



BE *the* CHURCH

Discipleship and Mission
Made Simple

10 Drawings - 10 Conversations

Caesar Kalinowski & Seth McBee

Be The Church
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By Caesar Kalinowski and Seth McBee

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Credits

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To download all the drawings used in this eBook go here: [Be the Church Drawings](#)

Acknowledgments

I love doing things in a team, being a part of something bigger than myself. Working on this book was just such an opportunity. When Seth started sharing these simple yet powerful drawings, he captured so many of the core issues that we think need to be addressed and relearned concerning discipleship and mission. I am grateful that he allowed me to "horn in" on his great idea and give voice to the artwork. Thanks buddy!

Thanks also to my brothers and sisters in Soma Communities that have helped shape these thoughts in real time over the years. And finally, I want to thank Adam, Josh and Chris at Grace Covenant Church for providing an awesome place to rest, listen and write. You guys are the best!

Caesar

This has been a whirlwind of "interesting." What started with a simple drawing one night thinking through how to illustrate missional community life, has turned into something that has really hit a nerve for many. I'm truly thankful to Caesar, who has spurred on many of these drawings through our many conversations on theology and mission. Not only that, but his insight for this project was exactly what took it to the next level. Love you brother. I also want to thank all my brothers and sisters within Soma Communities, who shaped many of these thoughts and ideas through the years. Lastly, my bride, who helped form these drawings by giving me insight to their usability and ease of transferability. She helped ensure they spoke what I was thinking and what we've been trying to live. These drawings represent so much of what I've learned by being a part of an actual family of missionary servants. I truly hope they are an aid towards making disciples who make disciples.

Seth

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Introduction

Sometimes the simplest things can get lost in tradition or become over complicated due to confusion or lack of practice. Sometimes we are just too smart for our own good. The reality of who we are as Christians, the Church and as disciples, while having historical and eternal importance, has become somewhat muddled in our modern understanding and dialogue.

As the conversation around being “missional” has come front and center within certain church circles in recent years, it seems that many of us struggle to grasp and/or explain the basics to others. This short book of simple pictures and conversations is meant to offer a starting point—a way to get, or keep, the dialogue going around some of the key issues surrounding who we are as the Church and what our mission really is.

This project started out when Seth doodled up a few simple drawings on his digital tablet and posted them online for others to see and comment on. The response was immediate and surprising. Those first few drawings were shared across the interwebs at an amazing rate. Regular folks, church planters, pastors and teachers asked for more.

Then the idea of creating an ebook with several of these simple concepts being explained in brief came up. This is the result of that effort.

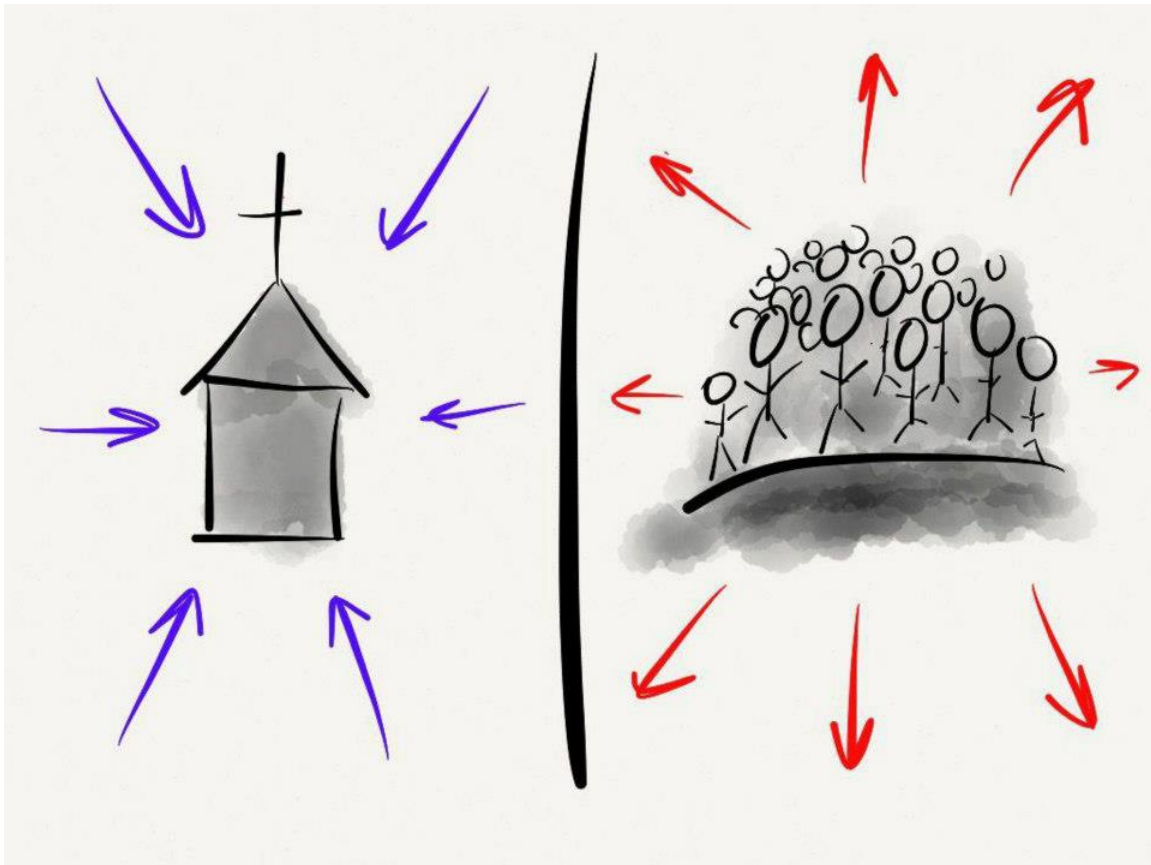
We know that conversations like the ones depicted in this short narrative don't “just happen”, or at least not in the simplistic ways you will read here. Clearly, regular conversations that turn to topics of theology, the church and discipleship are rooted in relationship and would occur in a much more nuanced context. But we are not writing this to compete against Moby Dick for some international literary award...we know that the dialogues can seem a little “canned” or corny in places. Forgive us. We offer these drawings and conversations to help give handles to a few important topics that we seem to be running into more and more these days. We imagine that at least one or two of these will jump out at you and answer a few questions.

We have kept them short and sweet and simple. We hope they're helpful.

Caesar and Seth

We Don't Go to Church

The church is not a building; it is the family of God on his mission.



“We’ll see you at church on Sunday...are you bringing your friend from work?” hollered Shari as she walked across the parking lot.

“What do you mean?” Mark playfully responded.

“You *are* going to church next week aren’t you?”

“I’m planning on seeing you this weekend, but I am not going to church. In fact I am never going to church again!”

Shari looked puzzled.

“If you mean, am I going to the building where the church gathers together this Sunday, I am hoping to.”

“You know what I mean...are you messing with me?” Shari shot back.

Mark opened up his car door and grabbed a napkin out of the glove box. Let me show you something Shari. It may seem obvious, and I’ve only got a minute before I have to go, but this is kind of a big deal really.

Mark started out by drawing a simple picture of a building with a cross on top.

“This is what most of us growing up have come to refer to as the church. A building. The place where Christians go, usually on Sunday, to worship and listen to the preacher.”

Mark added arrows pointing toward the building as he talked, indicating people heading to the building together on Sunday.

“But the Bible never ever describes the church as a building. It always refers to the church as a people—God’s people, in Christ—who are now sent by the Holy Spirit out into all of life to be the body of Jesus.

Mark added another simple drawing to the right of the first one that showed a group of people with arrows indicating outward movement.

“I think this is a better picture of the church; a people who are sent by God...who are outward focused. Certainly not a building, or contained within four walls for an hour or two each week.”

Shari ran her hand through her hair and responded, “We don’t go to church...we are the church. I like it. But maybe that’s just semantics.”

“Maybe, but I think it is more important than that. It might just be the beginning of straightening out our thinking about who we really are as Christians. Does going to that building on Sunday—or any other day—make us a Christian or a child of God? No, it doesn’t. I am not sure when in history we started referring to a building as “the church”, but it’s pretty bad theology and has only added to the pattern of doing our religious activities and living out our faith apart from the culture. We live separate from those in our city or neighborhood who need to hear and see the Gospel in action so they can believe. So they can experience Jesus.”

“I can see that.” Shari said, “And I don’t want my kids growing up thinking that the church is just a place we go on weekends or during the week for Awana meetings. I want them to see themselves the way Jesus does. They are the church. Everyday, wherever they are.”

“Cool. I am working hard to change my thinking on this...I think it matters. Anyway, I still plan to see you on Sunday when the church gathers together. And I hope my friend will be there to meet you. See you then Shari!”

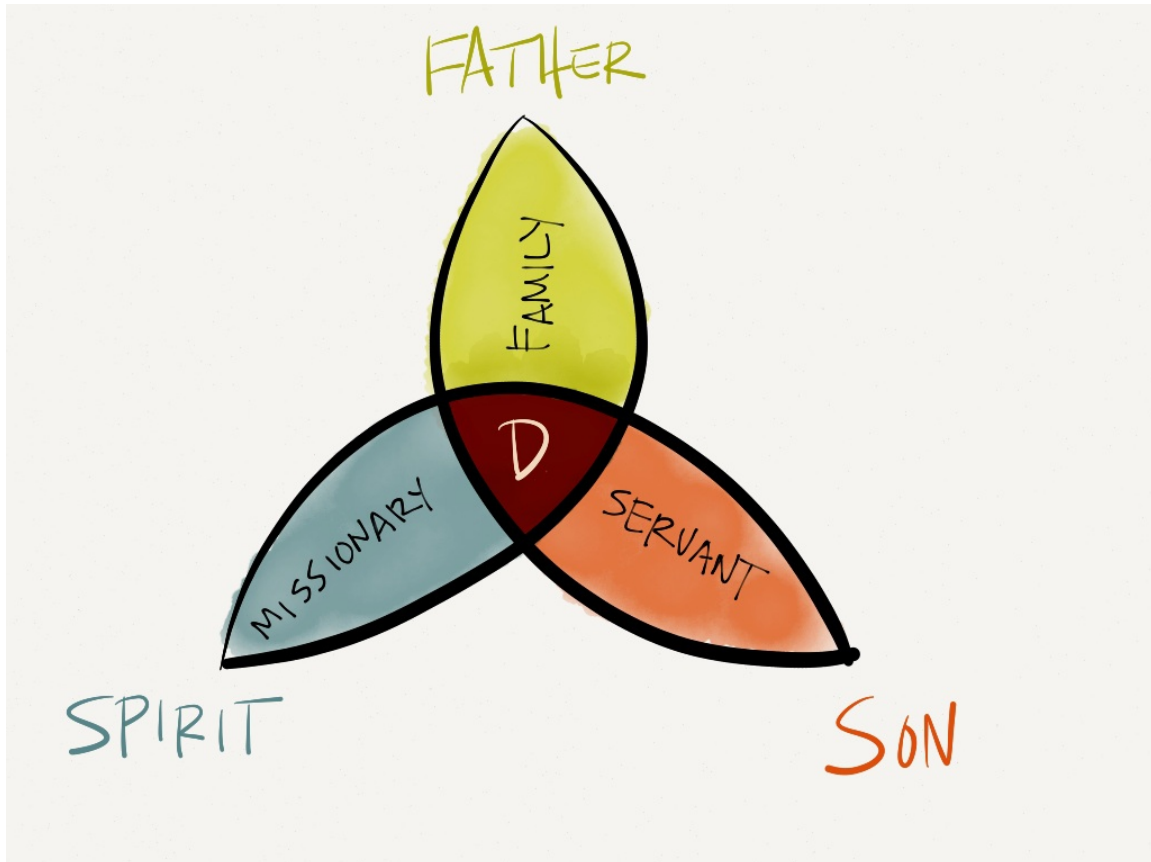
3 Questions:

1. What is God saying to you right now in light of this?
2. What will you do about it? When?
3. Who else do you need to share this with?

Notes:

Who We Are

As disciples of Jesus, we have been given a new identity that shapes all of life.



Nick was excited about having Tom as a neighbor. Not only were Tom and his family fun people to hang out with, they were Christians and shared much of the same faith and family values that Tom did.

“Sit down for a second, I’m taking a break to grab a cup of coffee—you in?”

Tom said, “Sure buddy. But you should borrow my blower thing. It’ll make short work of that mountain of leaves out there.”

“Awesome...now you tell me. If I had that earlier I would be finished by now! You’ve probably been watching and laughing at me for hours. Hey—are you gonna be there tomorrow when my daughter Heather gets baptized?” Nick asked.

“Not sure, but I’ll be there if I can. I love baptisms. Mine was a long time ago and I wish I had understood it better back then. Have you been baptized Nick?”

“Yep, when I was in college. Up above the choir loft in a little tub behind some curtains. I particularly liked that white robe they gave me to wear. At least the whole thing was over quickly. I was just glad I didn’t drown the pastor before it was over!”

Tom thought for a second before saying, “Baptism is a super significant picture of something amazing. And beautiful. When Jesus told his disciples to go and make more disciples baptizing them into the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, that was all a huge statement of their new identity as his followers—as Christians. There, in short order, Jesus confirmed the church’s identity and mission.”

“Whoa, I thought it was just some ancient tradition and what is called a sacrament.”

“It is Nick, but it’s really important stuff. Tomorrow when Heather is baptized she will be starting a new life with a recreated identity and purpose. She will be baptized into the name of the Father. With God as her father she—and everyone in the Church—are part of the same family, God’s family. She’ll be baptized, immersed, into the name of the Son, Jesus. With Jesus as King of her life, she will now begin to live as one who serves him—and others with her entire life. The way Jesus did. And she is being baptized into the name of the Holy Spirit. That same Spirit, Nick, that sent Jesus on his mission, and empowered everything he did now lives in and sends Heather out on the very same mission. All of that is true for us too.”

“Even if we didn’t always know or understand it?”

“It’s true of us because it is true of God.”

Now Nick stopped to think for a moment. “As Christians...we are all part of God’s family of missionary servants sent as disciples who make disciples.

Amazing. It sounds like a great adventure! I’ve got some catching up to do. And I want to make sure Heather understands how awesome tomorrow is going to be.”

Nick paused for a second then said, “I wish I had understood all of this years ago.”

“Me too Nick. Me too.”

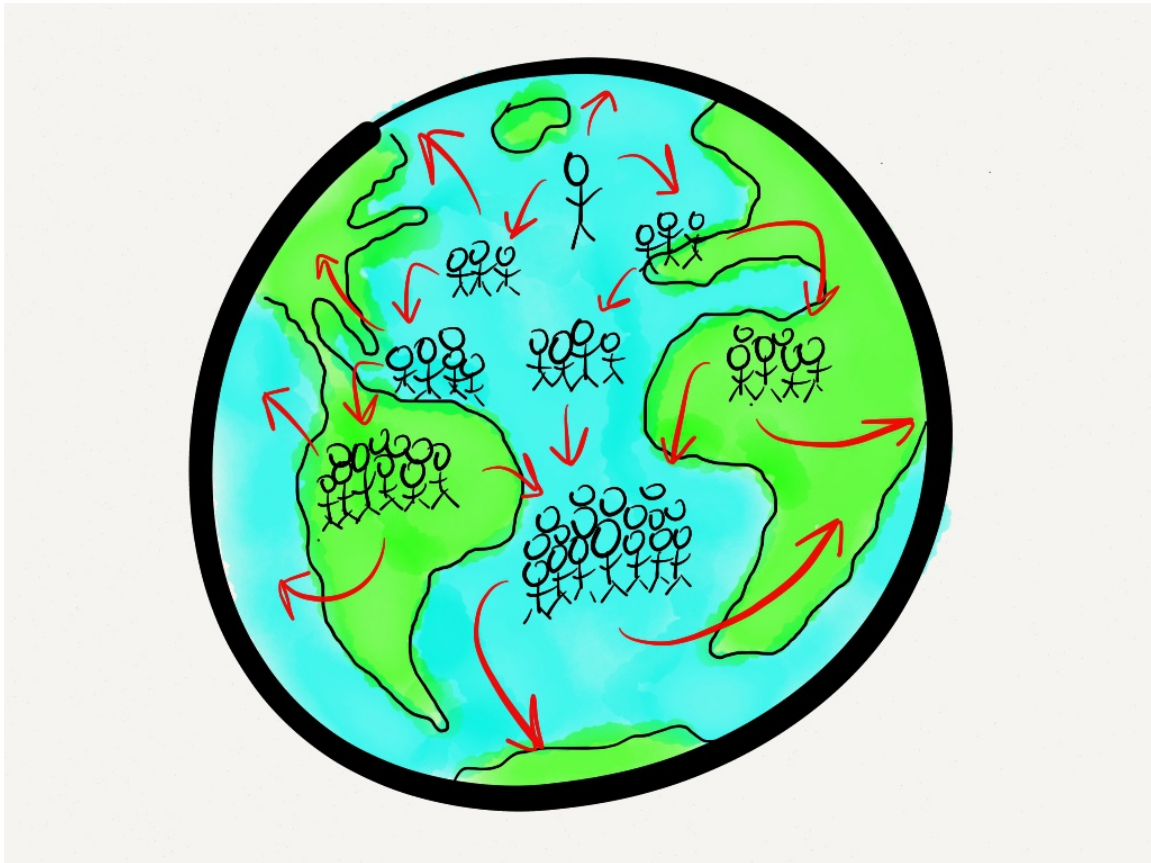
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Notes:

The Purpose of the Gospel

Disciples make disciples who fill the earth with God's glory.



“If you’re gonna stand there and make fun of me you might as well lend a hand. Hold this trim to the doorway while I nail it up, would’ya Bill?”

“No problem. It looks like you’re just about finished with the remodel on this kitchen of yours. It sure did need a restoration. I remember when your grandfather put those old cabinets up. Steve, you must have a real sense of accomplishment getting this all restored back to the way it was originally. It looks just like it did all those years ago!”

“You know Bill, the whole time I’ve been doing this restoration project I just can’t help but think about the end of *The Story*.”

“Which story?”

“The overarching story found in the Bible. It starts off with this planet and

the first humans created perfect. Everything was the way God intended it to be. Then for thousands of years we see human sin and self-rule jack everything up. It's still that way today, for the most part. But when Jesus died as a substitute for our sins, he began this amazing restoration of all things. And when I read the end of the Bible, somewhere in the book of Revelation, it says that God will restore all things back to the way he originally created them."

"That blows my mind Steve. Seriously."

"And here's what really blows me away—that restoration has already begun with us...AND God is using us to continue that restoration in the lives of others. Today. Right now."

"But that's not about fixing kitchens or even doing massive park clean-ups, or public restoration projects...or is it?"

"Well, those types of acts of service and restoration we get to do is both a blessing to others and a picture of the restoration that God is doing. But ultimately families, neighborhoods, business, cities or nations are restored as Jesus saves and restores the people within them. So as Jesus' disciples it is our mission to make more disciples who make more disciples. In so doing, people and things are restored. But here is the real point—the world is increasingly filled with...Jesus!"

Bill added, "A neighborhood doesn't get restored because all of the houses in it got a new coat of paint and repaired fences. It is changed and becomes a beautiful picture of who God is as the lives of those who live there are transformed more and more into Jesus."

"Exactly bro! Disciples of Jesus make more disciples of Jesus and little by little this world is changed, restored. It is both the beginning of God restoring all people, places and things, and a reminder that Jesus is coming back to this earth one day to complete the remodeling job."

"I can't wait Steve. I hope it's soon."

"Well, hopefully before I have to redo this kitchen again!"

"Then this whole discipleship thing, living as disciples and discipling others

to faith, is a big deal then.”

“For sure. If we believe the gospel, the good news about Jesus as our true hope, and we believe that the reason we have been saved is to now be his body on this planet, then we have to take this pretty seriously.”

“It sounds like it is the point—the reason we are saved in the first place. To live in such a way that the world would be filled more and more with Jesus, who is the exact image of our God, our Father . And then to help more and more people come to faith and live a life doing the same.”

“Yep, I think so. I got a long way to go with all of this. So much of my life is filled with everything but making disciples. Wow.”

“Steve, don’t freak out. It’s a process. It’s happening, little by little. I can see it in you.”

“Thanks Bill, I hope so. Okay, back to the restoration at hand. Hand me that nail gun.”

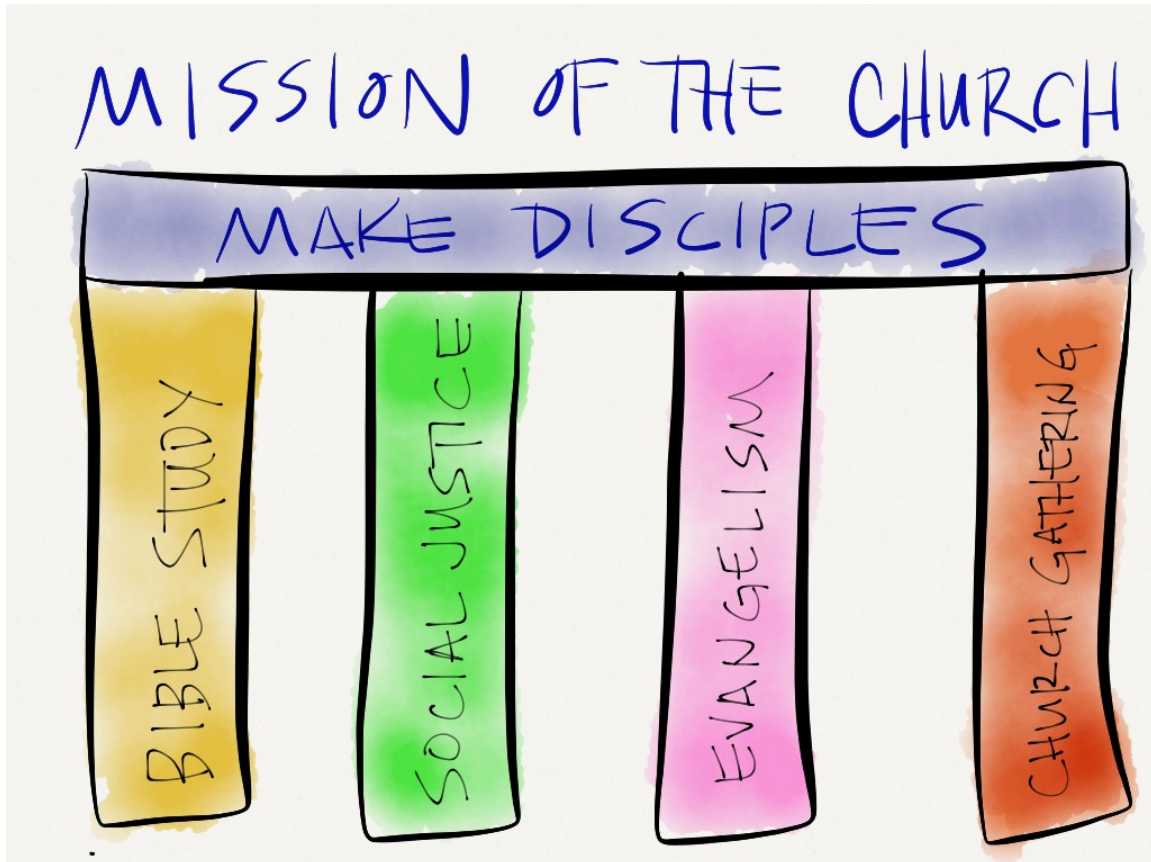
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Notes:

The Mission of the Church

Everything we do as the Church supports the only mission Jesus gave us—make disciples.



Email: To: All Department Heads “All department leaders should be prepared to present your annual plan to the rest of the staff and board at this week’s staff meeting.”

Email: To: Pastor Alan “Al, let’s do some lunch today. I need to run something past you brother. You in? –Pastor Geoff”

“Thanks for making the time on such short notice Al. I’ve been thinking and praying through our upcoming staff meeting—the one where everyone is supposed to give their master plan for the year.”

“Me too Geoff. Whataya thinkin’?”

“I gotta be honest with you, I love that our church has so many quality

programs to offer...Sunday Services, Men's and Women's Ministries, MOPS, AWANA, Youth Explosion...but I wish we could figure out a way to, I don't know, pull the rope in the same direction a little more. I'd love to see us get on the same mission."

"Yeah Geoff, but we already are, right? I mean everybody wants to see more and more people getting saved. That's the point, isn't it?"

"Well yes, but as I've been thinking more and more about Jesus' Great Commission, I can only see one mission that he ever gave the Church: Go and make disciples teaching those disciples to obey everything Jesus taught us. That's why the Church exists. To make disciples; more and more people who walk in Jesus' ways and live out his life today in community."

"So how are you thinking this affects our upcoming meeting?" Alan asked.

"What would it look like if everything we did, in every department or activity or program of our church, somehow served this idea of making disciples who make disciples?"

Geoff grabbed a napkin and quickly drew a simple illustration with several pillars supporting a main structure. On the top piece he wrote, Discipleship and on each of the different pillars that supported it he wrote a different activity or service the church engaged in. Evangelism, Sunday Services, Bible Studies, Social Justice...

"What do you think of this Alan? Does this make sense?"

"I think so, but why don't you explain it anyway. Sometimes I'm a little slow on the uptake."

"Okay, let me give you a 'for instance.' What if our Sunday Services, which are now designed to get the maximum amount of people to attend so they will learn from the Bible and hear the gospel preached, were instead planned to equip folks to go out and proclaim and live out the gospel and make disciples. Instead of the many coming to hear from the few, we could equip the many to go out and engage the masses. The focus of Sunday would start to be measured not by attendance numbers, but by how affective it was at making disciples who could go and make more disciples."

“Whoa. That would be a pretty big shift my brother. Talk about upsetting the apple cart!”

“Let me come back to that one. And what if your youth ministry, or the men’s and women’s ministries were all retooled, focused and measured based on how affective they were at helping our people live as disciples who know how to make disciples in all the normal stuff of everyday life? I think that would be awesome!”

“I can imagine a lot of people getting their feathers ruffled at first, but our team members all have the same heart to see Jesus made much of, and for more people to know him and walk with him.”

“Al, I’m not necessarily talking about getting rid of any of the things we’re doing, though we might find out we should. I’m talking about a difference in intention. We have a great time at our Sunday gatherings, but what if they were designed as a weekly equipping for everyday life in disciple-making? Instead of men’s and women’s ministries happening completely separate from each other, what if they were somehow integrated to prepare and train families—or single people for that matter—to live like a family of missionaries throughout the week. A family that has one mission: to make disciples?”

“It makes sense Geoff, but we’ve always done it a certain way. That’ll be hard to change.”

“Maybe. How about we start small and go for the “big fish” of Sunday mornings after we gain a little momentum. You’re over our youth ministries; I’m leading our adult ministries. What if we started by making this year a total life-on-life discipleship focus? Change our measurement tools a little and see what we learn?”

“It’ll be hard to argue with, and like you said, it really is a matter of intention versus blowing everything up.”

“Alright, I gotta get back to the office and rewrite my annual plan for the meeting this Thursday. I’ve got a few bombs to drop!”

“Careful Geoff...careful...Me too!”

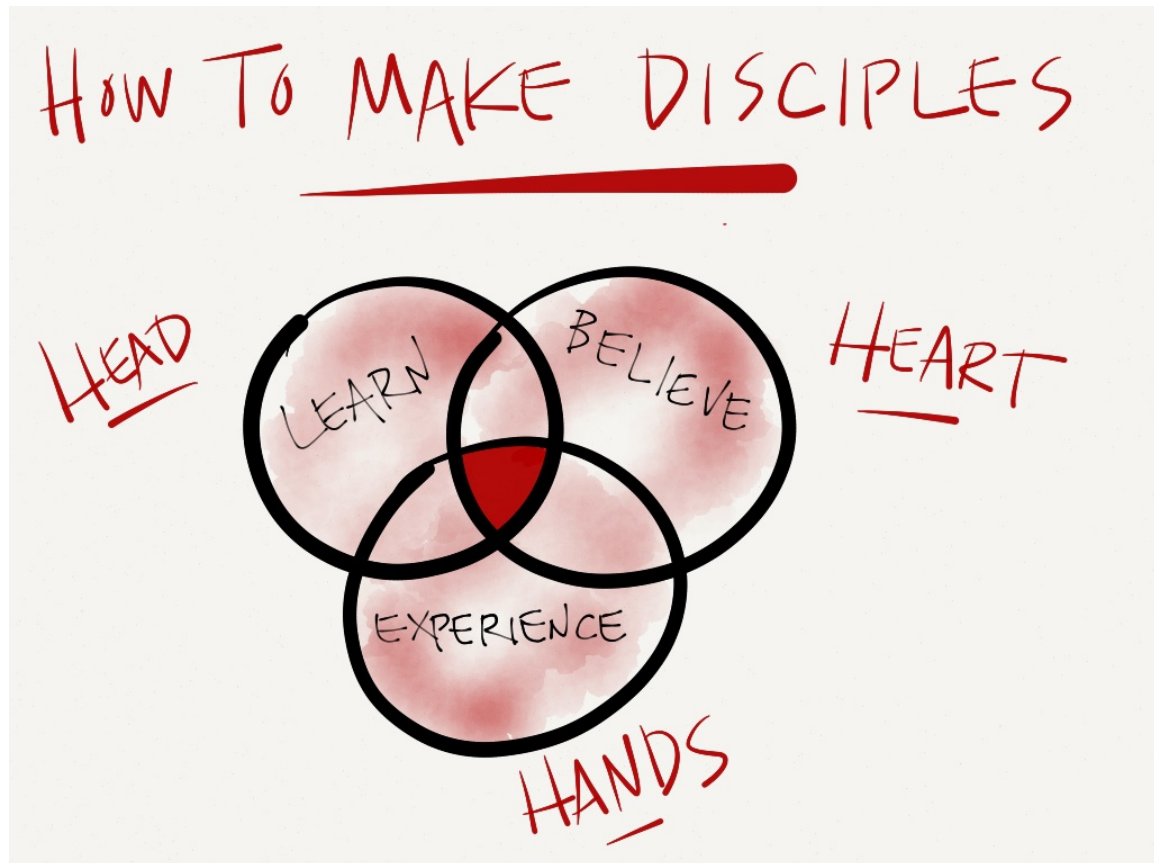
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Notes:

How We Make Disciples – Head, Heart & Hands

It is not enough to teach facts and gain knowledge. Disciples must be formed in ways that change their motivation and give them active gospel experiences.



“A few more hours and we’ll be finished. You know, I have a love/hate relationship with these yard sales. I love getting rid of our old junk, but it seems like more trouble than it’s worth sometimes. Thanks for coming over to help today. At least we got some time together to catch up, I really appreciate it Jill.”

“No problem. And don’t forget—when we were cleaning out that big closet you found your old violin and music books from high school! That’s pretty cool.”

“I remember when I first was first learning to play the violin. I started by studying music theory. I learned the history of the violin and how they are

made. I listened to endless hours of music that was played by accomplished musicians. I listened and studied for two years, but it was all dots on a page to me. And you know what? When I picked up the violin I still could not play it. It just sounded like a series of squawks and squeaks that were horrible and far from being music!”

Jill asked Terri, “Didn’t your teacher require that you actually practice playing the violin along the way? I mean, that is how people learn things, right?”

“Well, we did a few minutes of hands-on stuff each week, like where to place my chin on the violin and certain finger techniques, but I guess he just figured I was practicing it on my own at home or playing for my parents and friends. He said I should, and assigned that as homework, but I had no confidence at all so I rarely practiced or played in front of anyone.”

“But Terri, when you first found your old violin today you opened up the case, tuned that thing up and played me a beautiful song; a little rusty, but clearly you are a very good violinist! What happened? How or when did you really learn to play so well?”

“In my junior year our family moved across town and I had a different music teacher. She not only taught us music theory and how to read the charts, but she gave us a love for the music. She would sit and listen to her favorite recordings with us, pointing out why certain parts were so amazing to her. I fell in love with the violin for the first time. She would also listen to us play and give us encouragement and feedback along the way. She even came to my house a few times when I played recitals in my living room for family and friends. And here’s some good news...it actually sounded like music—beautiful music.”

“What a gift she was Terri. What was her name?”

“I’ll never forget it. Ms. Barnabas. She was the best. She not only taught me about the violin, she made sure my heart was moved by the music and watched and encouraged me at every step until I was good at playing it.”

“You know what Jill? I’m gonna keep this old violin and start playing it again. I can’t believe I ever even thought about selling it!”

“Oh Terri, look at what time it is. I’ve got to get over to the church. It’s the

ninth week of my discipleship training classes. Only three more weeks of study and I guess I'm officially "discipled"!

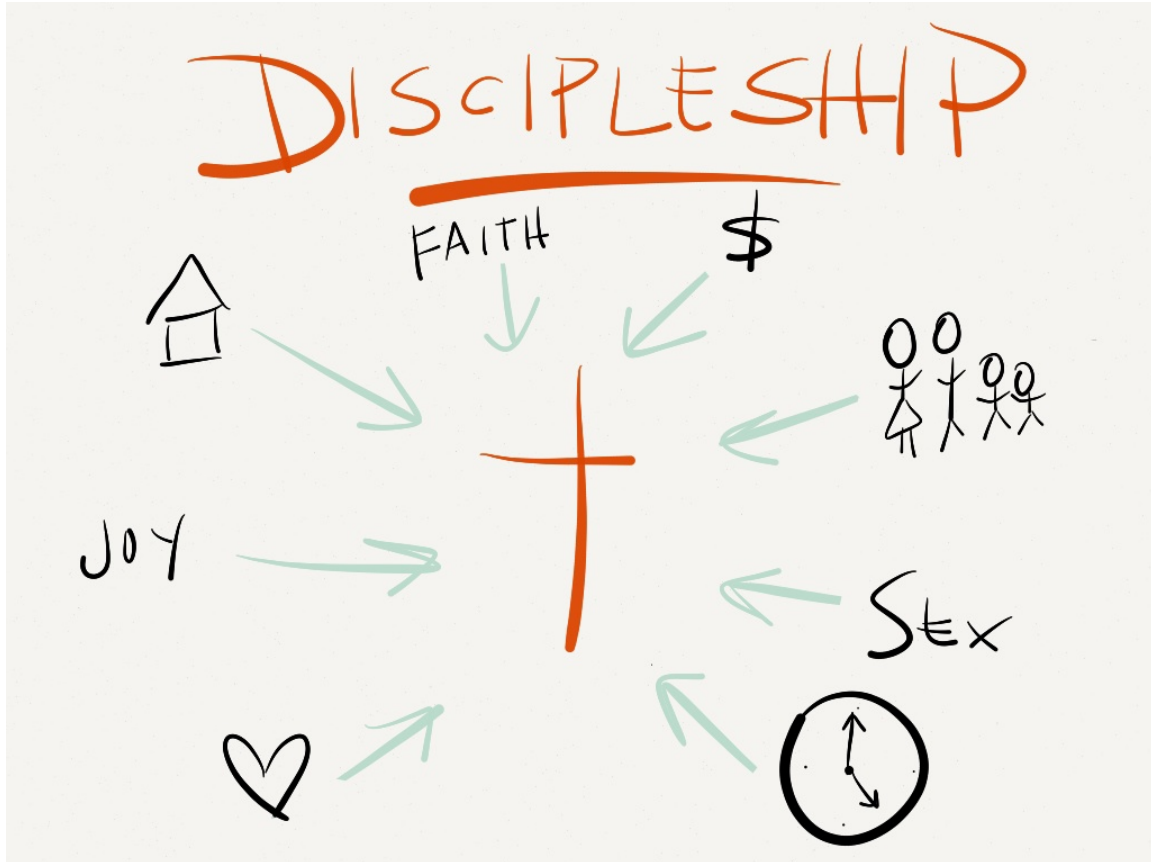
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Notes:

Discipleship In All of Life

The gospel is not just the beginning of our Christian life and a ticket to heaven. Our discipleship has implications for all of life today.



“I am so sorry Frank. I hate being late! I was in line at the store waiting to check out and the people in front of me were taking forever to pay for their groceries. First they tried a credit card that was declined, and then they started counting out a small mountain of bills and change only to be three dollars short. So they stood there trying to decide what to put back. I was already running late to pick the kids up from band practice so I was freaking out.”

“Sounds rough, I’ve been there honey—too many times. So what happened?”

“The people noticed me fidgeting, checking my watch and sighing a lot. I think I had a pretty frustrated angry face going on there. The teller noticed too. I made them all feel terrible, like they were ruining my day.”

“I know that face.”

“Anyway, I was pretty embarrassed by my actions. What was going on in my heart that I got so freaked out over a few minutes difference? Sheesh. I gotta relax!”

“This is like what we were talking about the other night. Like it or not Sal, we are always in ‘discipleship mode.’ People are either seeing us live a life centered on self, like we are god of this world...or they are seeing and experiencing our lives submitted to the Spirit and lived for others. So the folks ahead of you in line weren’t disciplined toward knowing what God is truly like in that moment by watching you...”

“Hey! Are you trying to make me feel worse Frank?”

“Not at all. In fact, I’m trying to encourage you. Like we talked about, our discipleship—moving from unbelief to belief about what is true of God in every area of life—is always happening. You experienced that today.”

“So just to be sure I don’t miss it, help me see what was really going on today that led me to freak out on those poor people.”

“Well...I wasn’t there and I could never know exactly what was going on inside that head or heart of yours, but I’ll take a stab at it. Ooh, bad choice of words. Anyway, when we are impatient with others, we are not believing that God is sovereign over our days and actions. And we end up expecting others to play according to our timeline. When they don’t comply, we get frustrated.”

“Sounds about right.”

“But when we believe that God is great and managing the world for his glory, including my time in a grocery line, we don’t have to try and control others.”

“Okay, so during those few minutes in line, God was using that to disciple my heart concerning time and patience with others...? Those are both discipleship issues I’m obviously still learning. I’m glad though. Not for those people having to experience my meltdown, but that God is pursuing all of that muck in my life. Even in line at a grocery store.”

Frank continued, “Sweetie, this process of ongoing discipleship touches every single aspect of who we are. The good news of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection has huge ramifications for all of life—not just our afterlife. How we spend our time, our money, where we find our passions and ultimately our identity, are all impacted by the gospel. Our discipleship is a life-long process. Today the Spirit reminded you of what was true concerning God’s greatness over your schedule, and that you can trust him and love others. He’s got ya!”

“Discipleship then, that touches all of who we are, would require a community of people around us who can see the times we are living out of unbelief and then lovingly remind us or show us the truth. This really couldn’t happen very well in a classroom. It needs to happen...in the normal stuff and conversations of life, right?”

“For sure Sal. The others in our missional community need us and we need them. Together, God is forming and re-forming our hearts and lives to look and be more like Jesus.”

“Cool. Next time I’m at that grocery store I’ll be more careful and maybe carry my Bible.”

“Just kidding!”

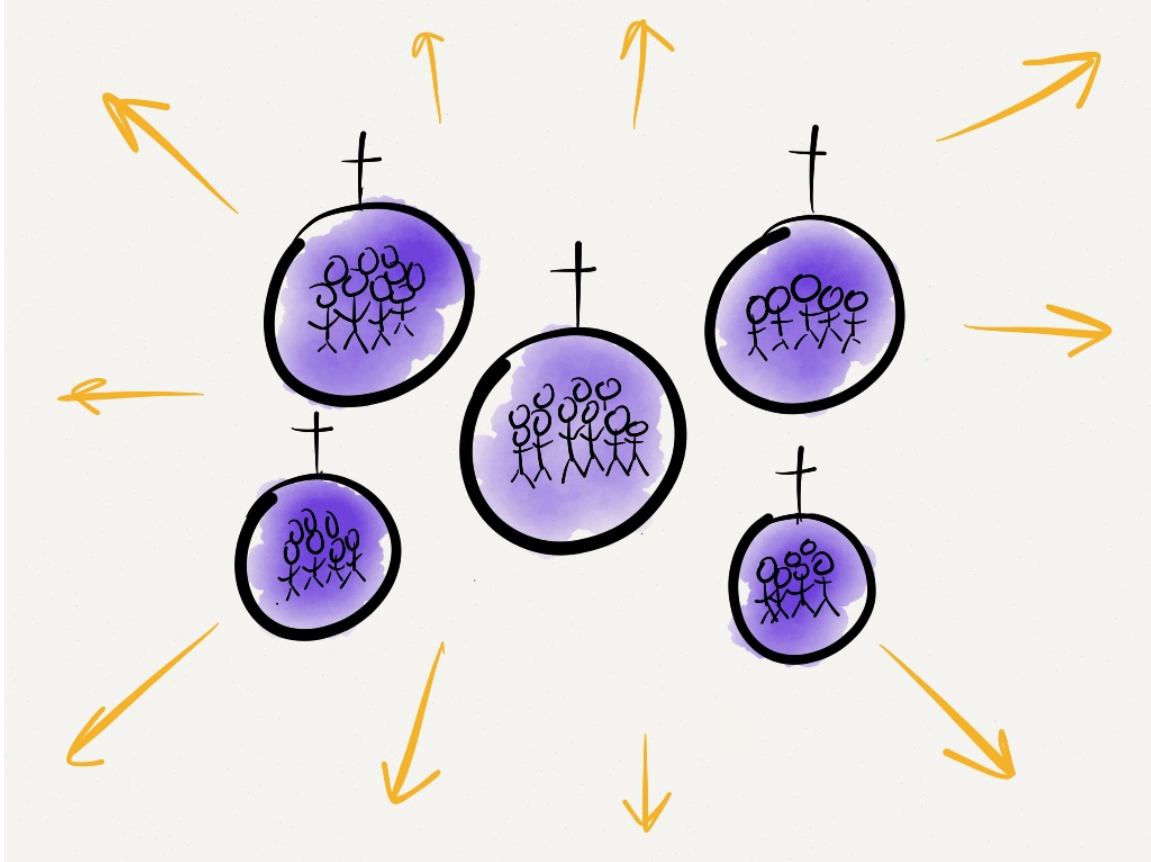
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Notes:

GCM – Gospel Communities on Mission

In order to make fully mature disciples of Jesus we must live in gospel centered communities together on mission.



Text Message: Ben, see you at Marli's Café at 9 as planned, Peter

Reply: Cool Pete, I have something I want to show you, Ben.

“Over there Ben, that corner table, I put my green bag on the chair. You want your usual?”

“Thanks bro, no cream though. I'll grab the table.”

“How ya been man? How's the coursework coming along?”

“Crazy Pete, one more semester to go and I–am–done! I can't wait.”

“I'll be pretty stoked when you're finished too. We all miss the heck out of you lately in community. We need you buddy!” Pete said with a smile and a

slap on Ben's shoulder.

“Don't worry, I have not forsaken the faith. I've just been super busy. But anyway, that's part of what I wanted to show you. Check out these discipleship materials I downloaded. Nine weeks, pretty sharp looking stuff.”

“Okay. What are you thinking?”

“Well you know how I sort of prefer to be by myself or in more of a one-to-one environment...so when I'm done with my last classes I am thinking about finding a 'disciple.' Someone I can pour my wisdom and...I don't know, my life into for Jesus.”

“I like your enthusiasm Ben. But we've talked some before about what it really looks like to make a disciple of Jesus versus a disciple of ourselves. It's not that you don't have a ton to offer some young dude, but to be honest, you're not enough.”

“Come on Pete. A zillion years in church and now I'll have graduated from Bible college. I think I can help some young guy understand the Bible better and live like a Christian.”

“That's not what I'm talking about pal. You're awesome. And you have a lot to offer, but you are only a part of the Body. You have been blessed with parts of what Jesus is like, so have I, so have the others in our community. It takes all of the different parts of Jesus' body, giftings, perspectives, life experiences...all coming to bear on each other's lives to conform us to Christ. And all of it is the work of the Spirit.”

Pete continued, “Ben, if you spent the next three years 'discipling' some young guy he would most certainly grow and mature in his faith. But he would look most like you spiritually. Which is not entirely a bad thing, except the goal is to make mature disciples of Jesus, not disciples of us. That takes the whole community with the gospel at the center of everything. The gospel becomes our 'true north,' guiding and shaping it all.”

“That makes sense. But I still like being alone or with fewer people. I guess I like to stay in the Word and work out my faith that way. The community thing is tough for me.”

“Well bro, that’s part of your growth toward being like Jesus. He loved people and he loved being in the mess of things. He also spent times alone and in prayer. I love you and want to see you shaped by all of the freaky, faith-filled friends that God has made our family. You need it. We need it. We need you.”

“So if I found a person or two that I could pour into, would that be a good thing or a bad thing?”

“That would be amazing! I’m not saying that we shouldn’t have a few people that we sort of spiritually “parent” along the way. But we need to help make sure that they are actively involved in a gospel community where their faith and lives can be shaped out on mission. That’s where the real growth happens. Rubber to road stuff.”

“You know how it is Ben. When we get outside of our comfort zones and move beyond life shaped around our preferences and timeline, our real gospel needs emerge. All those places where we are not believing the truth about God or what he has done for us through Christ become evident. It is also how we see the times where we are not believing and living out of our new identity as a family of missionary servants...with our lives radically reoriented around being disciples and making disciples. That kind of growth and maturing doesn’t happen in a classroom type of environment.”

“Wow Pete. It sounds like you’ve given this a lot of thought.”

“Sorry for the mini sermon bro. I’ll shut up now. Let me tell you what was originally on my mind this morning...”

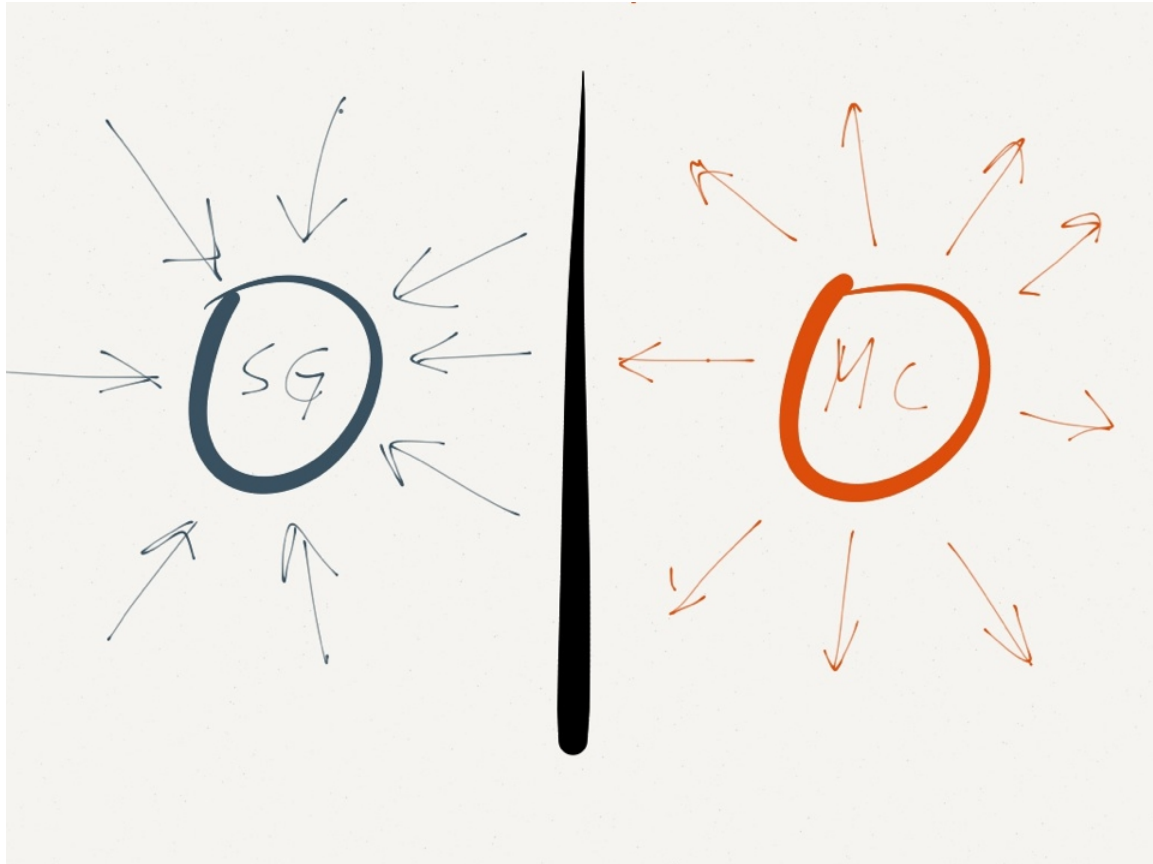
3 Questions:

1. What is God saying to you right now in light of this?
2. What will you do about it? When?
3. Who else do you need to share this with?

Notes:

Small Group or Missional Community?

Who is the focus of our community? If it primarily exists for our own benefit we are not living as God intended.



“Look at this photo, can you believe it? Our hair! I would have never imagined that the same original couples would still be in the same small group all these years later.”

“I know Mary, I feel so close to you and Nick and the others. You’re our family.”

“We’ve been through a lot over the years.”

“I know. Ten kids and now four grandchildren between us. You’re right, we’ve become like one big family over time. I’m so glad that it has stayed just us four couples and never changed.”

“We’ll see you guys this Thursday evening, like usual right? I think we’re

going to start planning our fall get away and holiday gift exchange. And Mike said he was hoping to get back to our Bible study soon...it kind of got back-burnered over the summer. Oh, and Mary, do you think I should invite Karen who moved in across the street to join us? She seems nice.”

“I don’t know Shelly...I just like our group when it’s...*us*.”

COMPARE and CONTRAST

“Randy, I was just praying and asking God, ‘What next Lord?’ concerning that young single mom, Carrie, and her three kids down the block. I think Cindi and I are going to offer to pick her kids up after school during the week, give them a snack and help them finish their homework until she can get home from work. They’ve been home alone so many afternoons and I know that Carrie is worried about them.

“She is so fun to be around. I am really hoping she’ll keep hanging out with us and the rest of our missional community. I think when we went over and helped her with the flood in her basement last month she really began to trust us.”

“More importantly, I think she’s starting to trust Jesus. Well, at least she’s asking a lot of questions about who we are and why we live the way we do in the neighborhood.”

“I was shocked the other day when she asked if she could bring her ‘world famous chili’ to our family dinner night. It was great too! She said she would make a huge batch of it this Saturday when we all go to finish that porch repair at the retirement home. Her kids were a big hit with all the grandmas last week.”

“Super fun. She asked if I would pray for her brother who is moving into town next month. He doesn’t have a job and has recently gotten into a little trouble. She said he’s moving here to kind of start over. She says he has a lot of fears and problems to sort out.”

“Tony, do you think Carrie’s brother could move in with you and Liddy for a while? It sounds like it would really be good for him to get to hang around a “manly man” like you who loves Jesus. He never had a father around growing up. He needs to see and experience that kind of love and

environment.”

“I’ll ask Liddy and we’ll pray about it. I would love to bless Carrie that way and help *her* feel like she’s helping her brother. I think he gets to town next week.”

“You know Tony, it’s amazing how God just keeps growing our family here.”

“I like it that it’s not just...*us*.”

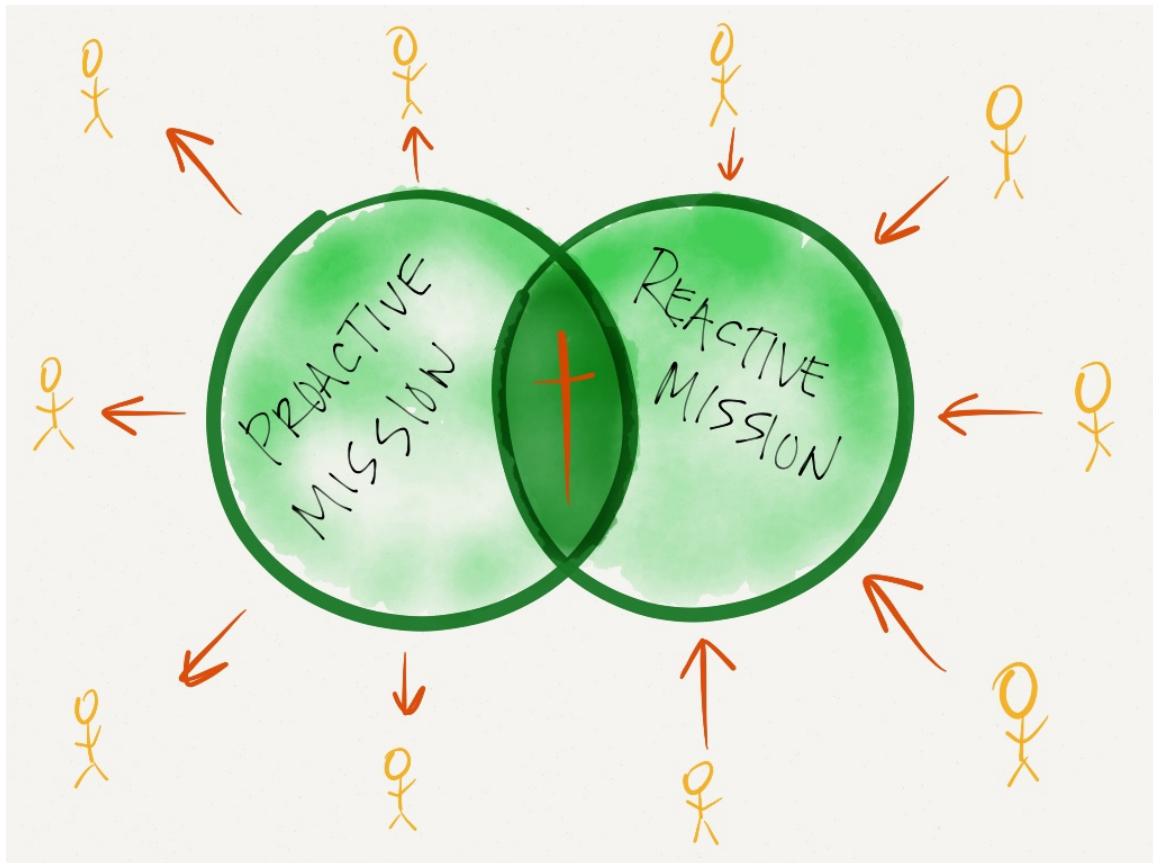
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Notes:

Proactive and Reactive Mission

A missional community should have a proactive mission directed toward a specific people in a particular context. It will also respond to reactive mission opportunities that come up along the way. In each case, mission=make disciples.



“What a day. I just *have* to get off my feet for a few minutes before the kids get home from school and this house explodes.”

“Did you say that you and Dave were having your neighbors over for dinner tonight too?”

“Kelly you’re right! I almost forgot.”

“No biggie, I’ll help you whip something up in no time...many hands make light work. You guys seem to always have someone over. You’re becoming quite the socialites.”

“What’s even better is that a bunch of the people in our neighborhood are starting to have *us* over to their homes for meals and parties. God is really blessing our missional community’s efforts to try and love and disciple folks around us. It’s taken a while, and we’ve all had to reorient our schedules and stuff to fit theirs, but it’s starting to pay off in real and meaningful relationships.”

“I don’t know how you do it Kim, you and Dave are just as busy with work and kids as we are. And that’s another thing, how do your kids feel about your busy *missional life*?”

“Heck, the kids make it easier really. Going to all their school and sports activities is how we started to get to know everyone around here. They love that we are intentionally spending more and more time with their friends’ parents. Plus, I want our children to grow up focused on loving and serving others more than on building their own little kingdoms. You know what I mean?”

“For me I just find it’s easier to try and be a good Christian to those people at work and a few other friends that I’ve known for years.”

“Well that’s awesome too Kelly. As long as you are able to actually disciple those friends—which needs to happen in a community of people. I found over the years that if I was just sort of trying to ‘get people saved’ along the way as opportunities came up, I wasn’t being very affective at making disciples. But when our ‘MC’, our missional community, started to focus on a specific group of people, in our case those in our neighborhood, we could proactively engage them over time and begin to disciple them toward faith and trust in Jesus.”

“So what happens when God brings someone into your life that doesn’t live in your neighborhood, do you just ignore them?”

“Nope, but this is what’s cool. Now that we have a more *proactive* discipleship thing going on in our MC with my neighbors, I actually have a community to bring those more *reactive* discipleship opportunities into. You’ve met Kenny, Dave’s new friend?”

“Yeah, I’ve seen him over here a lot lately.”

“He’s a guy that Dave met at work. God made it clear that Kenny was leaning in to relationship with Dave and he was pretty open to spiritual things and the gospel. But Dave couldn’t disciple him very effectively on his own, or at the office in between work duties, so he intentionally helped Kenny get to know and do life with our missional community too. Now he’s part of the family. And I think he is *really* close to laying his life down completely for Jesus!” Kim was getting excited.

“That is really helpful. I have a whole bunch of friends that are not all that connected to each other and the best I could ever do before was drop a ‘witness bomb’ on them once and a while, or invite them to go to church. I need to loop these friends into my missional community life.”

“It does take a little bit of intentionality Kelly, but we’re living proof that it can happen. I’d pray and ask God to show you ‘what’s next’ with each of them and then do whatever he tells you to do. He’ll lead you there, for sure.”

“I gotta do that. But right now we better get after making this dinner or *you* won’t have a prayer tonight!”

“For sure!”

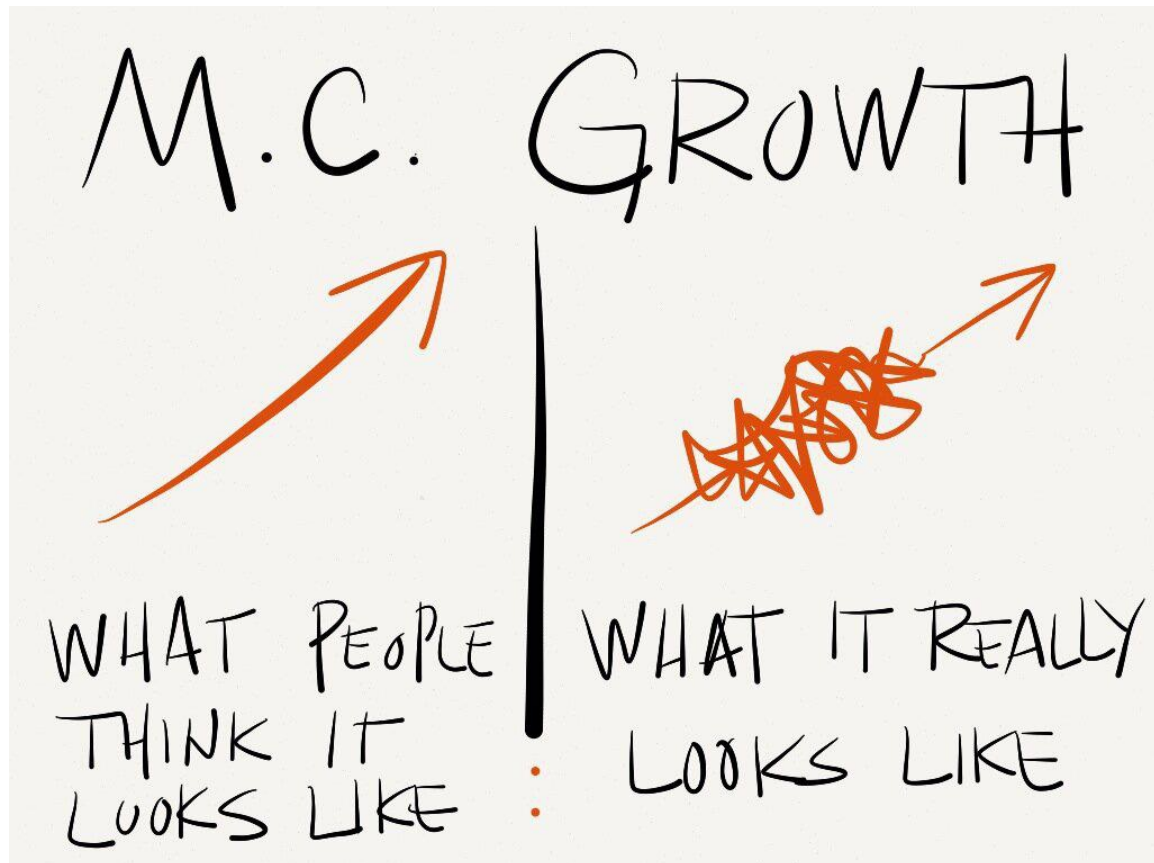
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Missional Community Growth Chart

From the outside looking in, missional communities can look very attractive and appear to be a straight line of growth toward multiplication. It is not always so.



“How you doing Josh, what’s shakin’?”

“Oh man, I’m pretty frustrated to be honest with you. Or maybe I’m just disappointed or needing to realign my expectations on some stuff.”

“Let it out buddy...take a deep breath and fill me in a little.”

“As you know our missional community has been a total blessing. We’ve never really experienced our faith in such real and tangible ways before. And last fall we were able to send a bunch of our ‘family’ out and they multiplied into another MC.”

“Yeah I can see where you’re coming from, that sounds horrible. What?!”

Where's the rub?"

"It seems like we are always taking two steps forward and one step back. Then a hard left, a u-turn...jam on the breaks... Man, I don't know what we're doing sometimes. I guess I just figured by now we'd have a little smoother path and just keep making disciples and it would get a little easier." Josh was passionate when he spoke about this.

"What are your biggest challenges as you see them?" Drew asked him.

"There always seems to be a few people in our MC that are not really on board. They say they want to be a part of making disciples with us on mission, but their priorities and how they choose to spend their time don't really line up with that. I guess it's an issue of motivation."

"Have you tried shaming them? ...I'm just kidding!"

"I probably have without meaning too. But seriously, I know it is a gospel issue. Just like I need to be consistently reminded of what Jesus has done for me so I'll live out of a heart of gratefulness and joy, so it is with everyone in our MC. It's like we *know* this stuff, but we don't always live like we *believe* it."

"And that's the point of discipleship Josh. We're on this journey together, moving from unbelief to belief in every area of life. That is never a straight line. Some things need to be learned and relearned until they sink below the neck line into our hearts so they can truly become part of how we live."

"Last month Drew, we had a couple who I thought was totally sold out leave our missional community. They said that they were just too busy for all of this right now. Like this life on mission was an add-on to their lives and it just wasn't going to fit into *their* busy schedule. How could I have helped them understand that all of life is a discipleship opportunity waiting to happen?"

"I think you are—by living and modeling it. I know it's tough when everyone is not on the same page. This whole life as a missional community is messy. It's a glorious mess...but it's messy. I would keep loving that couple and inviting them to the adventure, but don't let it derail the rest of the group. Keep doing what the Spirit leads you to do in faith. If it's God's will, they'll

be back. And we never know what route or path God may have them on in the long run. I know he will use their time in community to shape their lives for his glory. You just may not get to see that season with them.”

“That helps. Thanks man. Once again I am learning that this is not something I get to control. In fact, I don’t really want to.”

“Just keep loving people my brother. When you look back over that twisted path in a few more years it will be covered with fruit and changed lives. And you’ll be having this same type of conversation with another young leader while you try and talk him back off the ledge!”

3 Questions:

1. What is God saying to you right now in light of this?
2. What will you do about it? When?
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Notes:

About the Authors

Caesar Kalinowski



Caesar is a church planter, missional strategist and one of founding leaders of Soma Communities. He currently serves as the Director of the [GCM Collective](#), an organization that helps catalyze missional community multiplication across North America. He is a spiritual entrepreneur and an avid storyteller. His background includes communications for Fortune 500 companies, media production, working with youth, and extensive travel in international missions. He has worked in over 17 countries around the world including Sierra Leone, Sudan, Nigeria, Burma, India, Latvia, Romania and the Czech Republic.

He owned and operated several businesses in and around the Chicagoland area, then pastored at a mega-church before moving to Tacoma, Washington in 2004 to help launch Soma.

At any given moment Caesar is starting a new Missional Community and handing over another to a new leader. He is currently working establishing new churches throughout several cities in North America and Eastern Europe. Caesar has a Master's Degree in Ministry in the area of Global Leadership. His is a certified coach and Coach Trainer via CoachNet.

He has been married to Tina, his high school sweetheart, for 29 years; they have three children, Caesar, Christin and Justine.

Seth McBee



Seth is the adopted son of God, husband of one wife and father of three. He's a graduate of Seattle Pacific University with a finance degree. By trade Seth is an Investment Portfolio Manager, serving as president of McBee Advisors, Inc.

Today, he's a preaching elder with Soma Communities in Renton, WA and part of the Executive Team with the [GCM Collective](#). In his down time he likes to CrossFit, cook BBQ, host pancake ebelskiver breakfasts at his home and many other neighborhood events in his hometown of Maple Valley, Washington.

He has been married to Stacy, his high school sweetheart, for 13 years; they have three children: Caleb, Coleman and Madelynn.

To download all the drawings used in this eBook go here: [Be the Church Drawings](#)