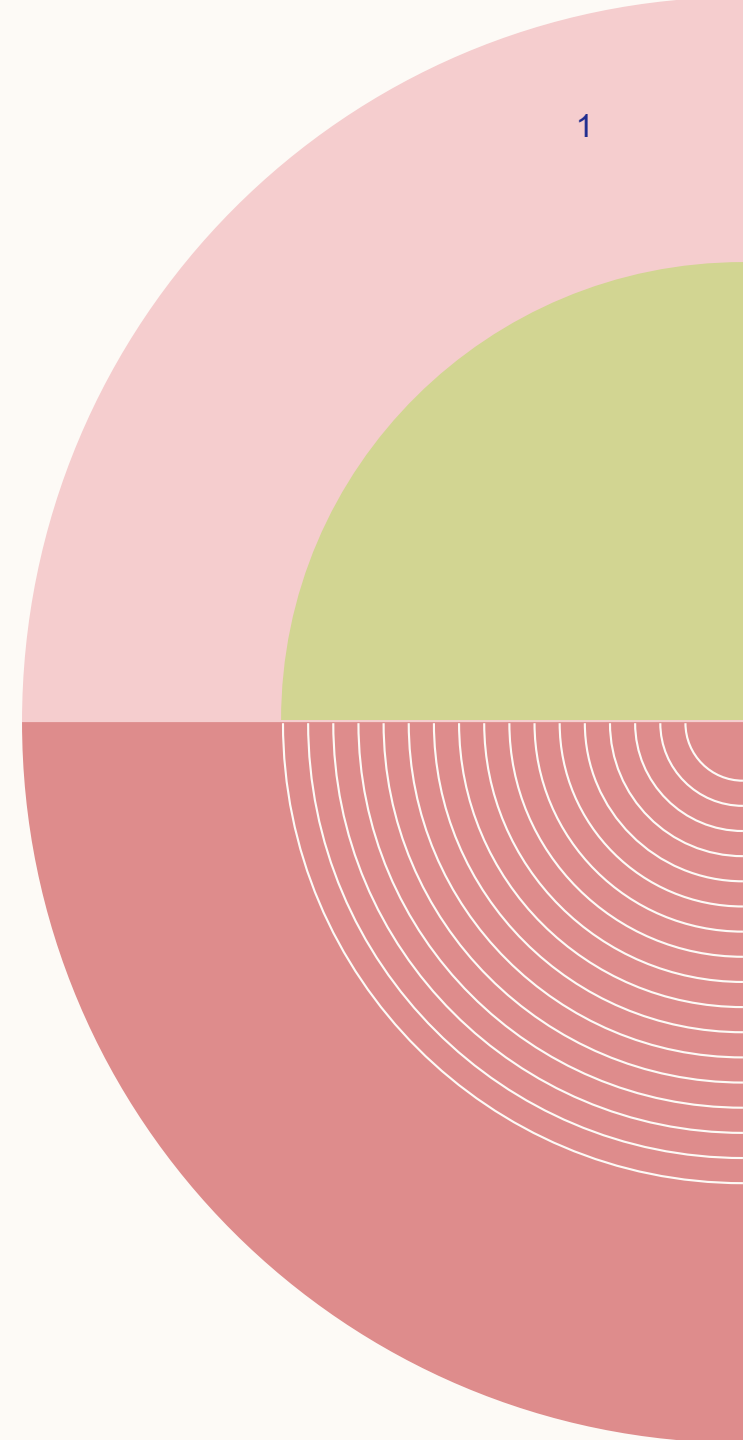
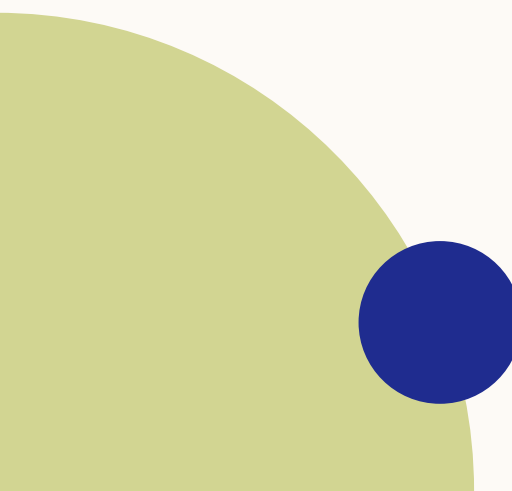


THE HISTORICAL WORK OF GOD'S SPIRIT IN OUR CHURCH

1



THE HISTORICAL WORK OF GOD'S SPIRIT IN OUR CHURCH

At the age of 28, Rev. James R. Morris began the Passaic Gospel Mission in his home at 277 Passaic Street, Passaic, NJ.

Pastor Morris was an inventor

He was educated, but not a [seminary] graduate.

The congregation ordained him on July 23, 1900. He then read a pledge and requested all members to repeat with uplifted hands to live up to all the light they received from the Holy Spirit. Then all took hold of hands and on bended knee asked God in prayer to bless His own work and themselves.

He founded a mission in Monrovia, Liberia, Africa, which he visited multiple times for extended periods of time.

My conclusion: James Morris was a gifted apostolic-type leader.

How the Spirit used key leaders & sovereign circumstances to shape a path that prepares us for such a time as this.



PREACHING

Morris

Focus: Founding the Community

Charismatic leader, missional focus, tireless worker, no leaders trained to replace him [1 city focus: Passaic]

1889: Church of Jesus Christ at the Passaic Gospel Mission; 1910: Grace Presbyterian Church

SACRIFICING

Landis, Williamson, Hall

Focus (crisis): Helping the Needy

Uncertain times – poverty (Great Depression & WWII), unclear path, stability achieved through sacrifice

1940: The Grace Church

BUILDING

Swearing, Mouw, Fesmire, Rosser

Focus (culture): Constructing & Insulating

Post-war prosperity, highest attendance, cultural upheaval (conflict without), fundamentalism, infrastructure

[2 city focus: Passaic-Clifton]

1955: The Grace Church of Passaic-Clifton

REACTING

Felty, Burke, Mott

Focus (crisis): Searching for Stability

New focus, Shifting Evangelicalism / Waning Fundamentalism, church split (fears within)

[home fellowship groups, Evangelism Explosion]

DISCOVERING

Rhodes, Burns (Galegor, Canion)

(Elders: Eisenmenger, Bird, Williams)

Focus: Discovering The Way of Christ & His Apostles

A clear path ahead, primary tradition, new paradigm, church plant (SI)

[monthly Lord's meals, intentional leadership development]

SHAPING

Galegor (Canion, Eisenmenger)

(Elders: Eisenmenger, Bird, Williams)

Focus: Setting things in Order – Shaping the Community

Beginning the journey, family-of-families, new community habits

[Nic@Nite, 3 city focus: Passaic-Paterson-Clifton, all church gatherings]

IMPLEMENTING

Canion, Eisenmenger (Williams)

(Elders: TBD)

Focus: Fulfilling Our Purpose

Going the distance, kerygmatic communities, building the network, training next generation

2024: 3CityChurch or GraceCityChurch

1889

1925

1950

1980

1996

2008

2022



Observations - Leadership

- The church was started by James Morris during a time when new Pentecostal ideas were opening opportunities for 'uneducated apostolic' types, who were recognized for their giftedness, zeal and ability to implement a vision
- Prior to the 1980's the church basically had one leader/pastor at a time (until under Felty, Burke became Associate Pastor)
- Since that time leadership has existed as a team (with both apostolic/sodality types and local/modality types), and new leaders have been trained and developed from within the church family

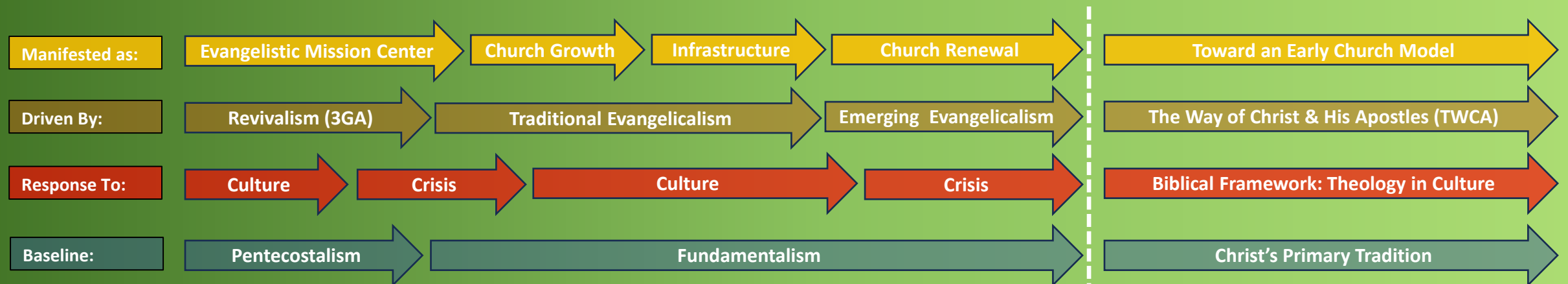
Observations – Sphere of Ministry

- The sphere of ministry began with Passaic (1889), expanded to include Clifton (1952), and eventually Paterson (2009)
- There is a clear progression from each era to the next, where it's obvious that each subsequent generation is simultaneously standing on the shoulders of those that came before them, while also attempting to shape the church in new ways
- There is also a clear progression from each era to the next that reflects issues in the culture at that time, and a response to crisis that developed

Observations

- Over the last 30 years, there is an obvious, but gradual move away from being oriented around expressions of Evangelical culture or reacting to cultural crises, and instead moving toward a sincere commitment to **The Way of Christ and His Apostles** (a church that was reactionary has become convinced that Jesus has but one **primary tradition, TWCA**)

Evangelizing – Sacrificing – Constructing – Insulating – Renewing – Discovering – Shaping – Implementing



How the Spirit used key leaders & sovereign circumstances to shape and prepare us for such a time as this.

Leader Driven
Household

Congregationally Driven

Leader Driven
Individual

EARLY CHRISTIANITY

PROTESTANT FUNDAMENTALISM

IMPLEMENTING

Canion, Eisenmenger (Williams)
(Elders: TBD)

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2024: 3CityChurch or GraceCityChurch

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A clear path ahead, primary tradition, new paradigm, church plant (SI)
[monthly Lord's meals, intentional leadership development]

RENEWING

Felty, Burke, Mott

Focus: Searching for Stability

New focus, Shifting Evangelicalism / Waning Fundamentalism, church split (fears within)
[home fellowship groups, Evangelism Explosion]

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Sweeting, Mouw, Fesmire, Rosser

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1889 1925 1950 1980 1996 2008 2022



EMERGING PARADIGM

ENLIGHTENMENT

Schleiermacher

Deposit: Liberal Theology

Reason, Human Rights, Progress

REFORMATION

Luther/Erasmus - Zwingli/Calvin

Deposit: Protestant Fundamentalism

Inerrancy, Word of God, Grace

MEDIEVAL

Thomas, Bonaventure

Deposit: Roman Catholic - Authoritarianism

Ecclesia, Inquisition, Crusades

EARLY CHURCH

Origen, Athanasius

Deposit: Hellenistic/Greek - Orthodox Traditionalism

Gnosticism, Greek and Latin Fathers

EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Peter, Paul, James

Deposit: Letters to Church Networks, as Biblical Text

Gentile Christians, Churches as Families, Churches as Movements

JESUS IS MESSIAH!

1ST CENTURY

1ST-3RD CENTURY

11TH CENTURY

16TH CENTURY

17TH-19TH CENTURY

21ST CENTURY

- Do we live in a time for a major paradigm shift?
- Could we return to the Early Christian Traditions?
- Could we return to the way that Christ's Apostles wrote about?

SERMON NOTES

"Rethinking the Mission: An Introduction"

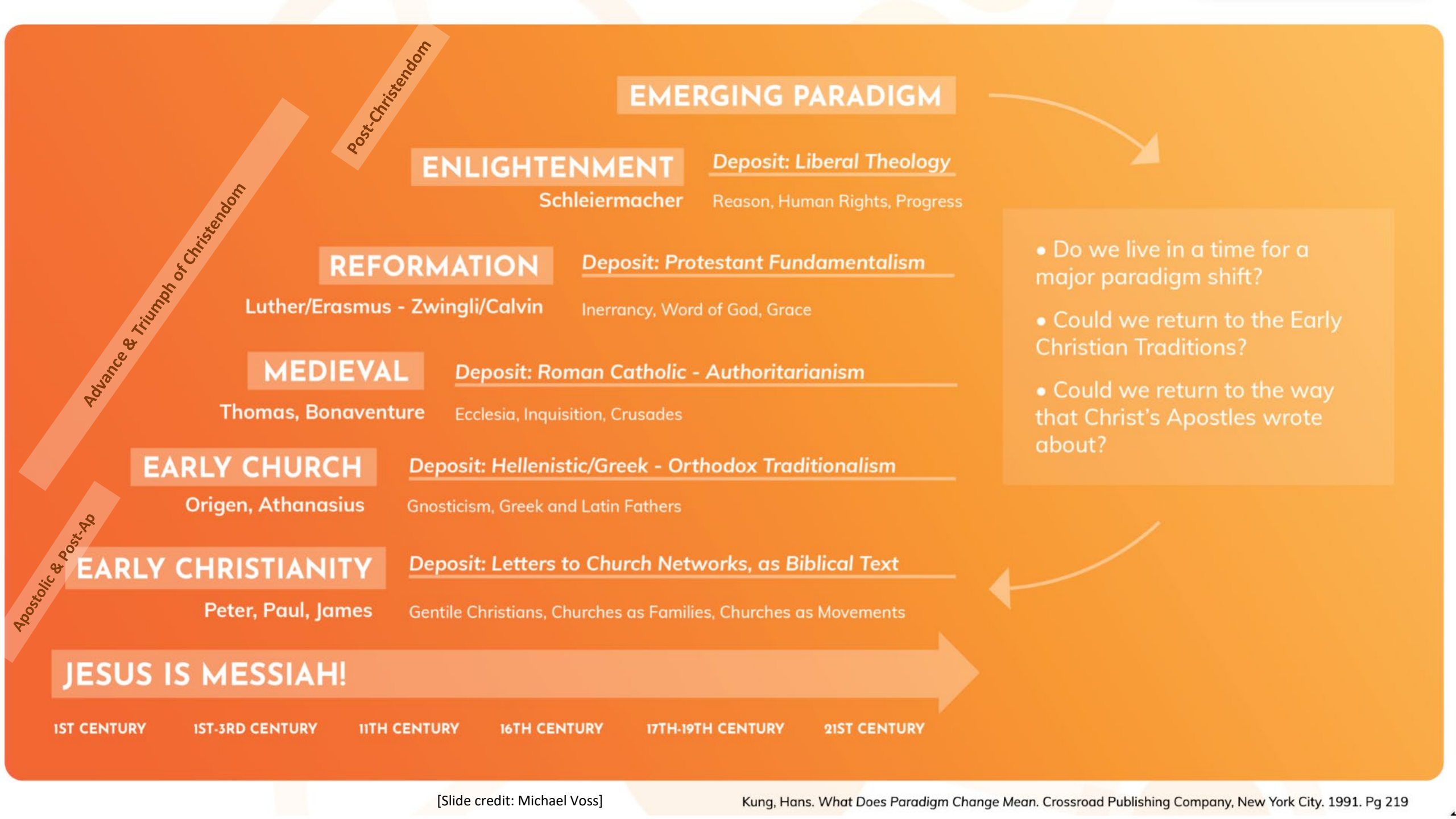
Kevin L. Rhodes (June 13, 2004)

Just as the first-century disciples had to reorient their thinking to a missional perspective, twenty-first century disciples need to do the same

*"Christendom ... had effectively become the metanarrative for an entire epoch. A metanarrative is an overarching story that claims to contain truth applicable to all people at all times in all cultures. While the Christendom story no longer defines Western culture, it still remains the primary definer of the church's self-understanding in almost every Western nation, including and perhaps especially the United States." (Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch. *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 8)*

<i>Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Mode (A.D. 32 to 313)</i>	<i>Advance and Triumph of Christendom Mode (A.D. 313 to present)</i>
<i>Didn't have dedicated sacral buildings. Often underground and persecuted.</i>	<i>Buildings became central to the notion and experience of the church.</i>
<i>Leadership operated with a fivefold ministry-leadership ethos.</i>	<i>Leadership by an institutionally ordained clergy operating primarily in a pastor-teacher mode.</i>
<i>Grassroots, decentralized movement.</i>	<i>Institutional-hierarchical notion of leadership and structure.</i>
<i>Church is on the margins of society and underground.</i>	<i>Church is perceived as central to society and surrounding culture.</i>
<i>Missionary, incarnational-sending church.</i>	<i>Attractional/"extractional."</i>

On the reverse side record any additional thoughts, comments or questions



EMERGING PARADIGM

Grace Church
1889 - Present

ENLIGHTENMENT

Deposit: Liberal Theology

Schleiermacher

Reason, Human Rights, Progress

REFORMATION

Deposit: Protestant Fundamentalism

Luther/Erasmus - Zwingli/Calvin

Inerrancy, Word of God, Grace

MEDIEVAL

Deposit: Roman Catholic - Authoritarianism

Thomas, Bonaventure

Ecclesia, Inquisition, Crusades

EARLY CHURCH

Deposit: Hellenistic/Greek - Orthodox Traditionalism

Origen, Athanasius

Gnosticism, Greek and Latin Fathers

EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Deposit: Letters to Church Networks, as Biblical Text

Peter, Paul, James

Gentile Christians, Churches as Families, Churches as Movements

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- Do we live in a time for a major paradigm shift?
- Could we return to the Early Christian Traditions?
- Could we return to the way that Christ's Apostles wrote about?

Implications

For most of its history Grace Church has relied on Fundamentalism as its primary tradition. As far as I can tell, this was done with sincere motives to preserve its values in the face of challenges from the culture, national & global crises, and internal struggles. However, Fundamentalism itself, is actually a tradition that is secondary to, and in some places at odds with, TWCA.

I think it's clear that there was always a remnant of sincere believers doing their utmost to follow Jesus. We don't need to feel bad about our history or heritage. Those that came before us worked hard at preserving their faith and shaping Grace Church in such a way that it wouldn't be overcome by or simply attempt to synchronize with the culture around it.

Implications

However, we do need to think critically about our history and predecessors, but without becoming critical or complaining about their choices. We serve a loving God, who looks at people's hearts and intentions as well as their lives and choices, and He works constantly to redeem them around His purposes.

I do know this... Our generation will certainly be held accountable for our choices related to following TWCA, because we have rediscovered it, and we've had it explained, taught and modeled for us for 27 years

Luke uses Jesus' parables about the Kingdom to emphasize this point. He emphasizes Jesus' use of parables to teach about His kingdom and what the focus and work of true disciples should be here on earth, after Jesus left.

Implications

One parable describes the responsibility of the servant while the master is away...

Lk 12:47-48 “And that servant who knew his master’s will and didn’t prepare himself or do it will be severely beaten. But the one who did not know and did what deserved punishment will receive a light beating. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, even more will be expected.”

Implications

James addresses the same idea, but approaching it from a wisdom perspective. Wisdom is doing what we know is right, therefore...

Js 4:17 “if anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them”

Implications

- There is a 133 year legacy of leaders and faithful followers of Jesus who did their utmost to represent Jesus and pass on the faith. To their credit, God's Spirit has chosen us, those that remain here now, to rediscover His grand strategy and continue the process of shaping this church, based on our very best understanding of what it means to follow Him (The Way of Christ and His Apostles – TWCA).
- The current generation must honor and care for those who have paved the way for us, both those who have passed on and those who remain; and those who remain, must stand behind the current generation (in prayer and support) as we start the next lap, and plan for the time when it will be our turn to pass the baton on to the next generation

Implications

- Together we need to “tie off” any remaining appendages of the old Evangelical, institutional paradigm and fully commit to implementing Jesus’ primary tradition in our situation [fulfilling our calling], allowing remnants of the old paradigm to dry up and fall off, as we redirect all our energy into fully following Jesus’ plan
- This means continuing to reinforce our structure (a cluster of simple churches networked together); our mission (planting new simple churches while supporting leaders & networks); our facilities (becoming a true resource center); and our identity (**3CityChurch** or **GraceCityChurch**)

Implications

- Simultaneously, we need to be careful about establishing any new secondary traditions, which could distract us or could prevent the next generation from doing their own **theology in culture** process, potentially replacing TWCA for that generation
- We need to be training the next generation in such a way that they become skilled at solving problems using TWCA and can pass on that skill to the following generation so that, we guard against secondary traditions becoming primary

Implications

- We need to shape our lives and families around the first principles of Christ, not because they are a more accurate moral code than what we were taught growing up, but because Jesus' plan can only be realized among us if we give ourselves fully to following His principles. If we don't master them, then at best we are irrelevant to His plan, and at worst, we are an obstacle. Our prayer shouldn't be *'God Bless This Mess'*, but *'Father Use Our Sincere Efforts as We Work Hard To Follow Your Master Plan'*. In other words, we either do the hard work to fully commit to the first principles of Christ (becoming transformed by the renewing of our minds) or, by default, we will end up diluting or replacing the FP of Christ with cultural priorities and secondary traditions

Implications

- What does it mean to master the first principles?
- It means having a clear grasp on the teaching (Committing My Mind), engaging in the habit of prayerful journaling about the things that stand out to us as we study (Committing My Heart), designing a ministry plan that is actionable and measurable (Committing My Life), and having this work assessed by leaders who can help shape and challenge us (EQUIP). Everyone must do the work themselves. If you haven't done this process fully, you haven't *done* the First Principles.

NOTE: Having work returned to you for additional thought & reflection isn't a sign of failure, it's a sign that you are fully engaged in the process of becoming transformed by the renewing your minds

Implications: Living out the First Principles

- Every household needs to have a plan for using their homes as a mission center within their sphere of influence
- Husbands/Fathers need to be taking responsibility in their households; leading their families throughout the week so households are prepared to share what they are learning together, when gathered as churches on Sunday; carefully instructing their children with patience; lovingly shepherding their wives into understanding their roles in the community, and assisting their wives in the home as needed... all with an eye toward becoming a mature older man

Implications: Living out the First Principles

- Wives/Mothers need to be respectful of their husbands, following their leadership, talking with them and discussing any aspects of the teaching that remain unclear; they should be managing their homes well, in line with their family's 'mission center' household plan; reinforcing order and learning with their children, according to their family's parenting/training plan; caring for and contributing to the needs of the home, and looking for opportunities to show hospitality... all with an eye toward becoming a mature older woman

Implications: Living out the First Principles

- Mature older men & women need to fully hand off the baton to the next generation, encouraging families in the Apostle's Teaching, and helping shepherd anyone who is still stuck in the old secondary traditions, who might be having a difficult time adjusting to our implementation of TWCA... while also focusing on prayer for the work ahead, as we fully implement TWCA here (This should be the focus of Wednesday evening prayer times!)
- Younger men & women need to engage in intentional relationships "from house to house" in their simple churches, while building deep relationships with those in their sphere of influence... while regularly reaching out to and caring for our aging church family members, making sure our older 'aunts' and 'uncles' are included in gatherings and activities whenever possible

Implications: Living out the First Principles

- Younger men & women need completely commit (“sell out”) to TWCA, and mature into older men/women who can faithfully pass on the deposit to the next generation creating stability and a training/support system for them as they engage in the Theology in Culture process

Implications: Our Existing Leaders

- **Key Apostolic Leader for North America & Europe (Steve Galegor):** helps to oversee our apostolic team in North Jersey (MEC) and continues to train and coach Level 4 apostolic types
- **Apostolic Leader in Residence (Scott):** continue training existing leaders-of-leaders in Master Craftsman programs; strategize for potential new leader candidates; develop larger network with new church planters throughout New Jersey (MEC); participate in North America church planting strategy development (BILD)

Implications: Our Existing Leaders

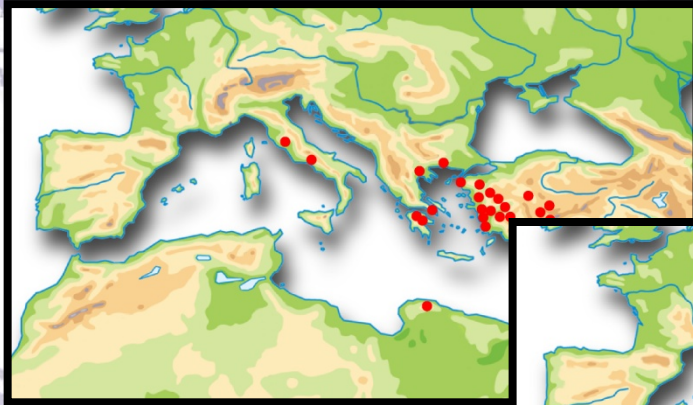
- **Shepherding Coworker (Jonathan):** continue to develop local leaders and grass roots leaders; engage in and complete Master Craftsman training; Focus on planting simple house-based church in Kinnelon area; participate in New Jersey apostolic network (MEC)
- **Shepherd in Training (Mark):** continue shaping household strategy; assist in leading Charis house church (occasionally hosting); Create a clear plan for planting a simple church

Where we are today: Implementation

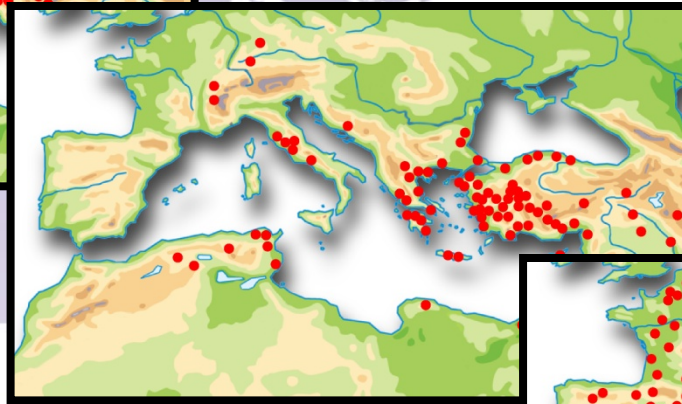
- We have been prepared for nearly three decades, for such a time as this, to be shaped into a community that reflects Jesus' plan – small simple churches (nodes), clusters of simple churches in a geographical area, a hub within the greater NYC region with a resource center (facilities), part of a national and global network of churches following The Way of Christ and His Apostles (TWCA)
 - Do you believe that we are weak or somehow lacking God's blessing because we are few in number? Because we have limited finances? Because our facilities are in disrepair?
 - Do you think God's power is somehow diminished because of this 'weakness'? (2 Cor. 12:9-10)

Network: The Way of Christ and His Apostles

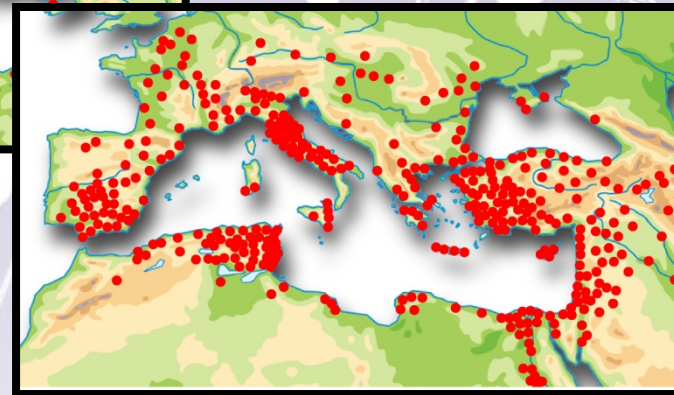
1st Century Churches



2nd Century Churches



3rd Century Churches



network

Eerdman's *Handbook to the History of Christianity* (Berkhamsted, Herts, England: Lion Publishing, 1977), pp. 66–67

2010

2015

2020

2025

2030

2035

2040

2045

Becoming A Mature Strategic Church

1. To what extent does the fulfillment of Jesus' plan depend on us fulfilling our roles (personal development, in our households, our simple churches and our communities)?
2. What would it look like for us to become a mature City Church cluster, and what sort of commitment and sacrifice will we need to make to get there?
3. Can you envision our partnership with the Ames/Des Moines City Church and BILD International for planting churches and building a network in North Jersey?
4. Can you envision the specific role you will have in this partnership (younger men & women, older men & women, households and simple churches)?

Becoming A Mature Strategic Church

5. How will we be able to measure success as we implement these changes?

Definitions

Primary Tradition (Apostolic Traditioning of Paul):

This phrase refers to Paul's process of establishing churches that frames in the overarching purpose behind all of Paul's letters [along with associated writings in Luke/Acts which together provide the framework for understanding the New Testament], which was to be handed down to all future churches; this was a unique part of Paul's apostolic stewardship of revealing Christ's grand strategy, regardless of history, time or culture – a process that includes following Paul's blueprint, principles, processes and key practices.

Definitions

Secondary Traditions (used to create solidarity around or present a corrective in particular cultural situations):

Traditions that are formed to solve problems within a given cultural situation or specific generation

- **Movements:** Evangelicalism, Liberalism, Fundamentalism, etc.
- **Denominations:** Lutheran, Baptist, Grace Brethren, Presbyterian, Reformed, Independent, etc.
- **Theological traditions:** Calvinism, Covenant Theology, Dispensationalism, Liberalism, etc.
- **Distinctive Practices:** Baptism – 3 dunks, Foot Washing, Raising Hands, Healings, etc.
- **Styles:** worship, prayer, gathering, etc.

Definitions

Theology in Culture:

Doing *theology in culture* is the process and ability to think biblically in culture, dealing with issues that Scripture does not directly address but which we can confidently address and form solid answers as a result of increasingly mastering the Scriptures

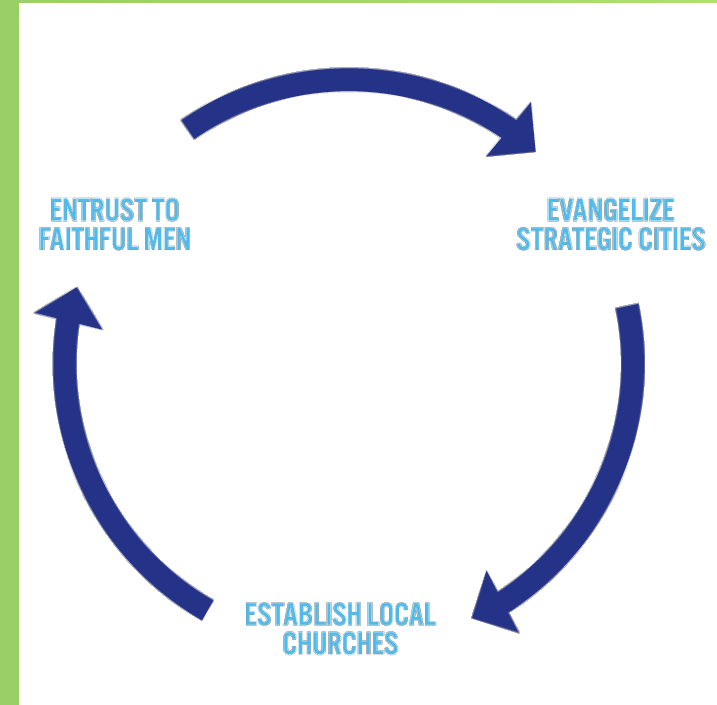
Definitions

The Way of Christ and His Apostles (TWCA)

1. The Pauline Cycle
2. Paul's Letters as Establishing Tools
Early Letters: Strong in the Gospel
(FP Series 1-3)

Middle Letters: Strong in the Mission/Vision
of the church (FP Series 1-3)

Later Letters: Strong, mature households and
leaders (FP Series 3, Master Craftsman programs)



Definitions

The Way of Christ and His Apostles (TWCA)

3. The Didache (the teaching, sound doctrine): Establishing Believers and Families

Reformed conduct

Virtues

Household order

True community – love

Conduct toward outsiders

Submit to governing authorities

Responsible living

Definitions

The Way of Christ and His Apostles (TWCA)

4. The Paul & Timothy Model

Local leaders: Elders, deacons, deaconesses

Apostolic-type leaders: Who move among the churches, strengthening and establishing them

Young Man

Apprentice
(Team Member)

Master Craftsman
(Developer of Team)

Milestone #1

Commendation by elders to apprentice with team, 1 Tim. 4:14

- ▶ proven character
- ▶ obvious gifts and fruit
- ▶ teachability
- ▶ loyalty

Milestone #2

Commendation by recognized leader to develop missionary teams, 2 Tim. 1:6

- ▶ kept the faith
- ▶ avoids wrangling over words
- ▶ accurate workman of the deposit
- ▶ obvious growth
- ▶ undefiled conscience

How the Spirit used key leaders & sovereign circumstances to shape and prepare us for such a time as this.

IMPLEMENTING

Canion, Eisenmenger (Williams)
(Elders: TBD)

Focus: Fulfilling Our Purpose

Going the distance, kerygmatic communities, building the network, training next generation
2024: 3CityChurch or GraceCityChurch

SHAPING

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(Elders: Eisenmenger, Bird, Williams)

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[Nic@Nite, 3 city focus: Passaic-Paterson-Clifton, all church gatherings]

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A clear path ahead, primary tradition, new paradigm, church plant (SI)
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Felty, Burke, Mott, interims

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New focus, Shifting Evangelicalism / Waning Fundamentalism, church split (fears within)
[home fellowship groups, Evangelism Explosion]

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Sweeting, Mouw, Fesmire, Rosser

Focus (culture): Constructing & Insulating

Prosperity, highest attendance, numerous ministries – cultural upheaval (conflict without), fundamentalism
[2 city focus: Passaic-Clifton]
1955: The Grace Church of Passaic-Clifton

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Landis, Williamson, Hall

Focus (crisis): Helping the Needy

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A clear path ahead, primary tradition, new paradigm, church plant (SI)
[monthly Lord's meals, intentional leadership development]

REACTING

Felty, Burke, Mott

Focus: Riding the Wave of Success

Birthright: Fundamentalism, Responding to: Shifting Evangelicalism, Church Split (Mott)
[home fellowship groups, Evangelism Explosion]

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