



Church ver 2.0

rethinking the Great Commission

How the local church can engage disciple-making movements strategy

(Watch for **Spent Matches; igniting a signal fire for the spiritually dissatisfied** to be published in Feb. 2015)

My introduction to current automobile technology came when my octogenarian in-laws wanted a new car although neither could drive at the time! You just don't argue with 80+ year old people. A friend owned a car they were looking at so we borrowed it for a test drive. I had never driven a Hybrid car.

Being ever practical my mother in law wanted to stop by the grocery store to pick up a few things on the test drive of Ford Escape Hybrid so I parked just outside the door of her favorite market and waited while she ran into to get "a few things." Half an hour later she emerged with a two bags of groceries and climbed in the hybrid car.

It was then the drama began. I hadn't turned the car off because it didn't seem to be running so I didn't turn it on either. When I started forward it was a strange sensation not to hear an engine rev. It must have been strange also for the lady who walked right in front of me as well. Fortunately the brakes are conventional, they worked exceptionally well as they created a threatening screech!

I am sure that it never occurred to the lady holding a bag of groceries coming out of the store that a car not making a sound could be a threat to her health. She grew up in a world where cars made sounds, engines revved when they move and especially when they move from a stand still.

Her world had now changed! Her old paradigm had brought her in harms way and her survival depended on her changing her thinking and behavior. Hybrid cars that possess both gas engines that rev and electric engine which don't make much noise had entered



her world. No longer could she count on hearing a car coming at her, she must now understand that cars move silently propelled by an electric engine.

It was this moment that gave birth to a new way of thinking about how I did “church¹.” In 1994 I began a journey to establish a “[Willow Creek](#)” model church. After 11 years [Shoal Creek](#) was approaching 800 people and growing. It didn’t take a Einsteinium mathematician to figure out that our current facility had an expiration date.

Having planted the church from 6 people in my living room, I was sure that I only had one church plant in me. The clawing for viability while raising a family left trace elements of stress, fatigue and aging! This was the primordial soup which formed the the beginning of a journey to find a scalable strategy that would both reduce the dependence on facilities and allow us to continue to aggressively participate in seeing the lost found.

This journey visited all the typical venues; multi-site, rapid church multiplication, video venue, house/simple church, missional communities conferences as well as the typical list of books and mp3s from the latest gurus on everything church. Yet on that journey a constant irritation was a story from India of unbelievable proportions that became a annoying splinter in my mind.

After each visit to these experiences, much evaluation and discussion led to the same conclusion; our current format was not easily reproducible.² Which then lead to a fork in the road, do we change how we do what we do so that we could find a scalable model?

In the middle of this journey to find this “scalable” model, I had a dream. To be honest it was more like a nightmare. We were attractional and proud of it, so in a dream God gave me the answer to my prayer.

Faithfully I prayed for the 300,000 people within a 30 minute drive of Shoal Creek. My hope and prayer is that we would make it hard to go to Hell for these people. They had been assaulted by emails, billboards, postcards, radio ads, newspaper ads, Facebook ads, personal invitations and the list goes on. We had gone to extraordinary lengths to encourage them to come.

Sound asleep the dream starts. People from all over this area begin to come on a Sunday morning. Thousands of them driving, but quickly the roads, highways and freeways started to get crowded. Those who started early got to the parking lot and filled it and the auditorium quickly (seats a thousand!).

¹ I will use Church to refer to church universal and church to refer to a particular local church

² Shoal Creek drank the “Willow” style cup all the way down and even to this day has no musical worship on Sundays.

The rest got stuck, massively stuck because the infrastructure of my city won't support 300,000 people descending on any one spot not even our professional sports stadiums. As the frustration of their spiritual interest collided with the inability to get where they wanted to go, they began to turn around and go home. Maybe next Sunday, maybe never who knows!

The dreamed turned nightmare was the realization that my prayers and my strategy were in grave conflict. I was asking God to do something I was not capable or prepared to cooperate with.

An even deeper realization later as I discovered that there weren't enough seats in all the churches in my area to fit 300,000 let alone at Shoal Creek. There is about 1 church for every 1104 people in the Kansas City area³. I've seen a lot of the church facilities and I know that many people would overwhelm the majority of churches.

Despite the building limitations, we liked what we did and it was effective. Every week on average 10 new families visit 5 of which self identify as not yet followers of Christ. Changing our strategy with that kind of exposure to the unbelieving world seemed rather foolish. But the inevitable capacity issue still loomed with the only solution being investing more money into bricks and mortar.

Our effectiveness at reaching those far from God and predicable facilities shortage complicated and magnified the irritation of the story from India. How could we continue to reach those far from God and not commit more money into a facility?

As a last resort, I dove into the [Bhojpuri story](#) via David Watson's [website](#). It didn't take long for the pain of the splinter to turn to an inquisitive wonder. The echoes of "It is a cultural thing," slowly faded as I discovered that this phenomena, 2 million new disciples in 80,000 churches over 20 years was not unique to India but had spread to East/West Africa and in fact over 100 different movements of this type had been identified around the world.

This story and the principles being applied drove us back to the Bible. This was a RE-READ for us which made it deceptively difficult. Never were we more aware of the cultural bias that we brought to the Bible. The forms that have developed over centuries had to be submitted to the functions that the Bible laid out. The practices with which Jesus used to launch the first disciple making movement had to erase our paradigms of the past traditions.

³ As reported in Cityview Report 15th Ed. John Mayer p. 113 published by cityvisiontc.org

Now a holy collision was set up; a viable Biblical strategy to make disciples who would multiply at viral rates irrespective of traditionally trained leaders and adequate facilities⁴ AND an attractional church with an aggressive heart to reach those not yet vitally connected with their Heavenly Father thru his Son.

From the beginning of my spiritual journey I had been infected with a disciple making mentality. Those who mentored me left me hopelessly addicted to reaching people far from God and to make disciples of those who responded.

I have an impressive family tree of men and women who I've invested in and whose lives are heaven bound. They will come to my funeral tell wonderful stories of how profound my influence was in their lives. There is only one problem. Very few of them have been able to make disciples. Why?

My engagement in the Bhojpuri story caused me to ask some hard questions and re-read some familiar passages in the Bible, like Matthew 28:16-20. A fresh reading created a new insight that not only was I responsible for making disciples but my disciples were responsible for making disciples. A subtly profound conclusion! So in effect the Great Commission requires me to make-disciple making disciples.

Why didn't my disciple make disciples? Simply because I disciplined them out of my own passion, personality and giftedness. The methods I used with them weren't transferrable because they were who I was not who they were. I could reproduce or make disciple making disciples-of those who were like me. BUT most weren't impassioned and gifted the way I was so they could do what I could do.

The sobering reality set in on me. Methods were important. In the discipling process, if I was going to make disciple making disciples that is, OBEY the GREAT COMMISSION, I would need to choose methods that were simple and repeatable over a broad array of personalities and giftedness. I was responsible for baptizing them and teaching them to obey with methods that they could use to continue making disciple making disciples.

So we changed our finish line. No longer would we be satisfied with making disciples. All of our activities and energy would now be measured against a new understanding of the Great Commission. Are our disciples making disciples? Disciple-making disciples are finish line!

This realization along with the Bhojpuri story created a collision of epic portion. How would an attractional church and a viral disciple making strategy be explained? Two

⁴ To understand the principles and practices of discovery focused, obedience based disciple making movements go to <http://www.dmmlearninglab.com>

unique and somewhat competing strategies existing alongside one another, a HYBRID! Yes, the car I was driving that almost flattened an innocent grocery shopper gave me the inspiration to put these two strategies together.

The car had two unique power sources in it, gas and electric. The gas engine is old technology which is well understood and commonly used. The electric engine although not new, is a recent application to the automobile and particularly the presence of both gas and electric alongside each other in the same automobile.

We trust the gas engine because we know it, yet of late we are more aware than ever of the dangers it poses to our world. So the electric technology has been put alongside it to create better efficiencies.

The two technologies are distinct in every way; principles on which they are built, the dynamics of producing power, the parts and principles of maintenance. Yet they cooperate with one another when they serve a common mission, to propel the car.

This metaphor became a picture for Shoal Creek. On one side the old attractational model-gas engine-inviting people each week to Come to come discover a life that they've always wanted AND on the other a gospel planting model-electric engine-that equips

Mission: Turn Spiritual Seekers into a Community of Fully Devoted Follower of Jesus

Matthew 11:28

Come to me,
all you who are
weary and
burdened,

Gas Engine

Matthew 28:19

Go make
disciples

Electric Engine

Discovery Process

people to move into their neighborhoods, workplaces and relational networks with a life changing truth of Jesus.

On one side we ask people to invite their friends aggressively, on the other we train people not to mention Shoal Creek unless asked. On one side we have a group structure that organizes virtual strangers into small biblically functioning communities on the other we exploit natural relational connections to plant the gospel in obedience focused groups.

Why do we do this? We've prayed for years that God would allow us to see the 300,000 people who are our near neighbors to come to follow Jesus. Once, I allowed myself the privilege of experiencing what that would look like to have that prayer answered. It was a nightmare! We couldn't handle the answers to our prayers. So we allowed the holy collision to take place and entered a HYBRID world.

How did we do it? Awkwardly at first. The western mind does not hold things in tension well yet our world is held together at the atomic level by just such tension. So our hope was to tell a story long enough for people to begin to get it.

We decided not to roll this out like we would other new ideas. The counter intuitive nature of disciple making movements was something that couldn't be marketed, it had to be caught not taught. So we took on the role of a terrorist rather than marketer and looked for people who were vulnerable to a new and different way of reaching out.

This type of change has to be seen before the majority of people will adopt it. So we focused on high value targets; men and women who already had a demonstrated love and concern for their lost friends and relatives. These people had already exhausted the "Come Strategy" by repeated invitations to their relational network.

The repeated nature of these invitations over time were bordering on irritation so they were ripe for a new and different way of reaching out. In fact we discovered there was about a 7 years S curve they all had in common.

The S curve describes most growth, organic and organizational. At the bottom there is a distinct turn from downward to upward signifying new life and the growth is steep. That growth continues for a period of time until there is a slowing at the peak and if



something doesn't take place, the peak will evolve into another downturn. To avoid the downturn at the top something needs to engage the descent to create ascent.

That process was identified in numerous people and they all had an approximate 7 years growth spurt in common. If we caught them at the right time they were ready for something different because their relational networks were not expanding as fast as their ability to invite⁵.

Enter a strategy learned from David Watson's website and heard explained in person by David Broodryk⁶ for the very first time, Disciple-making movements⁷.

Disciple-making movements (DMM) is a strategy that has 6 key characteristics,⁸

⁵ It is important to note that these people were growing in the relationship with God primarily because they were reaching out. When their ability to reach out in their natural relational networks began to slow down so did their growth.

⁶ [David Broodryk](#) had a guest post on David Watson's [blog](#) just before I was headed to South Africa to host a training session. On a lark I asked if he would do the training for us and he agreed.

⁷ There is often confusion between CPM and DMM. CPM is a term that looks at results. DMM is a methodology to get to CPM. CPM is not a methodology, but a reporting/measuring of results via David Watson. CPM or Church Planting Movements was brought into the public view by David Garrison in his book of the same name.

⁸ More information on the Key Characteristics of DMM found [here](#)



In brief DMM turns average followers of Christ into event planners rather than salesmen for Jesus so that they can invite their friends, neighbor and workmates into small groups designed to hear from God thru reading the Bible, obeying what He says and sharing it with their social networks.

Our attractional/Come strategy or our gasoline engine was running well but we understood that it didn't have the scalability to reach the more than 300,000 in our area with the Gospel. The new DMM/Go strategy did offer the possibility of reaching those 300,000 and beyond. (Our strategy to reach 2.3 million shared later in article)

Putting the two together was no easy task. They at times are seemingly opposite or even contradictory in nature. That is where the Hybrid metaphor helps us communicate our vision. Like the Hybrid auto Shoal Creek has a mission. The car's mission is transportation so the two different power plants serve that greater mission. The design allows each power plant to work when it is most effective thus cooperating together despite their disparate technologies.

Shoal Creek's mission is to turn spiritual seekers into a community of fully devoted followers of Christ. The two sides, Come/Go, serve to support that mission when each is most effective.

From our antidotal research we have discovered that about 50% of our target audience will look for a spiritual beginning in an existing community of faith. There is something inside them that attaches safety and security to an established church. So they are susceptible to a large meeting outreach that provides in their mind a safe place to be exposed to spiritual ideas.

The other 50% isn't coming to a "church service" if their life depended on it. They either have had bad experiences with church or they don't even have a category in their thinking for church. That is, when they think about spirituality, church is not one of the options that appears on their radar screen to deal with spiritual issues. It is as if they don't have a column on their spreadsheet to enter data for church when they are calculating their spiritual pursuits.

So a person's strategy would depend on their target. This is important to keep in mind. At the forefront of this metamorphosis is a love for people who are far from God. That passion drove us to the Hybrid model and is the foremost and driving principles behind this thinking. A passion for the lost then formed a desire to grow a church that focuses on people far from God to bring Jesus' kingdom from heaven to earth.

Although sounding deliciously simple, there is a second and fundamental decision we had to make regarding our Come/Go strategy.

Key Learnings

Growing a church and expanding Jesus Kingdom on this earth despite your ecclesiological underpinnings, are not always good bed fellows. Once we adopted disciple making movements thinking we had a second and very important value to live out.

It would have been easy to allow each side of the strategy to bleed into the other and use Discovery Groups⁹ as a way to grow attendance at Shoal Creek. But if our 50/50 assumptions were right then an invitation to Shoal Creek on the Go side would be counterproductive rather than clarify the main issue of connecting with God for at least 50% of those we pray for.

The second important key to this strategy (the first being a passion for the lost) is a willingness to build Jesus' Kingdom on earth even if it means not growing our church's Sunday attendance.

Sitting on my deck with a group of mega-church pastors discussing this issue, one of these perceptive guys looked at me and said, if you aren't careful, you are going to work yourself out of a job. He saw the implication clearly, that if the gospel moves away from the church (small "c" church as in Shoal Creek) it might threaten the viability of what we have called church.

- a passion for the lost drives strategy
- a priority on Kingdom growth over church growth
- small conversations rather than big promotions
- failing faster was the best way forward

⁹ A written training sheet for Discovery Group can be found [here](#) or a video on how to lead a Discovery Group can be viewed [here](#). On the Come side groups are called Journey Groups on the Go side they are called Discovery Groups

I mentioned that I had a bucket list item that I would probably never get to, working at Starbucks. The implications he was drawing might make that possible, although I don't believe it will. But, I am more than willing to see this happen if it means progress toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission in my lifetime.

It is no easy task to move the Hybrid model from theory to practice. It requires “bi-modal” thinking skills. Bi-modal thinking consist of holding competing ideas in tension without jettisoning either. To be a bi-modal thinker is to be both logical and intuitive, big picture and detail oriented, near and far looking. Holding these competing outlooks in tension becomes a valuable asset. Although there is an objective picture of the Hybrid strategy that appears clean and clear cut, the practice is not always so.

It might seem that with such a visual and unique strategy that the typical communication and marketing channels would have been the best source thru which to launch. But the Go strategy is so counter intuitive especially to people who have “churched” genes that pushing it thru a marketing loud speaker produces disappointing results.

When the words “churched genes” are used it doesn't necessarily refer to people who grew up in church. Shoal Creek began with the typical “church for the un-churched” montra. It didn't take long to discover there are very few “un” churched people in the US. Certainly that number is growing but our culture has a “churched” smell to it. Getting people to believe that legitimate spiritual communities can exist apart from buildings and budgets is not as easy as one might think. Even when reaching people who haven't been in church since their nursery days.

A third value that we stumbled on was getting in touch with our inner terrorist. Instead of shouting “We have a new thing!” from the front we discovered that it is more effective to lurk around the edges for disenfranchised, even dissatisfied people. There seems to be in every church a group of “holy dissatisfied” folks. They aren't trouble makers they just feel like the church could do so much more.

These people were marked by 3 characteristics

- a positive hope that there is something more even though the church is not reaching what they feel is its potential
- already serving in activities outside the formal church structure
- ample relationships outside the church especially with people who didn't share their faith journey.

These folks didn't respond to announcements and promotions but to conversations about what was happening around the world and a question, "Could this happen here?" An experiment intrigued them not a program. The simplicity of the DMM strategy infused a courage and confidence that they in fact could do this.

These conversations led to many mini-training sessions. First, how to lead a discovery group¹⁰ and then the many counter-intuitive principles that allow movements to happen.¹¹ Mini-training sessions helped us understand the need for many training session.

But shock came when we began implementing these groups. More than half of them failed!

Our fourth and painful learning experience was that failure was the path to success. That might be a great line in a speech on how to succeed but it is not a pleasantly accepted practice by Americans. No one likes to fail!

In fact there aren't conferences that highlight FAILURE only success. When people inquire about our "success" with this strategy they always are interested in how many groups, how many generations, etc.

One late insight into the path to success thru failure was learned well after we took the plunge. All the movements that caught our attention and convinced us to move in this direction had an underground as well as above ground story.

Using the analogy of a building, there is sufficient work done out of sight that ensures the structure is built on a good foundation and will stand the test of time. Most movements tell the story of the above ground structure but you have to dig to get the story of the below ground activity.

After much of our own learning did we discover that David Watson had at least 6 years "underground" before seeing results. City Team wandered in the wilderness as long as 9 years before gaining traction. In fact, Dave Hunt of City Team told me in a private conversation that they had a start and 2 restarts in all of their cities in the US.

Failure as in groups starting and then having people drop out or find excuses not to attend became an all too familiar reality. Group facilitators not understanding the

¹⁰ View this training [here](#)

¹¹ For instance, good group facilitators ask questions don't give answers, start group in others homes not yours, don't grow your group multiply it as fast as possible,

criticality of the DNA was also common. People freewheeling there own designer strategy popped up all the time.

This led to another key learning, which might seem like the “DUH!” of the decade but as obvious as it is, it remains critical, not only did we learn that we needed to “fail faster” but also “fail smarter.”

This fifth realization, eased the pain of failure. We took every opportunity to make each failure a learning experience. Connecting leaders to one another and providing tools for them to share their learning with one another helped establish a culture that was constantly in a beta testing mode so we could celebrate failure thru learning.

One of our first learning experience came with the title of our groups. Many of our partners around the world use DBS or discovery Bible study to describe their groups. While failing at starting a group one of our leaders helped us eliminate “Bible” from our group name.

Upon asking friends to join a “Discovery Bible Study” group reading the Bible to find out what God says about life, they found a resistance. Wanting to learn we had them explore the “No” answers they had received.

The answer was enlightening to say the least. The non-believers answered that a “Bible Study” was a place where Christians go to display their knowledge about the Bible and since they knew nothing about the Bible they didn’t want to go to another place in their life where they felt stupid. We learned to call our groups- Discovery Groups not Bible studies from then on.

Every moment has its own unique learnings because it targets a unique culture. The idea of a one size fits all strategy is simply misguided. So implementation and execution has to include many pivots based on the learnings.

To ensure that all this learning was moving thru our Go side culture we have a commitment to train, train and retrain. Stan Parks says in an interview on the Disciple Making Movements Sandbox¹² that before we see disciple making movements in North America we will have to see training movements. We now believe that.

To care for and create this learning environment we discovered that the casual exchange of learning was helpful but not sufficient. There was and is a need to catalog and categorize the learning and communicate it in formal settings to allow the give and take

¹² The interview with Stan is available [here](#)

of Q & A to further infect our disciple making disciples with the DNA of DMM. This led to a sixth principle, train, train and retrain.

Many and varied training opportunities were needed. We provided online training which they could take advantage of 24/7. We held regular 4 hour sessions that help encourage their skill building.

We use a flush and drip strategy. Upfront was a 4 hour immersion into discovery process and movement thinking. Out back was a host of opportunities to hone their skills and mindset.

This commitment to training grew not only out of our practitioners but also our leaders. We were learning both inside and outside of our movement efforts. We learned how to better put words to our instruction. New metaphors to explain what we were up to, new exercises to help get ideas across. We learned from others how to train better.

We offered short, end of the work day, Happy Hour Coaching session that people could stop by on their way from home and interact. We committed to calling every new group facilitator for the first 6 to 8 weeks. We expected the group that they grew out of to provide coaching but we also had some of our “super” coaches get in the game with them to discover how we could help them.

Since this is not leading edge but bleeding edge stuff, it becomes vital to have a value of training, coaching and mentoring at the heart of catalyzing a movement. Great battles like Napoleon in Russia were lost not because of superior opposing forces or better strategy but because his army wasn't able to supply itself the proper needs of the animals and humans. Movements live and die on good mentoring and coaching. So we started our movement catalyzing efforts surrounded with coaching opportunities.

This seventh learning, providing coaching and mentoring, was not easy working with suburbanites Americans. Americans don't seek nor especially appreciate coaching. And the younger your street level operatives the more difficult it is to get them to accept coaching and to give coaching.

There is a spirit of competence that resides inside the suburban mentality. It may arise from a sense of democracy or even insecurity but it causes people to resist seeking advice and evaluating the results of their action especially if it means being evaluated by others.

So our coaching and mentoring couldn't wait for questions to be asked. After each group a phone conversation or face to face meeting with our disciple makers took place. The agenda?

- Generally, how did your group go?
- Specifically, we move thru our 6 discovery process questions
 - What kinds of things is your group thankful for?
 - What types of things are stressing them out?
 - What needs are being raised and how is your group meeting them?
 - What happens when you discuss the Bible passage?
 - What do the obedience statements look like?
 - What types of people are they sharing with?

These along with a regular connection to the disciple makers own personal journey creates a successful coaching session. It is impossible to have a disciple-maker without having a disciple so coaching has to pay attention to character development as well as skill development in the disciple-maker.

We find that a constant vision casting posture is necessary for our coaches. There is a gravitational pull of every group inward and the coach needs to constantly draw attention to the generational nature of disciple making.

Changing our minds about critical issues

In adopting the Hybrid Strategy we had to start moving toward a very different way of handling the truths that Jesus provided us. This meant radical movement in our thinking from a traditional perspective. Many of our firmly held practices were challenged as we re-read the Bible clearly understanding our western filters.

Knowledge to obedience

Although Jesus clearly said, “If you love me keep my commandments,” (John 14:15) and repeated it numerous times in His teaching, Christians have always placed a high valued on those who knew the most about the Bible rather than those who obeyed the most. Consequently discipleship has become synonymous with the acquisition of knowledge about Jesus which seldom translates to a life becoming more like Jesus.

This may have something to do with the movement of the good news from Jerusalem west. As the message of Jesus left the Hebrew culture which possessed a unified

assumption of the person, it picked up a hitchhiker. The Greek world's patristic understanding influenced by Plato's dualism.¹³

Plato taught that there were two parts to a human mind (soul) and body. Although it might be too simplistic to pile all the blame on Plato, the incursion of the Greek thought slowly gave rise to the western habit of valuing the mind and the acquisition of knowledge over the a Hebrew pursuit of spirituality that would value a unified approach.

Simply put, Greeks could be satisfied with know but Hebrews would only be satisfied with know and do. For a Hebrew to know and not obey would be to not know.

One only has to calculate the time given to applying what the Bible says as opposed to knowing what the Bible says in any Christian gathering. The ratio tells the story of allowing of the incursion of Greek dualism into western spirituality.

Both in what we valued and our practices, obedience became our desired outcome. When opening the Bible our main question is "If this is God speaking, what are we going to do about it?" Most if not all the Bible is easily understood in the English language by the average reader and doesn't need explanation but demands obedience.

Although this sounds rather simple, it is more difficult to practice. We have been steeped in a knowledge based Christianity so long it is often like a fish. When asked if it feels wet, the response would be, "NO!" All a fish knows is wet so feeling it is not something in its skill set. To discover his "wetness" is a painful and revealing process. He must feel dry to appreciate what it means to be wet.

Discovering our addiction to knowledge is a painful process. We began gaining a new awareness of our addiction to knowledge and how it makes the good news heavy. One has to know a certain amount of facts to be 'qualified' to do certain things irrespective of their desire to obey. As we discovered our wetness we were able to think differently about obedience.

Telling to asking

With obedience the main focus then the key to facilitating groups becomes learning the fine art of asking questions rather than giving answers. Giving answers hijacks the learning process from the learner and creates a passivity that is detrimental to the disciple-making process. Adults especially trust their conclusions much more than they trust the conclusions given to them.

It is no wonder that we have created a consumerist mentality in the church. It comes with the valuing of experts who give us the answers that we could seek for ourselves. But moving from telling to asking pushes against consumerism and has the unintended consequence of revealing those who are genuinely interested in the disciple making.

¹³ see Tim Hegg, My Big Fat Greek Mind Pt.1 for more. <http://www.torahresource.com/EnglishArticles/BigFatGreekMindsetPart1.pdf>

John 6:44,45 gives us a new way of thinking about the teaching learning process. It says that God will draw people to himself and be the teacher and bring people to his Son.

It is no secret that the great teachers from Socrates to Jesus have always used questions as their key teaching tool. Seeing their key function as “causing to learn” rather than the exchange of facts some times thought of as teaching.

On a practical level this meant focusing on the Bible to the exclusion of any sort of curriculum or book. Our goal is to create a disciple making disciple who has a face to face relationship with God. Not a relationship mediated by disciplers, pastors, authors, spiritual mentors or the like. It is no wonder the nobility of the Bereans is noted in Acts 17:11 because they searched the Scripture for themselves.

Qualified to willing

Modern education has taught us to value subject matter experts, the formally educated who possess credentials and degrees. Roland Allen in his formative book, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church* suggested in the early 1900's the church didn't possess enough money to prosecute their strategy. A strategy to build hospitals and schools to educate, hoping to deploy the educated to fulfill the Great Commission

It was Allen's unpopular assertion that this strategy was dead in the water. History and the numbers prove him right. Never has Christianity achieved more than a third of the world's population. David Barrett & Todd Johnson in *World Christian Trends* published by the William Carey Library assert that it cost \$1.5 million to baptize one person in the US in 2001¹⁴. To make matters worse, Gordon Conwell's *Status of Global Missions Report* finds that in 2013 it cost \$710,000 globally to baptize one person.

The current models of achieving the Great Commission are unnecessarily expensive and ineffective at penetrating a majority of the world's population. There just isn't enough money to educate and train people in our current paradigm to get the job done.

There is a need to change the lens in which you see the gospel expanding.

Jesus gathered his disciples in the mountains of Galilee in Matthew 28 to give them a final command. We find two types of people gathered, Worshipers and Doubters. It was to this crowd that Jesus gave the Great Commission-Go make disciples.

It didn't bother Jesus that some doubted. He was fully convinced that it was the Gospel that was the power of God that would lead to a new life with God not the Worshiper's or the Doubter's level of competence. Jesus was more interested in the willing than the equipped to take this life changing message to every culture.

Just as in virus transmission there is a period of contagion that is usually very close to when the virus was transmitted. When it comes to obeying the Great Commission the sooner a disciple (simply defined as someone willing to obey Jesus) begins to call people

¹⁴ *World Christian Trends*, William Carey Library, David Barrett & Todd Johnson p.

to partner with them in obeying the Bible, the more likely they are to create disciple making disciples.

Simple, repeatable strategies were developed that allowed the newest person to begin inviting their friends, relatives and workmates to a life of following Jesus. The group process empowered the neophyte to be contagious to their relational network.

Stop evangelizing start discipling

Re-reading the New Testament, two surprising discoveries created much discomfort. First, the concept of “Evangelism” as it is commonly practiced and second, the definition of the “Gospel” as it would be regularly explained were embarrassingly missing from the text of the Bible.

Nowhere is there an example of someone sharing the Gospel as is commonly taught in evangelism training classes. Pieces parts are found all over the place but in moments like

- Acts 2 where Peter challenges those gathered at the feast of Pentecost
- or in Acts 7 where Stephen defends himself to his executioners,

the idea of the Gospel being 4 pieces of information

- God loving us,
- being separated from God by sin,
- Jesus dying for our sins and
- the need to receive him as Savior and Lord

doesn't seem to have the same priority as is given in modern explanations of the Gospel.

Surprisingly when Jesus is ask the “Gospel” question by the rich, young ruler (Matthew 19:16-30), His response is so unsettling that we find ourselves doing theological gymnastics to avoid the implication of being able to buy your way into heaven. Jesus is declaring at least that entering Heaven requires a surrender of rival gods, obedience.

The Gospel when shared in the Bible more often than not goes back to Abraham or Creation and comes thru the Messiah to the Cross and Resurrection. It is a fuller, less distilled version of what goes by the name “Gospel” today.¹⁵

Jesus' prime method of reaching men and women was to call people to obedience, to disciple them. He started with people where they were and ask them to follow him, not to believe but to obey. His main currency of spiritual transformation was trust.

¹⁵ Scot McKnight's King Jesus Gospel looks at every “Gospel” presentation in the Bible or Recovering the Real Lost Gospel by Darrell Bock

The story, a Creator God, a long and enduring love relationship thru Israel, the promise of a Messiah to heal the world, the life and teachings of Jesus, the death and resurrection and the promise of a consummation of the age is the good news that Jesus called men and women to.

A new King and a new Kingdom was the new life that Jesus offered.

Because of our shifts in thinking about the Gospel, we began to train people not to be salesman for Jesus but event planners. Instead of cajoling people to persuade friends what to believe about Jesus, we taught them to invite their friends to a group that was going to read the Bible and discover what God had to say about life. Believing that God would show up, be the teacher and bring people to His Son as He promised in John 6:44-46.

This reading began in Genesis with creation, traveled thru places like Leviticus and Isaiah, before arriving in the Gospels and culminating at the Cross. This presentation of the Gospel was more in keeping with what we see the Bible describing the Gospel.¹⁶

Our Discovery Groups provided repeated exposure to God's story in a relational context where they are encouraged to obey what God is saying and share what they are discovering with their friends.

More importantly, the understanding of the whole Gospel challenges a disciple to more than belief. Instead of persuasion which attacks what someone believes, discipling pre-Christians brings people to the issue of true repentance: Who is their King and whose Kingdom will they live for. Small acts of obedience leads to God's act of regeneration and a new life with their Creator and King.

It is unfortunate that our translations of the Bible use the word "faith or belief" for a translation of the Greek word "pistis." The word can and should be translated "trust" in most cases. That would give us a clearer understanding of what Jesus is asking. "Having faith or believing in" has lost the Biblical teeth that trust conveys.

As we have begun to disciple pre-believers teaching them to obey by trusting that what God says matters most is in line with the core of Jesus' teaching. It leads not only to them understanding that Jesus is their savior but he is also their KING!

A new vision with a bigger dream!

Our Come Strategy continues each week seeking to reach men and women far from God. But inside that strategy we are constantly training people to make disciple making disciples. Teaching them to identify spiritually interested people and invite them to read and obey the Bible and share what God is up to in their lives.

¹⁶ A list of our discipleship curriculum can be found [here](#)

Learning from leaders around the world, we now have the confidence to begin to pray not for 300,000 but for 2.3 million, the number of people in the Greater Kansas City area. Those individuals reside in 17-counties that can be broken down into 1,607 block groups¹⁷. We can pray specially for geographical areas, know the characteristics of those whom we are praying for and begin to connect with partners to plant the gospel in these areas.

So now our prayer and our Come/Go Strategy have synergy. We can pray specifically for 2.3million people in the 29th largest city in US spanning 2 States-Kansas and Missouri.

The Go Mission

Establish disciple-making ecosystems in 17 counties by replicating the Disciple-making Movements Learning Community DNA in ever descending movements to counties to Census Tracts to Census Block groups until we have a replicating Discovery Group for every 300 people in each of the 1607 Census Block Groups or roughly 8000 Discovery Groups

We have asked 5 key questions:

1. Where will we be active?

17 Counties in Kansas City MSA

2. How will we get there?

Establish self replicating disciple making ecosystems-DMLCs

3. How do define the win?

One Self replicating Discovery Groups for every 300 people

4. What speed will we move at?

Over 10 years we see the Great Commission achieved in KC

¹⁷ A census block group consist of from 270 to 1360 household.

5. How will we fund this initiative?

**Shoal Creek will contribute 50% of Roy Moran's time
Derek and Shea Poe raise their own funds to be City Catalyst
Partners will be acquired along the way**

Timeline for our Go Strategy

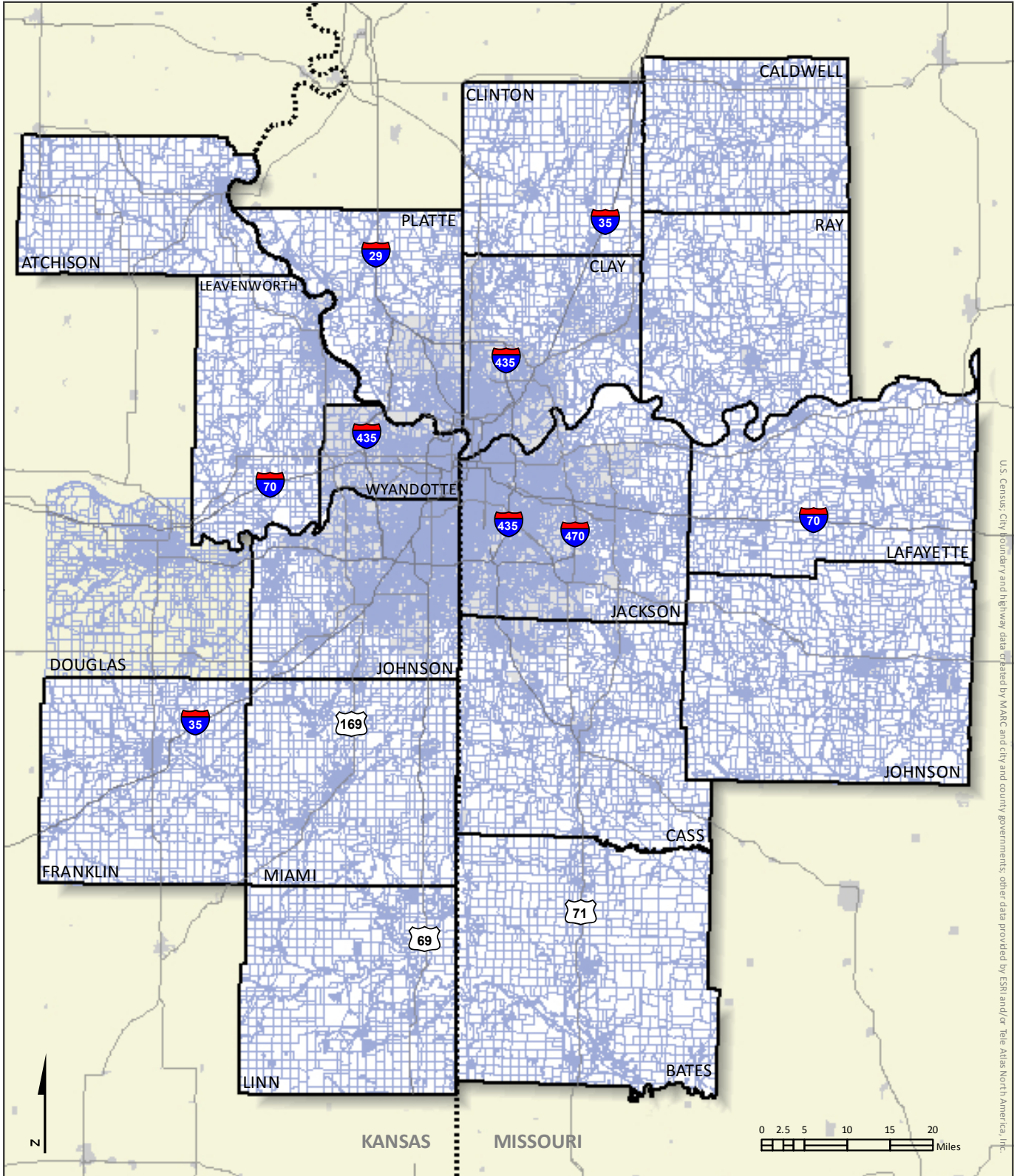
2014 Establish a Disciple-making Learning Community (DMLC) Kansas City
Launch an online training platform
50 groups with 2nd Generation growth
Host iDisciple Conference (Nationwide event)
DMM Collaboration Kitchen Monthly
5 Church partners
1 Ministry Partner (Mission South Side)

2015 Establish DMLC in 5 most populated counties developing partners in
Hispanic, African American and Ethnic populations.
Upgrade Online Training platform to include Spanish
Monthly regional meeting for DMLC
City-Wide DMLC coordinating coaching mentoring and training
City-Wide Training events
8 Hats (functionaries of a moment) identified
5 Partnering churches
5 Ministry Partners
200 Groups in suburbia
50 Groups in Hispanic communities
50 Groups in African American communities
5 Groups in Somali communities

2016 DMLCs in remaining 12 counties
250 Discovery Groups in 17 counties
10% of Discovery Groups achieving 3rd Generation
50 Partnering Churches
30 Ministry partners
Establish DMLCs focusing on affinity populations-Recovery Community,
Marketplace, LGBT, Homeless, Gangs, Sex-Trafficking, Sports
Teams,
Begin trolling for exurb partners

2017 Add 3 strategic focused self funded staff
Enhance Online train platform fully mobile, multi-lingual
Catalyst with eyes for every population segment
500 groups with consistent 4th Generation
100 Church Partners across every denomination

2010 Census Blocks in the KC-OP-KC Combined Statistical Area & Douglas County, KS



U.S. Census, City boundary and highway data created by MARC and city and county governments; other data provided by ESRI and/or Tele Atlas North America, Inc.

- Counties in the KC-OP-KC Combined Statistical Area
- State Boundary
- Cities

More information and data use policy are available at www.marc.org/gis

JANUARY 2011



Replicating Groups on major employer campus
Cerner, Sprint, Hallmark, Garmin, Black and Veatch, GM, Ford,
DST, Med Centers, Gov't Centers

Campus Catalyst identified for every College and University
Begin trolling for rural partners

2018 Continue to improve online learning tools and expanding training capacity
Track groups throughout city
DMLCs in every Census Tract who are able to provide training

2019 1000 groups spread across every segment of city

2020 Identify 4th generation specialist and replicate thru training

2021-2025 Learn and pivot

We don't need money or even qualified church planters with leadership gifts to attract a core group to start a Sunday church meeting. The key is finding spiritually interested people who want to begin to obey what Jesus says. Teach them to be a disciple and make disciples. Again and again and again!