

## CHAPTER 6

### A THEOLOGY OF A MISSIONAL MINISTRY

Dallas Willard asserts that God's intent for the church is the proclamation of the gospel, making disciples of all people, and the development of Christ-like character.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus acted on these mandates. For example:

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matt 9:35-38, NIV).

The gospel of Matthew serves as a primary biblical text in the formulation of a theology for missional ministry. David Bosch describes his understanding of Matthew's intent: "It was primarily because of his missionary vision that Matthew set out to write his gospel, not to compose a 'life of Jesus' but to provide guidance to a community in crisis on how it should understand its calling and mission."<sup>2</sup> This chapter explores biblical and theological core values for the mobilization of ministers into mission fields. It provides biblically and theologically sound strategies that can be employed to make, mature, and mobilize Christians for apostolic discipleship.

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<sup>1</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1988), 15.

<sup>2</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 57.

### **All People Matter to God**

“Jesus went to all the towns and villages” (Matt 9:35). Jesus did not discriminate; rather, He attended to women, children, prostitutes, tax collectors, lepers, the rich and poor alike. All people are important to Jesus because all people are valued by God (Luke 15:4-7).

There are significant implications of this profound assertion for FLC. It is located in an urban center in Iowa’s second largest city, and the potential for reaching multiple ethnic groups, generations, economic classes, and disenfranchised people is great. A FLC core value moving towards greater actualization states: “FLC values a commitment to reach out to the unchurched in meaningful ways” (Appendix 1). The expanded core value states:

Because all people matter to God (Luke 15:1-32; 19:10), we will continually seek new ways to connect with the unchurched so that they can consider the claims of Jesus Christ in an atmosphere of openness and encouragement. God desires for us, individually and corporately, to reach as many people as possible with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. We believe it is our task to go out to help a dying world and are committed to that mission locally, nationally, and internationally (Matt 28:19-20).

This core value serves as a catalyst for new outreach ministries and has highlighted congregational concern for sex offenders, orphans, widows, the poor, and unchurched friends, relatives, associates and neighbors.

Jesus sent workers into the harvest, and FLC follows in their footsteps. Robert Farrar Capon believes the parable of the sower is a key Christian directive because

mature discipleship is evangelistic and God sows the seed.<sup>3</sup> Capon argues the catholicity of God's word, because it is scattered everywhere.

The other parables in Matthew 13 reflect the same inclusiveness: "The whole purpose of the coming of the Word into the world is to produce people in whom the power of the kingdom will bear fruit."<sup>4</sup> Individuals' responses to the Word reveal the difference it makes to, for, and in them.<sup>5</sup> Capon asserts that Jesus "is not threatening some kind of retaliation by the Word against people who fail to make the best response; rather, he is almost wistfully portraying what we miss when we fall short and fail to bear fruit."<sup>6</sup>

Based on Capon's insights, the question arises: "How does the body of Christ, the church, help people see and discover the seed in the soil?" If God sows the seed, what is the church's role? It is to proclaim the gospel and nurture those who believe in their faith and actions. God's providential hand extends through the church's human touch empowered by the Spirit.

### Good Soil

Cole asserts that planting good seeds in bad soil wastes time, energy, and the precious Word of God, and he suggests Christians should wipe the bad soil off their feet

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Farrar Capon, *Kingdom, Grace, Judgment: Paradox, Outrage, and Vindication in the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 57.

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

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

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

and move on when the gospel is not received.<sup>7</sup> “The church are constantly being preached to but not living in obedience to Jesus’ commands. Yet, we keep spending all our time and resources on the church, while bearing little fruit.”<sup>8</sup> Cole argues that bad people make good soil because, “there’s a lot of fertilizer in their life.”<sup>9</sup> As Jesus said, “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:32). Many passages suggest the enriched soil includes: sinners (Luke 5:32), young people (Matt 18:3), seekers (Matt 7:7), uneducated (1 Cor 1:27), those of bad character (Matt 9:9), bad reputation (John 4), the least (Matt 25:40), and the despised and weak (1 Cor 1:28-29).

FLC consists primarily of wealthy, well-educated persons. Jesus indicates that this is typically *poor* soil, and He identified the difficulties of the wealthy in His conversation with the rich, young man (Matt 19:16-30). Jesus says, “It is not the healthy who need a physician, but the sick” (Matthew 9:12). The apostle Paul indicates that few Christians of his time were intellectual, or highly educated, or people of influence and power, but rather quite simple people (1 Cor 1:18-31). These realities present challenges to FLC as it embraces apostolic discipleship.

### **Everyone a Minister**

Jesus does not identify who can or cannot be a harvest worker, but He did say that the workers are few. For years, mainline Protestant churches adopted a clergy-centric

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<sup>7</sup> Cole, “Church Multiplication Movements,” (Lecture, MG707 Church Planting: Starting and Birthing New Churches. Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA: 2002), 6.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

model in which ordained pastors are perceived as professional ministers who alone are equipped to do the work of ministry. Martin Luther suggested a priesthood that included all believers capable of ministering. Ogden writes:

For the people of God to enter fully into their ministry we must come to see that there is only one people and one ministry, not two peoples—clergy and laity—a view that inevitably leads to two ministries. In other words, what kind of lens we use to view the church will affect the kind of church we produce.<sup>10</sup>

It is paramount for the mainline church revival that the separation of the ministries end and merge into one ministry. Ogden proposes that all ministry is lay ministry and is shaped by the gifts and callings distributed by the Holy Spirit to the whole body of Christ.<sup>11</sup>

A primary text in support of every-member ministry is Ephesians 4:11-12

[NRSV]:

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

Paul uses the word *saints* to denote inclusively all those who belong to God and who have been set apart to do ministry.<sup>12</sup> This is in distinction to that more narrowly defined class of people Paul refers to as pastors and teachers (i.e. clergy), called to equip God's people for their kingdom work in the body of Christ. There is only one ministry, and all

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<sup>10</sup> Greg Ogden, *The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 56.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

Christians share that ministry, and different Christians perform different ministerial roles. Clergy have a role, but not as a separate class.

McNeal describes this paradigm shift from a top-down model to flat line ministry and asks the question: “Who is empowered for what?”<sup>13</sup> The traditional model is a clergy-driven/dominated ministry.<sup>14</sup> The missional approach is more egalitarian and suggests all believers are empowered and can be equipped for ministry.<sup>15</sup> This major paradigm shift is taking place at FLC.

#### FLC Culture Shifts

“Culture announces its identity through everything you do. The values of your culture—stated or unstated, thought out or unintentional—shape the feel, behavior, and attitude of a congregation more than anything else.”<sup>16</sup> First Lutheran is making a distinct culture shift. Multiple ministry functions often implemented by clergy in the past are now led by non-ordained, often part-time staff people or equipped lay ministers. Staff people who have particular gifts and vision are selected to be congregational equippers, rather than only doers of ministry. For example, in the past the pastors invested countless hours visiting the elderly or home-based people, but now thirty lay deacons are equipped and sent out with communion to minister. Those with special needs are visited by Stephen

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<sup>13</sup> Reggie McNeal, *Revolution in Leadership: Training Apostles for Tomorrow's Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1998), 77.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro, *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church From the Inside Out* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 41.

Ministers who interface weekly with their care receivers. Ultimately, FLC may fulfill

Hunter's definition of an apostolic church:

An Apostolic church is a community of believers which is rooted in the Scriptures, and in which members are helping one another to apply their faith to every area of their life; are ministering to each other's needs; are detecting gifts for ministry and empowering their total membership to serve and witness to the pre-Christians whom God brings into their lives with a view to inviting them to know Christ as their Savior, Lord and Empowerer and to welcome them within the Christian fellowship as members-in-training for ministry.<sup>17</sup>

### The Multiplication of Ministers

“Discipleship training is the spiritual work of developing spiritual maturity and spiritual *reproductiveness* in the life of a Christian... A multiplier is a disciple who is training his [*sic*] spiritual children to *reproduce* themselves.”<sup>18</sup> FLC's core value states that the congregation has “a commitment to *multiply ministers* for God's work in the world” (Appendix 1):

We hold to the creedal statement, “Every member a minister.” We believe that the primary responsibility of the pastors and program staff in the local church is to “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...” (Ephesians 4:12). Church leaders, therefore, have the responsibility to help believers discover, develop, and exercise their spiritual gifts in appropriate ministries.

Jesus states that His heavenly Father is glorified when His disciples bear much fruit (John 15:8, Col 1:6). Multiplication, as cited by numerous authors studied, is the greatest principle for extensive equipping and disciple-making. Table 4 illustrates a comparison

<sup>17</sup> George G. Hunter III, *Church for the Unchurched*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1996), 19.

<sup>18</sup> Gary W. Kuhne, “Follow-up—An Overview,” in *Discipleship: The Best Writing from the Most Experienced Disciple Makers*, ed. Billie Hanks and William A. Shell (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 117; quoted in Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 138.

between evangelism by addition (an arithmetic progression) to evangelism by multiplication (an exponential progression).<sup>19</sup>

Table 4. Evangelistic Addition vs. Discipleship Multiplication

YEAR	EVANGELIST	DISCIPLER
1	365	2
2	730	4
3	1095	8
4	1460	16
5	1825	32
6	2190	64
7	2555	128
8	2920	256
9	3285	512
10	3650	1,024
11	4015	2,048
12	4380	4,096
13	4745	8,192
14	5110	16,384
15	5475	32,768
16	5840	65,536

First Lutheran's biblically-based strategy and goal to make and mature disciples includes the multiplication of ministers for apostolic mission.

### **Spiritual Gifts and Passions**

“In the Body of Christ, each of us has something to contribute. If for some reason we choose not to use the gifts God gave us, the church will be less than it could have been. Therefore, each individual and his or her unique contribution counts.”<sup>20</sup> The apostle Paul identifies numerous spiritual gifts given by God that fulfill personal callings and

<sup>19</sup> Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 137.

<sup>20</sup> Jane A.G. Kise, David Stark, and Sandra Krebs Hirsh, *LifeKeys: Discovering Who You Are, Why You're Here, What You Do Best* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1996), 64.

edifies the church (Rom. 12, 1 Cor 12-14, Eph 4). Each person is uniquely gifted and has at least one God-given gift to share with and strengthen the church with.<sup>21</sup> Gifts are to be used in the church community for God and others (Rom 12:4-8, 1 Cor 12:4-12, 18, Mark 10:42-44, and 1 Pet 4:10-11).

A ministry match takes place when an individual's God-given spiritual gift(s) and passion intersect. Hybels writes:

A God-given passion—an area of intense interest—lies buried within each of us. One of the goals of volunteer experimentation is to discover that passion. Connecting our spiritual gift with an area of passion is the key to ultimate effectiveness and fulfillment in serving. It's also one of the keys to maintaining energy in serving. When you're serving in an area of passion, nobody has to fire you up to stay involved; you can't help but show up. It feels like recess, when the bell rings and you get to do your favorite thing.<sup>22</sup>

Schwarz describes the quality characteristic of gift-oriented ministry and suggests that growth in this area comes from matching ministry with people's gift(s) and passion.<sup>23</sup>

FLC's strategy, called First Serve, uses a trained ministry connector<sup>24</sup> and matches people to ministries.

As individuals explore their spiritual gifts, they understand how God has equipped them, and they learn to function as part of a team and live gracefully and abundantly.

Paul writes:

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<sup>21</sup> Sue Mallory and Brad Smith, *The Equipping Church Guidebook* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 256.

<sup>22</sup> Bill Hybels, *The Volunteer Revolution: Unleashing the Power of Everybody* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 81-82.

<sup>23</sup> Christian A. Schwarz and Christoph Schalk, *Implementation Guide To Natural Church Development* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1998), 55.

<sup>24</sup> Mallory and Smith, 142.

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us (Rom 12:4-6).

When the body of Christ misses people in active ministry, the full potential of ministry suffers. The assessment of an individual's spiritual gifts leads to clarity in God's calling to individuals to serve the body of Christ. Two of the church's roles is to help people discover how God has specifically gifted them, and to equip and empower them in ministry service that provides passionate, abundant living in Jesus' name.

### **The Equipped Saints Are Sent Out**

One of the church's key roles is the equipping of the saints "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph 4:12), and to "equip you with every good thing that you may do his will . . ." (Heb 13:21a). Mallory writes:

The bottom-line purpose of what leaders are to do is to prepare God's people for works of service. Of all the Scriptures that explain the qualifications of church leaders, that give them instructions in various circumstances, and that specify their attitudes, this is the primary passage that describes the essential nature of what they should be doing. Ephesians 4:12 is the mission statement for church leaders. They should return to it time after time to ask, "Do our programs and activities 'equip the saints'? If not, how do we go back to the basics and refocus our leadership and our church on this priority?"<sup>25</sup>

Many mainline pastors have been trained in the clergy expert model to do the ministry for the people. Ephesians 4:12 states that the role of the pastor-teacher is to train, prepare, or

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 14.

and equip Christians in skilled servant work.<sup>26</sup> In order for the pastor and staff to become equippers, a congregation may require training to reach this understanding. As Pope writes, “The old habits of direct pastoral care resist change. [But, w]ise laypeople go out of their way to encourage equipping efforts undertaken by their pastor and staff.”<sup>27</sup> FLC intends to make this shift from clergy-centrism toward the preparation and mobilization of ministers.

“Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matt 9:38) and Jesus sends out the twelve immediately as apostles (Matt 10:1). This is apostolic discipleship because Jesus’ followers are equipped, sent out on mission, and do the work of Jesus. Guder writes:

What the apostles did, that is, their life and work as witnesses to God’s good news in Jesus Christ the Lord, defines and shapes the very nature of the church. The apostolicity of the church is expressed by its witness to the gospel, its obedience to the mandate to go out as Christ’s ambassadors.<sup>28</sup>

This apostolicity requires going somewhere. Matthew concludes his mission-minded gospel with Jesus’ words: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt 28:19-20). Jesus is consistent and clear: workers

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<sup>26</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message* (Colorado Springs: Navpress,, 2002), 409.

<sup>27</sup> Randy Pope, *The Prevailing Church: An Alternative Approach to Ministry* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2002), 173.

<sup>28</sup> Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 256.

are needed, the disciples are equipped, and the church moves out in ministry. All Christians have been called to do the same.

### **The Emerging Apostolic Leader**

Pastors, staff, and lay leadership can demonstrate an apostolic leadership style that is visionary, missional, empowering, team oriented, multiplying, entrepreneurial, and kingdom-conscious.<sup>29</sup> For the sake of the Great Mission (Acts 1:8), apostolic leadership “freshly challenges the church to evaluate its attitudes and activities in light of Jesus’ last command before returning to the Father. These paradigm pioneers are practicing an intentionality in their ministries that shows up in kingdom expansion. They courageously refuse to let their congregations settle for maintenance ministry.”<sup>30</sup> They are, instead, on the frontlines of church leadership transformation.

McNeil wrote, “As the number of early believers multiplied, the apostles made a strategic decision. They opted to share the ministry with others outside their immediate leadership circle (Acts 6:1-6).”<sup>31</sup> This decision toward empowerment began a new era of expansion (Acts 6:7), and the number of leadership assignments increased in the apostolic era (Eph 4:11 and 1 Tim 3:1-13). “Effective church leaders today understand that the strategic way to leverage their ministry efforts is to empower others to minister.”<sup>32</sup> Systems devised to assist church members in discovering and developing

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 28-31.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

frontline ministry opportunities frees the ministry from being bottlenecked in the hands of a few professionals.<sup>33</sup> New apostolic leaders will know how to recruit and coach others into leadership excellence leaving behind a legacy of quality leader multipliers.<sup>34</sup> Logan and Cole provide an apprentice roster (Figure 9) for this purpose, and the maturity stage of each person is indicated by how effectively the disciple multiplies disciples, groups, ministries, or churches.<sup>35</sup>

SOWING	GROWING	CULTIVATING	HARVESTING
1. Kent Dvorak	1. Joel Decker	1. Ryan Koester	1. Robin Tyner
2. Tom Buekers	2. Shannon Decker	2. Serve the City	2. Kim Pagel
3. Ted Carlson	3. Ralph Plagman	3. Marriage Care	
4. Ken Van Zee	4. Men's Ministry		
REPRODUCING DISCIPLES	REPRODUCING GROUPS	REPRODUCING MINISTRIES	REPRODUCING CHURCHES

Figure 9

The early church leaders were entrepreneurs who immersed themselves in their culture, understood it profoundly, and organized, managed, risked, and provided results.<sup>36</sup> To connect the gospel with culture demands calling people out of the culture and sending them back in. Logan and Cole describe this as drawing people from the harvest for the

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Robert E. Logan and Neil Cole, *Raising Leaders for the Harvest* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1995), 2-26.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

harvest.<sup>37</sup> Through this strategy, “The apostles cooperated with the Spirit to rapidly expand their market.”<sup>38</sup> Emerging apostolic leaders can use this technique and bear fruit in the twenty-first century. Rapid growth occurred in the early church when believers discovered that the gospel was for everyone (Acts 2:47; Rom 3:29, 9:24). McNeal asserts:

Today’s new apostolic leaders are determined to prosecute a kingdom agenda for God’s people. They are determined to follow Christ out into the world where they can dispel some darkness with his light. They join ranks with other believers to put Christianity into action in their communities. Those who can move beyond the constraint of “churchianity” discover an explosion of kingdom growth waiting to occur.<sup>39</sup>

### **Leadership and Change Implementation**

Morley asks, “Why do some discipleship programs succeed while others languish or fail?”<sup>40</sup> Kotter suggests that organizational change initiatives fail because of the following errors: “allowing too much complacency, failing to create a sufficiently powerful guiding coalition, underestimating the power of vision, under communicating the vision by a factor of 10, permitting obstacles to block the new vision, failing to create short-term wins, declaring victory too soon, and neglecting to anchor changes firmly in

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<sup>37</sup> Logan and Cole, 1-3

<sup>38</sup> McNeal, *Revolution in Leadership*, 29.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>40</sup> Patrick Morley, “A Case Study on Leadership and Implementing Change” in *A Look in the Mirror: Equipping Leaders in the Battle for Men’s Souls* (Casselberry, FL: Man in the Mirror, 2005), 1.

the corporate culture.”<sup>41</sup> Morley suggests nine major themes for implementing sustainable change found in the book of Nehemiah.<sup>42</sup>

### Leadership

Leadership involves a commitment to long-term results, a transformational style, invested involvement in the change initiative, and support from all key leadership team players.<sup>43</sup> Nehemiah is portrayed as a man who weeps, mourns, fasts, prays, and repents for his people—a humble man. (Neh 1) Collins found effective corporate leaders of great companies possessed a mixture of personal humility and professional will or what he termed a “Level 5” leader.<sup>44</sup> The book of Nehemiah provides a case study of a transformational leader with an iron will who was personally involved and made his vision a reality. Nehemiah found support from his king. Nehemiah said, “Let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it” (Neh 2:5), and the king granted his request.

### Ideas

A transformational leader develops ideas by gathering and analyzing information, creating a clear and compelling vision and a sense of urgency for change, and then

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<sup>41</sup> John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 3-14.

<sup>42</sup> Morley, “A Case Study on Leadership and Implementing Change,” 1.

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

<sup>44</sup> Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 21.

introduces an initiative that works and is perceived to work.<sup>45</sup> After Nehemiah had gathered information from his brother (Neh 1:3), he thought about it prayerfully (Neh 1:4-11). God put a vision into Nehemiah's mind to rebuild the city of his fathers (Neh 2:5) and he shared his vision with the king (Neh 2:4-5). Once he arrived in Jerusalem he surveyed the damaged walls under cover of darkness (Neh 2:11-16). When he introduced his vision and plan, it captured the imaginations of the leaders in Jerusalem, and they believed his plan would work (Neh 2:17-18).

### Resources

The use of resources involves creating structures, building a schedule, budget development, assigning staff with needed expertise, training those who need it, and providing rewards and incentives.<sup>46</sup> Nehemiah assembled carefully the resources he needed such as: written authorizations (Neh 2:7), timber for construction (Neh 2:8), capable workers (Neh 3:1-32), and money (Neh 7:70-72). He created an organizational structure and assigned the work (Neh 3:1-32).

### Planning

Planning involves a decision to move forward with the idea, formulation of a strategy, and development of specific action plans. Nehemiah formulated his strategy while still in Persia (Neh 1:8-11). He developed a comprehensive plan to rebuild the wall once he arrived in Jerusalem, and he analyzed the situation carefully (Neh 2:11-16).

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<sup>45</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 21.

<sup>46</sup> Morley, "A Case Study on Leadership and Implementing Change," 3.

### People

An essential success component is the expertise of capable, committed people who understand their roles and are trained with skills to implement the change. The creation of a culture that provides a safe place for discussion about their reservations is a key factor in implementation success. Nehemiah challenged his people with a compelling vision to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Neh 2:17), he created an atmosphere where people could speak (Neh 2:18), and he recruited city leaders to do the work (Neh 2:16).

### Execution

Morley states the following factors necessary for successful plan execution: conducting pilot projects, implementing the change, getting feedback, making adjustments, a contingency for taking too much time, and obtaining systematic feedback to evaluate results.<sup>47</sup> Under Nehemiah's leadership, forty leaders and their crews worked side-by-side and rebuilt the wall (Neh 3:1-32). The workers built large sections and others built next to where they lived, and they all acted according to their ability and resources. The wall was the pilot project for Nehemiah's plan to restore the nation (Neh 7:1-4). He had feedback mechanisms in place to measure progress (Neh 4:6), and Nehemiah had a contingency plan (Neh 4:16-18).

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

### Resistance

Mechanisms to identify and deal with behavioral and systemic resistance must be in place.<sup>48</sup> Sanballat and Tobiah opposed Nehemiah and his plan fiercely, so they “prayed to our God and posted a guard” (Neh 4:9). Other types of internal resistance included workers who tired because the rubble made it difficult to work (Neh 4:10), and others ran out of money (Neh 5:1-6). He identified resistance (Neh 4:11-12) and developed a communication plan to deal with resistance (Neh 4:19).

### Communication Plan

People accepted change because Nehemiah communicated the benefits of the change constantly. When Nehemiah communicated his ideas, he called the leaders together and extolled the virtues of his vision and plan (Neh 2:16-18). They completed the wall and celebrated (Neh 12:27-43).

### Sustainability

To sustain any major change involves including the initiative into organizational routines. Despite fierce resistance from within and without, Nehemiah and his team rebuilt the wall in fifty-two days. The city was large, but the people were few (Neh 7:4) and to sustain the vision and plans Nehemiah began, the city needed ongoing leadership. Nehemiah appointed his brother to lead them (Neh 7:2), and he appointed staff to maintain the city (Neh 7:3). He repopulated Jerusalem (Neh 7:4-5) and the towns of

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<sup>48</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 132-133.

Israel (Neh 7:73), normalized Jerusalem, and he stabilized the land promised to his fathers.

### **Church Covenant Partnership**

In the Twenty-first century, the participatory congregation model should be replaced by a covenant congregation model...the covenant congregation in the new century will put primary emphasis on the individual church member's mission and ministry. The congregation is still the mediator of the covenant, but not the primary bearer of mission. Each member is called to mission and has responsibility for carrying out mission in the world.<sup>49</sup>

The author of this paper asserts that the mainline church culture of low commitment/low expectations/low results produced nominal Christians. Gibbs refers to the work of the Lausanne task group that identified five types of nominal Christians:

Attends church regularly and worships devoutly, but who has no personal relationship with Jesus Christ; attends church regularly but for cultural reasons only; attends church only for major church festivals (Christmas, Easter, etc.) and ceremonies (weddings, baptisms, funerals); Hardly ever attends church but maintains a church relationship for reasons of security, emotional or family ties, or tradition; has no relationship to any specific church and never attends but yet considers himself [sic] a believer in God (in a traditional Christian sense).<sup>50</sup>

The growing disconnection between people and the church has occurred in Europe and Canada and is prevalent presently in the United States, but American churches can address this trend through a radical culture shift. FLC discovered connections and relationships with people that go beyond the context of worship. By raising the

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<sup>49</sup> Gustav Nelson, *Service Is the Point: Members as Ministers to the World* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2000), 19.

<sup>50</sup> Eddie Gibbs, *In Name Only: Tracking the Problem of Nominal Christianity* (Pasadena, CA: Fuller Seminary Press, 2000), 23.

participation expectations, a significant number of people have experienced life-transforming faith, begun personal relationships with Christ, and enjoyed Christian friendships that sustain and strengthen them along life's journey. Clearly defined membership expectations in a covenant document will be used as the next step towards spiritual maturity.

Clear membership demands and expectations are not typical among Lutheran churches, and Inskeep writes:

Denominations (and congregations) that are in a position (or have developed the position) to make demands on their members are denominations (and congregations) that are growing. From this point of view, Lutherans make too few demands because their expectations are so low. Lutherans are not characteristically a “demanding” group and their emphasis on a “theology of grace” may further undermine their ability to “expect” sacrifice on the part of their members. As a result, there is neither the desire nor the means for growth. Lutherans, for example, give the lowest percent of their income among all Protestant groups to the church, and as a group they live a lifestyle that is indistinguishable from the vast majority of individuals in the mainstream of American society”<sup>51</sup>

This assertion may cause Lutherans to examine their lifestyles and ask if they exemplify Jesus' imprint on their lives.

All Christians are called to lives of spiritual integrity that produce acts of public service. “The challenge facing the church is to move its members from a casual and contractual relationship to a covenant.”<sup>52</sup> Multiple congregations have proposed membership models that include a covenant member commitment that

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ian Coffey and Eddie Gibbs, *Church Next* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001),152.

may be renewed yearly. To move towards this important behavior, FLC must present the biblical and theological foundations for this higher expectation.

Schaller summarizes this biblical covenant model from a broad denominational perspective,

A third, radically different planning model also begins with a vision of a new tomorrow. This vision calls for this judicatory to consist of a collection of high expectation, high commitment covenant communities. Each congregation will be designed with a high threshold into membership and a low threshold at the exit door. From a denominational perspective this will be an expression of the high expectation, high commitment covenant community built on a foundation of clearly defined legal principles and a doctrinal statement marked by clarity and certainty. There would be a notable absence of ambiguity! This model is widely used in American Protestantism today. It attracts both people from Jerusalem and the disenchanted migrants who had been educated in Athens. It usually produces an annual denominational report in which the average worship attendance exceeds the total reported membership.<sup>53</sup>

This covenant model is a radical culture shift for FLC: however, as a progressive but conservative evangelical-minded congregation, it may make the healthy transition.

This chapter has described a theology of missional ministry based in Scripture and applicable to FLC in the twenty-first century. This foundation underlies strategies that can be employed to mature, mobilize, and equip Christians for apostolic discipleship and describes a discipleship plan designed to implement the biblically and theologically sound strategies.

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<sup>53</sup> Lyle E. Schaller, *A Mainline Turnaround* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2005), 84.