?

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO MINISTRY

In order to lead our people to see all of life as ministry and mission we must equip them to live out the gospel in everyday activities – everyday rhythms.

We have found some transferable patterns or rhythms of life that we see throughout The Story of God and in every culture in every part of the world[2]. Through each of these rhythms people have the opportunity to walk by faith – walking in line with the truth of the Gospel[3] – or walk in fear or prideful rebellion to God – walking in unbelief.

When we come to understand and believe the Gospel we realize that we are saved by faith not works AND we are being saved by faith not works. We know that the righteous live by faith[4] and every moment is pregnant with the opportunity to walk by faith and therefore in line with the truth of the Gospel. Training up ourselves and others to walk in line with the truth of the Gospel is really all about learning to walk by faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave up his life for us[5] in every part of life.

These everyday rhythms that we have identified can be easily observed in the very beginning of The Story before the Fall of Man and through The Story we can see how they can be lived out in faith or in fear or prideful rebellion...

What everyday rhythms of life do you observe in the Garden including the Fall of Man that are also present in every culture in the world?

[1] 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17

[2] We believe we are called to equip people for Gospel Mission in such a way that it can be done in any context in the world. That is why we have not merely adopted a model of ministry but Gospel Rhythms of life that are lived out in every context in the world.

[3] Galatians 2:14

[4] Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11

[5] Galatians 2:20

STORY-FORMED

We know and submit our lives to the Story of God while also becoming familiar with each other's stories and the stories of our culture.

God has been unfolding his Story since before time began. We believe we are participants in the Story and our only hope for redemption and restoration from our fear and prideful rebellion is when by faith we submit our lives to the overarching Story of God. Therefore, we regularly reacquaint with and submit ourselves to The Story by interacting with God's Word. We look for ways and times to tell the Story often. We also take time to listen to others stories and lead them to submit their lives to God's Story[6]

Every person on the planet is living their life inside of and in light of a larger story shaped by the country they live in, the cultures surrounding them, the family they were raised in, the worldview they believe... Until they understand all of this in light of the Redemptive Story of God, they will give themselves to lesser stories that do not work.

Where do we see this rhythm in the Garden and Fall of Man?

How could they have lived by faith and how did they NOT live by faith?

What does 'walking in line with the truth of the Gospel Story' produce?

The Story...

We are a story-formed people who are living our lives based upon and within a story. All of our beliefs, identity and actions are all connected to the dominant story. This is why we need to know it and we are to talk about it when we sit, stand, walk along the way, eat, lie down, etc...[7]

My Story...

I need to continue to grow in the gospel of grace and truth. I need to be self-aware and let the Spirit and the Word show me where my life past and present is not in line with the gospel story.

Our Stories...

We need to get to know each other's stories and pay close attention to where we are not believing the Gospel. As we hear each other's stories ask:

Where in your story are you struggling to believe the Gospel?

— OR —

What about your Identity in Christ are you struggling to believe, and how does the Gospel answer your need?

The Culture or Community's Story...

In order to be an effective missionary, we need to know the story of our culture – what has shaped it, what is the dominant story line, what are the idols, where are the open doors for the gospel – both demonstrated and declared and be prepared to show how the Gospel Story fills in the gaps, corrects the lies or successfully completes it's story.

What are some next steps your Missional Community should take in order to be a Story-formed people?

[6] Genesis 1:1-2; John 1:1; Psalm 1; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

[7] Deuteronomy 6:6-9

LISTEN

We submit to God through consistent backward and forward listening

Jesus listened to God in prayer to know his Father's will. We listen to God because through the Gospel we are now aware of our ongoing need for Him. We listen 'backward' by regularly interacting with God's Word–the Story and the Son. We also listen 'forward' to hear what God is saying to us today. We believe He declares to all people what He is like through His creation and specifically speaks to those who belong to Him through His Spirit[8].

Everyone is listening to someone or something as the primary voice or voices that they submit their lives to – an expert or teacher that they follow. These might include a school of thought, a leader or charismatic personality, demons, or lies from the past. Until the Creator is THE Expert and THE Teacher to whom they compare all other voices, they are prone to deceit and lies and worship of self or others.

Where do we see this rhythm in the Garden and Fall of Man?

How could they have lived by faith and how did they NOT live by faith?

What does 'walking in line with the truth of the Gospel' through listening produce?

...To God

The gospel reminds us that we are fully dependent upon God's Spirit to teach us the truth, convict of sin, and show us the way to go and empower us to do everything God wants. So, we must walk in submission to the Spirit if we are going to live as God intends.

...To Myself

Pay attention to what you say to yourself. C.J. Mahaney states in his book, *Living the Cross Centered Life*, that when listening to ourselves, we should speak the gospel to ourselves. In order to regularly realign ourselves to the truth of the gospel, we need to listen closely to what we say to ourselves and compare that to the gospel and our gospel identity. Where what we are hearing doesn't match up to the gospel, we should preach the gospel again to ourselves. Ask the Spirit:

Where is my self-talk out of line with the truth of the Gospel?

...To Each Other

We need to listen to each other carefully to discern where they are not yet gripped by the gospel, paying careful attention to whether their story is about them and dependent on something other than God. Listen for the fruit of the Spirit and the works of the flesh[9]

...To Our Culture and Community

The people in our community are telling us what they believe and why. We need to ask questions and listen. If we are to be prepared to give an answer for the hope we have, we must spend less time just preparing answers and as much time listening for the questions. Listening to others first is prerequisite for gospel engagement. We should be listening constantly to know which story they believe in and where that story has proven weak and ineffective to save.

What are some next steps your Missional Community should take to grow in Gospel Listening?

[8] Mark 1:35-37; John 16:7-15; Hebrews 1:1-3; Romans 1:20

[9] Galatians 5:16-24

CELEBRATE

We gather together to celebrate God's extravagant blessings in Jesus

God's calls people to regularly celebrate his goodness and grace. We gather weekly in missional communities and regularly as a larger family, to share stories and celebrate all that God is doing in and amongst us. We invite everyone to these celebrations as a way of displaying and declaring God's Glory, exhorting each other in the Gospel and encouraging each other in Mission.[10]

We are created to worship and one of the ways is through celebration. Every person in every part of the world celebrates. The question is: To whom or what is the celebration directed? Because of sin and idolatry we are prone to celebrate the creation instead of the Creator.

Where do we see this rhythm in the Garden and Fall of Man?

How could they have lived by faith and how did they NOT live by faith?

What does 'walking in line with the truth of the Gospel' through celebrating produce?

...God's Grace

If we truly understand and believe the gospel, we should be the most celebratory people on the planet. God regularly called his people to celebrate through feasts and parties because he did not want them to forget His grace and abundant provision. The very celebration wasn't just a response – it was also a demonstration of what God is like and has done. We must enter into a regular rhythm of celebrating God's extravagant blessings.

...In My Life

Part of my ability to live out the gospel is dependent upon my regular reflection on the gospel. I need to regularly set my affections on things above – the work of God in Jesus Christ and what is now true of me because of Him. I should ask myself:

How is gospel celebration a part of my everyday life? How should it be?

...With Each Other

We are called to not give up meeting together so that we might spur each other on to love and good deeds. Jesus himself demonstrates this through his first recorded miracle – at a wedding feast where he affirms the celebration of life together because celebrating life together demonstrates the working out of and one of the purposes for the gospel. Ask yourselves:

How often are we gathering together to celebrate and how does the Gospel inform it?

...With Our Culture and Community

The people God has sent us to are also celebrating – they happen to be celebrating a different god and a different story. We need to enter into their celebrations and do it unto the true God, fully aware that even this celebration is within His Story. Then, within the celebration we are to look for ways to serve, redeem, bring gospel light, etc...

As a Missional Community what celebrations should you be participating in as you seek to bring the Gospel to bear within the culture God has sent you to?

What celebrations should you be creating in order to invite others into the celebration of the Gospel?

[10] Leviticus 23; Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:24-25

BLESS

We intentionally bless others through words, gifts or actions

God desires that all people would be blessed through Jesus. And now, as his Body, we believe we live out this mission as we bless others. We intentionally seek God's direction for who he would have us tangibly bless each week.[11] We all have talents, resources and time. Some of us believe we have earned these things and therefore we are entitled to them. This leads to greed and selfishness stemming from pride and causes fights, quarrels, divisions and anxiety[12]. When we believe that all we have is from God's gracious hand – gifts given not due to our own work – then we selflessly share what we have for the sake of others leading us to acts of service, sacrifice and love.

Where do we see this rhythm in the Garden and Fall of Man?

How could they have lived by faith and how did they NOT live by faith?

What does 'walking in line with the truth of the Gospel' through blessing produce?

...Blessed By God

Just like Abraham we have been blessed – we have received unmerited favor and provision. This is not because of anything we have done, but because of all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ. We are co-heirs with Christ and blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms.

Take some time to write out and meditate on all that God has blessed you with in Jesus Christ...

...To Be A Blessing

We are not blessed just for our own good. We have been given what we have so that others might also receive. We must regularly take account of what has been given to us and realize that it is not ours, but God's to steward. Then, in light of the gospel that reminds us that He become poor so that in his poverty we might become rich, we are freed up to pour out our lives and things so that others might be blessed and taste and see that the Lord is good.

Identify all that God has given you to bless others with and ask Him to show you what to do with it...

...Each Other

When we believe the gospel and realize that I didn't gain what I have nor do I really own what I have, and then see that our Father in heaven provides for his children through sharing what we He has given us each other. Then I come to see that I don't really own anything and yet at the same time I have more than I ever dreamed (brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, houses, cars, clothes, food, etc...[13]). All that we have is His and all that is His is ours.

Identify the needs of your family as well as the resources given to the family and then ask God how you are to take care of each other.

...Our Culture and Community

God's intent in blessing His people has always been so that those who don't know Him and his grace might see Him at work in and through us and come to Him through our lives. We must direct our eyes outward and begin to believe that He has given us everything for life and godliness. He has resourced us with what we need to do the gospel work of blessing others who don't know Him yet.

What does the culture or community you are sent to really need and how has God blessed your Missional Community or the larger Expression to display the grace of the Gospel to them?

[11] Genesis 12:1-3; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 2:12

[12] James 4:1-6

[13] Luke 18:29-30

EAT

We regularly eat meals with others to invite them into Gospel Community

Meals are a daily reminder of our common need for God and his faithfulness to provide both physically and spiritually. Jesus called us to remember him and his sacrifice for us through a meal. When we eat together, we commune around this truth. We regularly eat meals with those not in our immediate family or circle of close friends, discipling them toward a life of dependence on God.[14]

In every part of the world hunger is a daily reality – whether they have plenty or lack – we all get hungry more than once a day. God gave Adam and Eve the opportunity to demonstrate their faith through the eating of food. They choose to eat unto themselves out of unbelief and rebellion. God has likewise given every person in every part of the world a regular reminder of their need and an opportunity to eat unto themselves in unbelief and rebellion or unto God in faith and with thanksgiving.

Where do we see this rhythm in the Garden and Fall of Man?

How could they have lived by faith and how did they NOT live by faith?

What does 'walking in line with the truth of the Gospel' through eating produce?

...Unto God

Whatever we do, whether we eat or drink, we do it unto God. Every meal really is a demonstration of the gospel. We come hungry (a real need) and our need is graciously met (Whatever we have is from God). Since we eat three times a day, we get a gospel reminder over and over again IF we eat unto God. It's interesting that throughout the Story, food continues to be the prime example of God's provision meeting their need. And in every case, they ate unto God or unto themselves.

How might you eat differently if your eating was informed by the Gospel and unto God in faith?

...With Each Other

When we eat together we commune over our common need and God's provision. In doing this we proclaim the gospel to each other over and over again. That is why it is so important to eat together regularly – a loving community of believers communing around the work of Christ is the best apologetic of the gospel AND eating together is one of the ways we are commanded to do this.

Consider how you might 'preach' the gospel to each other through our 'common' meal – The Lord's Supper...

...With Unbelievers

The table for the Jews, as also in our day, is very symbolic AND communicative – who we eat demonstrates who we love. This is why Jesus was called a friend of sinners – he ate with people who were dirty, unreligious, and visibly or sociably unacceptable. The table is one of the most powerful displays of God's love and acceptance of sinners.

How often do we eat with those who don't believe what we do?

How should your Missional Community shape its life around communing at the table with unbelievers?

[14] Leviticus 23; Matthew 6:11; 26:17-30; Acts 2:46-47; Romans 12:13

RECREATE

We take time to rest, play, create and restore beauty in ways that reflect God and the work of the Gospel to others

After powerfully and joyfully creating the universe, God rested. We were created in his image and therefore were made to joyfully create and rest as well. We regularly take time to rest, play, create and restore beauty in ways that reflect what God is like to our community[15].

In every culture and with every person we witness the desire to rest and create – although the means by which people work it out might be different, we find a universal and historical practice of ReCreating. However, apart from the gospel people remain restless in their work and labored in their rest. The Gospel enables people to rest while working because the work that justifies them was accomplished in Jesus – they don't need their work to give them significance any longer. The Gospel also enables people to truly rest when not working, because they know that God is always working–they don't have to worry their lack of work will stop the world from spinning.

Where do we see this rhythm in the Garden and Fall of Man?

How could they have lived by faith and how did they NOT live by faith?

What does 'walking in line with the truth of the Gospel' through ReCreating produce?

...We Rest in God's Work

Because God has accomplished everything necessary for our justification and is the one who will finish the work He started in us, we can rest. Whether working, playing, sleeping or creating – we rest in His work and His abilities and His power. Our rest then is not only a result of the Gospel, but a demonstration to the world not at rest in the gospel.

How and where in your life are you at rest in the Gospel?

Where are you restless and what about the Gospel are you not believing?

...We Work, Rest, Create and Play

We now approach work not needing validation or security – we can truly work unto the Lord and be free to do it as worship (not worshipping the job, the boss, the paycheck or the credibility we obtain). We can also truly rest – vacation or not, sleeping or not, etc... because the world is held together and run by Him and it will be restored by His work in and through us, not our work apart from Him. We can also create freely, not dependent on the quality of the creation or the validation of others to say it is good, but rather because we are already called good in Jesus Christ. Finally, we are free to play, because our Father is in charge and gives us all we need.

How could our work be a better reflection of the Gospel to the world around us?

In what ways could we be 'playing' and 'creating' such that it would be an appropriate display of the Gospel to our culture?

...With Each Other

We recreate together as a way of preaching the gospel to one another. We also become a display together of the truth of the gospel to a watching world. Our resting, creating, working and playing all proclaim that our God is Creator, Sustainer, Provider and Redeemer.

How could your Missional Community reshape its weekly, monthly and yearly rhythms to live out this rhythm?

Where in your culture does the Gospel need to creative, playful work of the Gospel?

[15] Genesis 1-2:3; Deuteronomy 5:12; Mark 2:23-28; Hebrews

BUILDING MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES

MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES DEFINED

A Missional Community is a gospel community (**FAMILY**) that lives out the mission of God together (**MISSIONARIES**) in a specific area and to a particular people group by demonstrating the gospel in tangible forms (**SERVANTS**) and declaring the gospel to others – both those who believe it and those who are being exposed to it (**LEARNERS**).

To Clarify...A Missional Community is NOT primarily:

- A Small Group
- A Bible Study
- A Support Group
- A Social Activist Group
- A Weekly Meeting

FORMING A MISSIONAL COMMUNITY

1 **Start with shared leadership:**

- Prophetic type – an emphasis on the unchanging truths of God's character, the gospel message and the mission of the Church
- Priestly type – an emphasis on the care of the soul and caring for one another
- Kingly type – an emphasis on the tangible working out of the mission through structures, strategic thinking and hands on activity



(NOTE: If you do not have a team to share this in the core of a group, you may want to supplement leadership through coaching, mentoring or itinerant leaders)

2 **Build a foundation on the Gospel**

- Gospel Power – Saved from Penalty of Sin; Being Saved from Power of Sin; and Will Be Saved from the Presence of Sin
- Gospel People – New Identity in Christ
- Gospel Purpose – Making Disciples who Make Disciples
- Gospel Practices – Live out the Gospel in Everyday Rhythms

3 **Live with Gospel intentionality**

- Lead into Prayerful Dependency
- Make sure the group knows the Story of God
- Become familiar with each others' stories
- Become proficient in the 4 Gs and Practice *Gospeling* each other's hearts

4 **Have a clearly defined mission**

- Ask God to clarify your mission – Who you are called to make disciples of
- Identify the difference between reactive mission and proactive mission
- Begin to pray intentionally for the mission
- Leaders clearly state the mission and call others to participate in it

5 **Begin to adjust the life of the community around the mission**

- Shape the weekly schedule to flow with the cultural schedule
- Strategically place meetings in order to make space for missional engagement
- Pay close attention to "seasons" and patterns in the culture of the mission field
- Join in the rhythm of life of the community bringing gospel distinctiveness to it
- Develop pathways of engagement in the gospel – Demonstrate and Declare
- Consider forming a Covenant together around the mission (See Appendix A)

6 **Display and declare the Gospel**

- Clarify the Gospel barriers
- Identify the Gospel "doors" or "pathways"
- Prepare and train the group to address cultural idols
- Begin by "showing" good news and be prepared to give an answer for your hope
- Consider engagement in one of the seven pillars[16]

7 **Stay Connected to an Overseer/Coach**

- Coaching for ongoing development of leadership
- Assessments to identify ongoing training needs
- Develop strategic plans together
- Supplement for areas of weakness

8 **Plan for Multiplication**

- Regularly sow seeds of multiplication into everything (from the beginning)
- Identify apprentice leaders (2 Timothy 2:2)
- Intentionally share leadership of the community (Leadership development is best in community)

9 **Birth new Missional Communities**

- Talk openly about the future sending of some to start new Missional Communities
- As leadership is identified and being equipped release some to start a new community
- Keep in mind the mix of emotions – celebration (newborn baby) and grieving (children leaving home)

10 **Form New Expressions/Equipping Centers**

- Groups will need to come back together for ongoing encouragement, equipping and mutual exhortation
- The gathering of them together becomes a unique and diverse expression of the Church within a particular context
- This all leads to the development and appointing of Biblical qualified overseers (elders) and lead servants (deacons) in a new local expression of the church

LEADING A MISSIONAL COMMUNITY

Key Leadership Posture

As a leader of a Missional Community you need to think like a Church Planter with a Core Group

- Ask yourself, "If this group were to eventually become a core group of a new church plant, what would I do?"
- Keep in mind that you will need to train and prepare for the ministry of making disciples and the leadership of new Missional Communities
- Prepare them to be a new expression of the Church some day

Key Role of Missional Community Leaders

Shepherd a Gospel Community

- Think of yourself as a Pastor over a small church
- Regularly pray for and consider how to best shepherd those under your care
- Keep in mind the call to intentionally disciple the people under your care

Key Responsibilities

Oversee the MC gospeling one another in their Identity in Christ and gospeling the community through the Rhythms of everyday life

MISSIONARIES

Listen

Carefully and submissively listen to God alone and together to gain clarity on the mission He has called you to lead people toward

ACTIONS:

- Take some extended time to listen, pray and journal
- Do pray walks or prayer drives to discern what God is saying
- Pay attention to His calling as demonstrated through personal convictions, passions, ongoing leadings
- Listen to the "Cry" of your community and the people you're being sent to

Story-formed

As you gain clarity on the mission God has called you to, begin doing the work to understand the story of that context and how best to bring the gospel to bear within it

ACTIONS:

- Do a historical study of the neighborhood, city, people groups, etc...
- Look for things that already exist that demonstrate the story of the culture
- Identify things that exist that are open doors for the gospel and demonstrations of gospel barriers
- Overall, look for where the Story of God and the Story of the Culture can intersect

Celebrate

Identify and join the celebrations that already exist where God is sending you and look to develop new forms of celebration that bring the gospel to bear in a culturally appropriate way

ACTIONS:

- Identify celebrations the culture is engaged in that you can participate with and still display the gospel
- Identify the celebrations that exist that need redemption and look for ways to enter in and redeem them
- Identify the celebrations that do not exist, ask God if they should and if so, how you should go about developing culturally appropriate forms for celebrating
- With a team of leaders/workers begin to engage in present celebrations and prayerfully plan out culturally appropriate ones for the community

Bless

Determine the most appropriate forms through which the community you're called to would feel blessed and it would be "Good News"

(Consider one of the Seven Pillars as a starting point: Education, Business, Media/Arts, Health Care, Government, Service Organizations, Disenfranchised[17])

ACTIONS:

- Determine what is broken or missing in your community
- Find out what exists to deal with those things and determine how you could serve
- If it doesn't exist, discern with God and in community whether you are supposed to start something and who you should work with to see it started

Eat

Begin to identify the "watering holes" in the community God is sending you to and frequent them often

ACTIONS:

- Determine where the people you're sent to hang out often to eat and drink
- Regularly eat/drink there and pay attention (listen to others, ask questions, learn)
- Become known as people who live out good news (tip well, bring more business, etc...)
- If a good gathering spot does not exist, prayerfully consider starting one

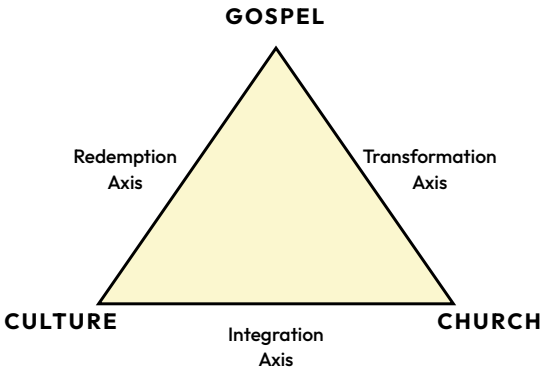
ReCreate

Learn about the work habits of the community and what they do for rest and play

ACTIONS:

- Get to know the kinds of work people are doing and what connection points you might have with them
- Discover their weekly/monthly/yearly rhythms of work/rest/play and begin to align with them
- Consider how you might demonstrate Creation/Rest to your culture so they might see Gospel
- Look for places or situations where restorative work needs to be done and creatively bring that about
- Pick up some recreational hobbies that would connect with the mission

Adapting a theology of mission from missiologist Leslie Newbigin, George Hunsberber, develops 3 relationships that must occur between the church, gospel and culture:



FAMILY

Story-formed

Know the life-stories of the people you are on mission with and on mission to so that you know how to shepherd and develop them effectively

ACTIONS:

- Become familiar with each other's stories
- Grow in speaking the truth in love to each other (Gospeling each other's hearts)
- Develop Pastoral Care skills within the group
- Make sure everyone is in a discipleship, nurturing and accountability triad (DNA Group)

Listen

Regularly listen to God on others behalf to discern how to care for each other

ACTIONS:

- Regular times of listening prayer with a journal
- Develop shepherding plans as you hear from God and listen to one another
- Direct members toward next steps for spiritual growth & development
- Create space to listen to God and pray together

Celebrate

Regularly gather to celebrate God's extravagant blessings

ACTIONS:

- Regularly gather in a local expression for community worship through teaching, singing, sharing, eating
- Meet weekly as a Missional Community to encourage one another
- Throw parties and events to demonstrate to the community what abundant life is like (b-days, anniversaries, baby showers, wedding receptions, holidays, etc...)

Bless

Love one another through tangible acts such as encouragement, gifts, time spent, acts of kindness, etc...

ACTIONS:

- Make an inventory of what your community has been given by God and make this know to each other
- Intentionally and tangibly bless a DNA member every week
- Intentionally and tangibly bless a Missional Community member weekly
- Extend blessing to someone not yet IN the family weekly

Eat

Break bread together regularly together to remember Christ's work on our behalf

ACTIONS:

- Remember our Lord's death regularly through communion
- Practice preaching the Gospel to each other through communion
- Share a meal with your missional community weekly
- Share another meal with another Christ-follower weekly (DNA, Mentor, or MC member)

ReCreate

Take regular times to create, rest and play together as a community.

ACTIONS:

- Work on projects together
- Take a vacation together or do a focused retreat together
- Share hobbies or recreational interests

LEARNERS

Story-formed

Know your own story and how God's story is redeeming and re-storying yours – becoming gospel saturated

ACTIONS:

- Study and be prepared to teach others the Gospel Story (Power, People, Purpose & Practices)
- Become aware of the barriers to the gospel in your own life
- Regularly work through the 4 Gs together (God is Great, Glorious, Good and Gracious)

Listen

Regularly listen to God through times of Scripture reading, journaling, solitude, book reading, fasting and prayer

ACTIONS:

- Take time to work through the contemplative disciplines and journal what God shows you
- Listen to good gospel teaching/preaching and submit to what the Spirit tells you to do
- Take spiritual retreats alone or with others when necessary
- Try activities like Lectio Divina together as a Missional Community

Celebrate

Know the gospel well and how it informs and changes all of life so that we are leading gospel celebrations from a gospel foundation

ACTIONS:

- Grow in knowledge of and purposes for hospitality
- Learn how to creatively and contextually connect hospitality and the gospel
- Train others to be hospitable and share responsibility for hospitality
- Rehearse daily evidences of God's grace in your life

Bless

Embrace the ongoing development of your own life as a means to bless others

ACTIONS:

- Grow in understanding what gifts you have been given by God and work toward sharing them effectively to build others up
- Learn the real needs in your community and find ways to bless out of who you are
- Teach and lead others to understand blessing and live out being a blessing

Eat

Learn more about intersection of the Biblical feasts and the gospel

ACTIONS:

- Study the Biblical feasts and learn to identify and articulate the gospel in all of the feasts
- Be prepared to proclaim the gospel through meals (appropriately within each context)
- Be prepared to lead others in remembering our Lord's death through communion
- Teach others to know and do these things as well

ReCreate

Understand and learn to walk in the rhythms of create and rest/play

ACTIONS:

- Become aware of Gospel rest throughout Creation, Fall, Redemption and Restoration
- Become self-aware to what prevents you from resting/playing
- Discover what patterns you need in order to build this rhythm into your life
- Help others to walk out this rhythm as well through teaching and equipping

SERVANTS

Story-formed

Know the stories of the community so you can embody Good News

ACTIONS:

- Ask questions of neighbors and community leaders, looking for real and felt needs
- Discover the hopes the community has and gaps in resources available
- Pay attention to the stories of your missional community and where the needs in the community intersect with the passions, gifts, talents and experiences of the MC

Listen

Regularly ask God to show you the community needs and how you can serve

ACTIONS:

- Take prayer walks/drives to discern where God is leading you to serve
- Journal what God tells you during your prayer times
- Ask God together to show you where and how to serve as a missional community
- Train your MC to be alert and in prayer listening for God's direction

Celebrate

Regularly provide parties/events that coincide with community needs

ACTIONS:

- Identify the regular celebrations in your community and serve at them
- Connect meeting needs to celebration (i.e. A park clean-up day with a BBQ at the end)
- Volunteer to plan and lead the celebrations

Bless

Identify at least one way/area to tangible express the gospel on a regular basis through serving and stick with it long enough to move beyond tasks to relationships

ACTIONS:

- As you become aware of the community needs and the MC resources identify a specific area or issue that you will lead the MC to regularly serve in (One of the seven pillars)
- Make serving in that area a regular focus of your MC
- As you serve in one area look for bridges into the other areas

Eat

Regularly provide or pay for meals for others in your community

ACTIONS:

- Eat at least one meal a week with someone who doesn't yet believe the gospel
- Pay for or provide the meal and tip well to demonstrate the gospel to the servers as well
- Teach your community about what serving looks like over meals and call them to it

ReCreate

Regularly provide opportunities for rest, play and creative restorative work

ACTIONS:

- Take time off when your community is taking time off and try to rest/play with them
- Engage in restorative work (i.e. community garden; community meeting; School of Life)
- Look for opportunities to display and declare what has been done for us that allow us to rest in the Gospel.

---

[16] http://www.lauriebethjones.com/site-content/seven-pillars-of-society/seven-pillars-of-society.html

[17] http://www.lauriebethjones.com/site-content/seven-pillars-of-society/seven-pillars-of-society.html

APPENDIX A

MISSIONAL COMMUNITY COVENANT TEMPLATE

(MC NAME) MISSIONAL COMMUNITY COVENANT

WHO WE ARE: GOSPEL IDENTITY

Missionaries – We live actively as missionaries sent by Jesus to make disciples.

We believe we are sent to:

- Which PEOPLE group or groups are you focusing in your obedience to Jesus' commission to MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS
- What people group will you partner with internationally to support Church Planting elsewhere and how will you partner?

Family – We are children of God who live and care for each other as a family.

We will:

- What actions should you engage in so that you are expressing your Gospel identity as Sons of God and brothers and sisters together?
- How will you insure that each of you is involved in regular accountability (DNA)?
- How will you commit to the "ONE ANOTHERS" that are key to be God's Family together?
- How will you extend the family to those who are still "lost" or "dead" to the Father?

Servants – We eagerly serve our Missional Community and those we are sent to as a demonstration of the Gospel.

We are committed to serve by:

- What do you believe you are specifically called to do in light of our Servant identity to tangibly demonstrate the gospel to those whom God has sent you to?
- How might you also demonstrate the gospel to each other?
- What specific projects or events do you need to accomplish or get involved in to demonstrate the gospel to your community?
- What does GOOD NEWS look like to the people group you are sent to?

Learners – We take responsibility for our own discipleship and the discipleship of others

We will devote ourselves to:

- In what ways do you all need to grow spiritually this year?
- In what ways will you help your MC become aware of their equipping needs
- In what areas do you need to be better equipped in so that you will be faithful in making disciples
- What specifically will you do to insure that the people you are sent to hear the gospel this year?

HOW WE LIVE: GOSPEL RHYTHMS

Story-formed – We understand, experience and intersect with God's Story.

We will:

- Where is your group at in terms of God's Story? Do they know it?
- What should you commit to together so that you will be familiar with God's Story?

- How will you get to know each other's stories? The stories of those including in your mission?

Listen – We set aside regular times to listen to God both backward and forward.

We will:

- How will you commit to listening prayer together?
- What would it look like for the group and the individuals to see Listening to God as a weekly rhythm?
- What needs to be in place to help you with this?

Celebrate – We regularly gather together to celebrate God's extravagant blessing.

We will:

- What equipping gathering or Expression are you committed to and how often?
- In what ways will you intentionally celebrate together and around what?
- How will you engage in celebrating with the people group God is sending you to?

Bless – We intentionally bless others through words, gifts or actions.

We will:

- How will you intentionally share what you have with each other and those in need?
- How will this get worked out in the context of your mission?
- How will this affect your giving – financially, physically, emotionally, etc...?
- What are some tangible ways you believe God has called your MC to bless others?

Eat – We regularly eat meals with others to invite them into the community of God.

We will:

- How will you celebrate communion together?
- What meals will you share with each other?
- How will you invite others to the table with you?
- Where should you go to engage in "Gospel Eating" regularly?

ReCreate – We take time to rest, play, create and restore beauty in order to reflect God to others.

We will:

- What regularly rhythms of ReCreating will you commit together to?
- What needs beautifying in your mission focus?
- How might you demonstrate God's creative beauty and restorative intent?

As a follower of Jesus and a child of God I covenant with (MC NAME) Missional Community to live these Gospel Identities and Rhythms in the above manner.

NAME _____ DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____ EMAIL _____

APPENDIX B

MISSIONAL COMMUNITY COVENANT EXAMPLE

SNODGRASS MISSIONAL COMMUNITY COVENANT

WHO WE ARE: GOSPEL IDENTITY

Missionaries – We live actively as missionaries sent to make disciples. We believe we are sent to:

- People at Brownstone
- Support Newcomers Meal and IF Table/Men's DNA

Family – We are children of God who live and care for each other as a family.

We will:

- Speak the truth in love and submit to one another in this
- Refrain from gossip or slander and be reconciled when we do
- Forgive one another
- Pray for one another
- Bear with one another
- Meet together regularly
- Share what we have so that there are no needy persons among us
- Hold each other accountable in DNA groups

Servants – We eagerly serve our Missional Community, People at Brownstone and Parents and Teachers at West Elementary as a demonstration of the Gospel.

We are committed to serve by:

- Newcomers Meal
- Giving Rides for free
- Weekly Brownstone Picnic (open)

Learners – We take responsibility for our own discipleship and the discipleship of People at Brownstone and Parents and Teachers at West

We will devote ourselves to:

- Regularly gathering for equipping with our local expression
- Working through an assessment to determine equipping needs for those in our MC
- Developing an equipping plan in light of our assessments
- Being trained in basic discipleship so that we can train others
- Sharing the Gospel verbally with Brownstone and Parents and Teachers of West
- Reading through the Bible in 2019

HOW WE LIVE: GOSPEL RHYTHMS

Story-formed – We understand, experience and intersect with God's Story.

We will:

- Learn and communicate the Story of God together
- Become familiar with each other's personal stories and the stories of the People in Brownstone

Listen – We set aside regular times to listen to God both backward and forward.

We will:

- Listen to God together when we gather to discern His will – prayer will be a normal part of our meetings
- Set aside regularly times to personally to listen to God

- Listen to God while listening to those in our MC and Mission
- Have Jake Snodgrass train us on 'seeing the problem'

Celebrate – We regularly gather together to celebrate God's extravagant blessing.

We will:

- Gathering on Sundays with AGAPE HOOD and on (DAY) with our MC
- Celebrate God's grace by coming together around special events
- Join in the neighborhood celebrations at Brownstone and participate at the School's events
- Create or Serve at 4 key celebrations annually within our mission

Bless – We intentionally bless others through words, gifts or actions.

We will:

- Together make an inventory of what we have been given for the sake of blessing others
- Make our blessings known on FB group page and to Brownstone so there is accessibility to what we have
- Grow in our financial giving together by 1% this year (i.e. from 10% to 11%)
- Build a welcome and greeting platform/ministry to Camp Humphreys

Eat – We regularly eat meals with others to invite them into the community of God.

We will:

- Break bread together weekly in homes to remember Jesus' Death for us
- Eat a weekly meal together
- Have one open meal monthly to invite people in our community into
- Pick one restaurant in the Ville to eat at regularly (Minimally 1 time a month)

ReCreate – We take time to rest, play, create and restore beauty in order to reflect God to others.

We will:

- Work with the Brownstone to provide a clean safe place for kids and Families
- Vacation together around Korea

As a follower of Jesus and a child of God I covenant with the Wedge MC to live these Gospel Identities and Rhythms in the above manner.

NAME _____ DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____ EMAIL _____

APPENDIX C

MC LEADER MISSIONAL READINESS INDICATOR

1 Do you know the story of the particular community or culture that you are called to?

2 If you know the story, what are the barriers to the gospel?

List 3 Barriers to the Gospel:

a.

b.

c.

3 What is the message and medium of the gospel for your community? Through what tangible forms would you demonstrate the gospel to your community?

List 3 tangible ways to demonstrate the Gospel in "rhythm":

a.

b.

c.

4 In your community, do you know the personal life stories of any unbelievers? What are some ways you can get to know the personal stories of unbelievers around you?

5 What are the forms of celebration that unbelievers in your culture engage in?

6 How are you leading (or how could you lead) the believers in your community to either create celebrations that un-believers can engage in or join un-believers in their celebrations?

7 Does your faith community have a clearly identifiable "people group" and mission to whom they are focusing their prayers, activities and resources? If so, who is it? If not, how can you find one?

8 If the answer to #7 is yes, is there a group of believers working together toward that mission on a regular basis? And if so, how?

9 Do the believers that are working on mission together know each other's life stories? Do you know the stories of the believers you are ministering with? How can you get to know teach other's stories?

10 How often do the believers gather together to eat meals, celebrate and focus on a mission in their community together? What does this look like?

11 What form of serving do you think would best communicate the gospel to the community you live in?

12 Are you able to clearly articulate the Story of God (the gospel narrative)? How can you begin to tell The Story of God in a form that makes sense to your culture? List some ways to start:

13 Are the believers in your community equipped to know the Gospel Narrative (The Story of God) and demonstrate and declare it in culturally appropriate ways in their community? What are some ways you can start NOW to equip them to Tell The Story?

14 Would you say that the unbelievers in your community would grieve the loss of your church if you were to "close the doors" and the believers left the community? What would it look like to be the Church in such a way that the city would grieve if you all left?

MORE QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION...

Are you aware of where the gospel could bring healing to your own life story? If so, where in your life story did you begin to believe a false gospel?

How does the gospel re-inform your story?

Which parts of the gospel narrative do you need to remind yourself of in order to both live out the gospel AND live out the mission of the gospel?