

FORM

A strategy for Coventry Vineyard church to be a people who make disciples who make disciples

For more see: *The Missional Journey: Multiplying Disciples and Churches that Transform the World*, Logan, Robert E. ; DeVries, David

Coventry Vineyard is a group of people committed to...

ENCOURAGE EQUIP EXPRESS

*Encourage one another to worship God in everyday life
Equip one another to live as followers of Jesus
Express God's love to others in practical ways.*

We want to be a people who make disciples who transform the world.

The purpose of our leaders training day is to equip our key leaders to fulfil our mission.

On being missional...

We do not exist just to satisfy the needs of our immediate community. We exist for the benefit of our 'non-members'. A lot has been said in the last ten years about 'missional communities'. To be missional is simply to live life as though you have been sent "on mission" by Jesus. Missional living is about living on mission. Missional activities are the focus of your life as you seek to fulfill the mission of Jesus.

To be "missional" is to focus on living in accordance with the great commandment and great commission.

Love God,
Love others
Make disciples

Jesus told his followers to make disciples. That is the core mission we've been charged with. Disciples learn from Jesus (the master) how to live under the kingdom of God.

Jesus made disciples and instructed his disciples to make disciples. Churches are the natural outcome of disciples making disciples. A church is the natural outcome of a people committed to making disciples.

People who live like Jesus lived. As those entrusted with revealing this Kingdom to others, we follow Jesus, imitate his ways, and try to live our lives as he lived his. We serve as the hands, feet, and voice of Jesus in the world around us. In doing so, we— as his disciples— participate in making the power of the God visible to others. -Logan

QUESTION:

What does it mean to “live incarnationally”?

To live ‘incarnationally’ is to live as a disciple of Jesus— living and loving as Jesus did. A bedrock passage for incarnational living is 1 John 2:5– 6:

But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

Jesus lived on earth in a way that showed us what God is like. In the same way, we are to live in such a way as to show others what God is like.

This should produce some important questions.

How did Jesus actually live?

What did he actually do?

Which specific actions of His are we to imitate?

What would those actions look like in our own very different cultural context?

Given that we are not God, how can we really live like Jesus lived?

As we read through the gospel accounts of Jesus life, we can see at least seven principles that demonstrate how Jesus lived, principles that you are invited to take on as His apprentice/disciple...

Mark 1:35, Matt 14:23, John 15:5

Principle #1: Staying connected with the Father

Luke 8:1-3

Principle #2: Integrating into the culture

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Principle #3: Living with purpose

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Principle #4: Engaging authentically with others

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Principle #5: Serving the "least of these"

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Principle #6: Calling people to follow Jesus

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Principle #7: Cultivating others to live incarnationally

What did Jesus tell us to do?

Matt 22:34-40

Matt 28:18-20

Love God

Love others

Make Disciples

Encourage Equip Express

It's very difficult to live incarnationally and not make disciples.

What is your role in transforming the lives of others as you take part in building for the Kingdom of God in your own life?

Some definitions:

Kingdom: *The reign of God on earth as it is in heaven; a reality that reflects the heart of God. The Kingdom of God is lived out through sacrificial service, authentic relationships, and spiritual transformation.*

Disciple: *One who is intentionally following Jesus, becoming like Jesus, transformed into his likeness, living like Jesus in community with others on mission.*

Gospel: *The story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, reflected by transformed lives that express the Kingdom of God on earth.*

Church: *The gathering of believers who together live out the Kingdom, communicate the gospel, and make disciples and in doing so transform culture.*

Missional: *Any person or group of people who are focused on living in accordance with the great commandment and the great commission.*

What is the church supposed to do?

Although there are many, many possible answers to this question, almost all of them would fall generally under one of the following three categories:

- **Sacrificial service**
- **Authentic relationships**
- **Spiritual transformation**

These are the core ingredients of the missional journey. They represent what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Together, they bring about broader societal transformation in line with the Kingdom of God.

The Tension:

When we view church as something we do on Sunday mornings, we can easily view our "ministry" as serving other Christians. Yet, when we understand that church is who we are, it opens up opportunities to serve beyond the walls of the church as well. Both are essential.

We are the continuation of the early church that we read about in scripture. Our own missional community descends from the believers in the book of Acts. How will we express the transforming power of the Holy Spirit today? What actions will we take?

The goal of the church

As disciples were made, the church formed to become a gathering place for those disciples. The church, in turn, took on the mission Jesus left it— to make disciples. The

church is to be a place of both gathering and outreach— a place for our own culture and a place for the reaching of other cultures.

Just like the early church was committed to making disciples, the church today must be committed to making disciples. Unfortunately, many churches today have lost any sense of mission, beyond serving the needs of its membership.

How will you seize Jesus' mission as your own?

Disciples gathered together in the church, lived out the Kingdom of God in community with other disciples on mission, and made more disciples. In doing so, the church grew. It grew by cooperating with the Holy Spirit and by structuring for maximum effectiveness. It grew through its goal of making disciples. It grew and multiplied from Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, to the ends of the earth.

How do you serve others?

How are you building authentic relationships?

How are you being transformed spiritually?

God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him.

-Romans 8:29-30

Do not conform but be transformed

-Romans 12:2

OUR MISSIONAL JOURNEY

1. Be FORMed

Spiritual Formation : grow in our own spiritual lives, becoming more like Jesus as we follow Him, for the sake of others

"If we preach a gospel of transformation, we need to show some evidence of what transformation looks like"

Transformed individuals transform culture.

Romans 8:29-30 The Message (MSG)

29-30 God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him. After God made that decision of what his children should be like, he followed it up by calling people by name. After he called them by name, he set them on a solid basis with himself. And then, after getting them established, he stayed with them to the end, gloriously completing what he had begun.

What is Spiritual Formation?

“Spiritual formation is a process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others.” (M. Robert Mulholland Jr., *Invitation to a Journey*)

The focal point of our formation journey is to know God. One result of truly knowing God will be a life that takes on the character of Christ. It is extremely important that we make “fixing our eyes on Jesus” (Heb. 12:2) our primary activity.

Things to remember as we think about spiritual formation:

- We are all being formed spiritually whether we recognize it or not.
- Classic and contemporary understandings of Christian spiritual formation contain the element of intentionality on the part of the Christian in the formation process.
- Although the Spirit of God is the initiator and sustainer of the formation process in our lives, we are called to recognize and respond to the Spirit’s activity.
- This is to be ongoing and ever deepening, and we play a part in the process: We are to *“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”* 2 Peter 3:18 - Spiritual Formation is a combination of God’s initiation and our being as diligent and obedient as possible in response.
- Spiritual formation is the process of becoming like Christ
- Spiritual formation is a process empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- Spiritual formation is about BEING FORMED... It is NOT about forming ourselves to be like Christ. Part of our struggle with the process of BEING FORMED is recognizing that

there is little we can do to transform ourselves into persons who love and serve as Jesus did...EXCEPT to make ourselves available for God and to respond to his initiatives in our lives...this results in the work of transforming grace in our lives.

- The process changes a person's inner and outer life: Jesus was always more interested in what was going on in the inside of people than he was with mere outward activity. Spiritual formation is about having the inner recesses of our lives touched by God's Spirit.
- The result of the formation process is that the believer's life will be progressively conformed to the likeness of Christ. In the life of Jesus we see what true humanity was intended to be. God's desire is that we be reshaped into his image.
- Spiritual formation is a communal activity, not an individual journey. We need the encouragement, strength, love, and relationship of others as we walk the pathway of formation.
- Formation is a process that occurs over a lifetime. It is not 'instant' and cannot be rushed. Spiritual formation is a gradual, life-long experience of shaping and forming by God's Spirit.
- Spiritual formation is a **process**, but it does have an end in mind. "True Christianity aims at having the character of Christ so formed in us that in our most ordinary activities His temperament and attitudes reveal themselves. The Spirit and the will of Christ should so possess us that in our relationships with people, in our leisure time, and in our daily business it will be second nature for us to act like Him. All this is possible because Christ himself, as the Living One, lives in us." (Andrew Murray, Daily Experience with God)

2. FORM Friendships

Engage Culture: build friendships with those who don't know Jesus by sharing life in such a way that shows His grace and truth.

"If you don't have friends outside the church, there's something wrong with you— and your version of Christianity."

We are transformed to have a transforming influence in the world. God has designed the church for this purpose.

Jesus engaged his culture by forming friendships. He was known as a "friend of sinners". They invited him to their parties. And he went!

Forming friendship is how we engage our culture. It means being where the people are, living among them, getting to know them, letting them get to know us. It also means shining the light of Jesus into dark places bringing hope and transformation. When we meet people on their turf, allowing them to really know us— including our spirituality— that's when we find people who are curious about God and open to him. That's when people choose to follow Jesus, and begin following him out of their own culture, not ours.

Engaging culture means living 'incarnationally' among the people with whom God has placed us. We are to live in such a way that shows Jesus to them.

We do this by forming friendships.

Look for people who the Holy Spirit highlights.

How do you practically love your neighbour?

Stranger ——> Acquaintance ——> Friend

The first step to taking the Great Commandment literally is to move from stranger to acquaintance in your relationships with those who live nearest to you. Learning a person's name is the first and easiest step you can take to become a better neighbour.

Once you have learned and remembered someone's name, your relationship has moved from stranger to acquaintance. That's a crucial first step. However, Jesus didn't tell us to become acquaintances with our neighbours; he called us to love them, and that means we need to have an actual friendship with them.

But moving from acquaintance to relationship is not as clean or as easily defined as the first step. There isn't a simple tool that can move you into relationship, because it is impossible to program relationships. All of us can, however, create environments where friendships might develop and grow into something significant.

It means making some effort. However, remember, relationships don't happen when we heap pressure onto ourselves and others. So don't try too hard! This can happen more easily than you anticipate because this is how God designed you to live. You were built to connect with other people. So be who you are, and relationships will grow out of that. It makes friendship normal and natural, something that just happens rather than something that's forced. And the most natural way to connect with people is through shared activities.

For more on this check out 'the art of neighbouring' by Jay Pathak & Dave Runyon

What's your definition of "friend"?

Being a friend has to mean more than being a friend on facebook, it might also mean even more than someone you know who is friendly to you?

What if a friend is really someone who invites you to be with their friends. Until someone feels safe enough with you to include you with their other friends, you're probably not a true friend yet. Think through this definition of friendship in your own life. Sometimes the way we define our "friends" means the friendship might be more on our side than on theirs. Two simple steps to form friendships...

Listen and serve

We engage culture through the three core elements of the missional journey: sacrificial service, authentic relationships, and spiritual transformation. The result is changed lives, changed communities, and changed neighborhoods.

All believers, regardless of giftedness or abilities, are called to engage culture. This journey is for everyone. It's the essential DNA of all the rest of the journeys. Even high-level leaders focusing on developing leaders or multiplying movements can never leave this first journey behind.

All missional ministry— however large in scale— starts with individuals deciding to live incarnationally within the culture around them. No one is exempt and no one can lead where they haven't been. Engaging the culture is foundational to the rest of the missional journey. When we lose touch with the culture, we lose the right to speak into it.

Key Questions:

What do you like to do?

how can you do that with others who don't already follow jesus?

What needs do you see?

How can you bring transformation?

How can you serve?

Suggested Practical Steps...

- Talk to/get to know people outside church
- Learn how to have those conversation with people
- Make opportunities to meet people
- Who do you meet on your route through life? (e.g. at the petrol station, walk to work)
- Pray and be aware - Ask the Holy spirit what He is already doing?

- Practice extravagant listening with people
- Ask “How are you doing” more than once...and mean it!
- Volunteer (PTA, governors etc)
- Work out where there is a need and serve
- It’s not about doing more!
- Offer to pray for people
- Tell people about Jesus
- Talk about what you are doing at church
- Start a Discovery Group

3. FORM Groups

Form missional groups that will intentionally transform communities through sacrificial service, authentic relationships and spiritual formation.

The groups we seek to form could also be described as missional communities. A missional community is a group of people following Jesus together with a commitment to three things we saw in the local church:

1. sacrificial service,
2. authentic relationship and
3. spiritual formation.

Make sure all three are included in your gathering times. For most groups it feels most familiar to focus on just one or two of these areas, but remember—it’s not a missional community unless it’s hitting all of these areas. You may be wondering what to do when you meet as a missional community. How do you keep from becoming just a small group or Bible study? That’s a great question! Read on... and start using some of these ideas in your gatherings. Here are some ideas for each element to get you started, but feel free to get creative:

Sacrificial serving

You’re not just a social gathering; you’re on a mission. Remind people of that every time you gather. Spend time talking about sacrificial serving when you gather as a missional community. Ask: What needs do you or others have? How can we meet those needs?

Then plan together how you, as a missional community, will take action that week. Encourage one another in the use of spiritual gifts. Do you know the two best ways to discover spiritual gifts? One is to get the perspective of others who know you well. The other is to try different types of service and see how God seems to be working through you.

Authentic relationship

If you've been in many small groups, you've probably discovered that community for the sake of community doesn't hold up well over time. For community to be authentic, it needs to be about something beyond itself. Remind yourselves of this during your sharing time. In addition to questions like, "How are you doing? How was your week?"

Try going a little deeper. Ask: How did you experience God this week? What opportunities did you have to be the hands and feet of Jesus? Another way to incorporate serving into your missional community is to adopt a school or a specific project in your neighborhood.

As you gather, take time to pray and plan. A regular time to serve a specific group each month will not only keep you outwardly focused; it will also become an important part of your discipleship process. It's also a great way to include others who haven't yet committed to following Jesus.

Sharing experiences, successes, failures—and everything in between—will exponentially increase the level of authenticity in your missional community. As a leader, your transparency and openness will help the entire missional community experience a greater sense of transparency. Don't act like you've got it all together—you don't. Share and support one another.

Pray for one another, and make sure that prayer goes beyond physical problems and needs. Pray for emotional healing, engagement in service, the finding of calling, and forgiveness. Allow your prayers to get real, and to go beyond the surface of life.

Spiritual transformation

There are lots of ways to focus on spiritual transformation. Certainly, reading scripture together and seeking to understand how to apply it to your lives is a great place to start. Try letting different people facilitate the discussion each week.

Again, Discovery groups are an ideal way of forming groups that intentionally make disciples.

Key Questions

What is God already doing in this community?

How can we bring Kingdom change to this area?

Where is their a need in my community?

Look for a Person of Peace. These are people that have a significant influence in a particular community and who are open to Jesus. Persons of peace are important because they represent the bridge between engaging culture and forming missional communities. They are the bedrock upon which new missional communities are formed.

Form missional groups

- Identifying a need and inviting others to serve with you
- Ensure the group has a purpose – spiritual transformation
 - Look for the opportunities for conversations of faith and to pray with people
- Invite others with the same purpose to join you
- Missional groups can form around
 - Geography, home, work, study
 - Hobby/activity
 - Cause/project
 - E.g. HOTS, Students, CAP, Football

Focus on missional groups as 2+ Coventry Vineyard people gathering together with a common mission purpose – serving, relating and spiritually forming.

Make it reproducible. As you get ready to start missional communities, adopt a reproducible model that others can readily imitate. As you answer these questions, keep the process simple so that it is easily passed on to others.

Start a missional ministry of some kind. There's nothing like stories of faith in action to encourage others to join. If you meet resistance from some within the group, don't let that stop you. Decide on a way to serve sacrificially outside of the group and invite along anyone who wants to join. Others in the group can engage in different kinds of missional activities. There's no rule that everyone has to serve in the same way. Some may serve at the Salvation Army; others may tutor at the neighborhood school. There are hundreds of possibilities, and no one right answer.

Remind each other of God's involvement in your lives and ministries. At the end of the group I'm in, we gather in a circle to pray—holding hands, but facing outward. Our physical posture is a reminder that we are blessed in order to be a blessing to others. We are connected to one another, but serving the world around us.

Create groups-within-a-group. Depending on the size of your missional community, you may need to create smaller breakout groups where deeper and more personal sharing is possible. Groups of four to seven are optimal for holding one another accountable, and for providing more personalized support.

Make disciples. A missional community is a disciple-making community. This is where disciples are made. Members engage not only in their own personal transformation as growing disciples, but also in making new disciples.

Create intentional ways for helping people reach out to those within their spheres of influence. Provide discipleship resources for those who are spiritually responsive. Decide on clear behaviors that indicate what a disciple is and does. Remember that discipleship is not purely a one-on-one activity; groups can disciple as well.

DISCOVERY GROUPS

Discovery Groups are one tool to aid spiritual growth to do this; as are praying with people, giving words, prophecy, taking about Jesus.

Discovery Group Format

Opening Question

1) What are you thankful for this week?

Accountability

2) With whom did you share last week?

3) How did it go with your "I will's?"

Bible Discovery

4) What does it say? (Retell and read the passage out loud.)

5) How would I say that? (Restate or retell in your own words.)

6) What must I do to obey what I have learned? "I will..." (Craft a sentence of how you will obey this week, trusting the Spirit to empower you.)

(Questions 7 and 8 if you have time, if not, go to 9.)

7) What did you learn about God?

8) What did you learn about humanity?

Share

9) With whom will you share what you learned this week?

Help

10) What is one challenge you are facing this week? Is there some way our group can help?

4. FORM Leaders

Build a structure that will develop and multiply leaders who enable others to be formed, build friendships and missional groups

Any missional community—whether it's a house church, small group, or more traditional church—will require organizational sustainability in order to flourish. This means that even something organic—a movement of God—requires that we structure it in order to steward it well.

Often I'm telling church planters not to start worship services until they've started making disciples first. Likewise, Jesus didn't train his disciples to start services to make disciples, but rather to make disciples to start churches.

Consider gathering monthly after you've started three missional communities. This is a great time to celebrate together what God is doing. Consider meeting twice each month after four missional communities are gathering. Resist meeting weekly until at least five missional communities have begun.

When creating a leadership structure there are two main areas:

1. People Development

Coaching is a relational way to develop leaders and organize local expressions of the church. We're still about authentic relationships, sacrificial service, and spiritual transformation as we make disciples. Coaching is simply a means to those ends. It helps us stay effectively on mission.

The goal of coaching is helping someone succeed. And what is success? It's finding out what God wants us to do and doing it. Given that definition, success will certainly look differently with different people, but all of it will be tied into accomplishing biblical mission.

Helpful preparation questions include: –What insights have I had since our last session? –What challenges and/ or problems am I facing now? –What opportunities are available to me right now? –What do I want to focus on during my coaching session?

2. Organisational Development

People development and organizational development are linked: As you coach and develop more leaders, the organization also grows. This reality often creates challenges for leaders; they quickly find that what they've been doing successfully suddenly doesn't work anymore. The senior leader who's been developing other leaders himself or herself now begins running short of time. He or she is no longer able to develop as many leaders as are needed for a growing organization. What works at one stage won't work at the next stage. We need to continue reorganizing as we move from one developmental stage to the next.

We need to know what we're measuring. What constitutes success? Jesus told us to make disciples. So what we measure needs to be an indicator of how disciples live, what they do, etc. We need to regularly reevaluate our organization to determine if it is still functioning in the best way to accomplish the intended purpose.

Build in regular reevaluation time to ask questions like these:

1. What are we trying to accomplish? How will we measure that?
2. In what ways does each ministry and system connect, in order to accomplish our goals?
3. How well do people understand the ministry flow— i.e., how we carry out ministry?
4. How are people involved in the process of shaping and fulfilling goals?
5. In what ways does the organizational structure facilitate ministry? In what ways does it hinder ministry from being accomplished?

Key Questions:

- How are we mobilizing leaders?
- How are we apprenticing leaders?

- How are we coaching leaders?
- How are we forming leadership communities?
- How are we celebrating successes and learning from experiences?
- How are we affirming vision and values?
- How are we organizing for further expansion?

5. FORM Churches

Be intentional about planting and developing communities and churches; locally, nationally and internationally

We need to continue to move from accidental to intentional church planting today. Many of our churches are planted accidentally, whether from church splits, diverging visions, or people just not getting along. How much greater would the “return on investment” be if we became more intentional about starting new disciple-making communities—and even new movements?

Forming missional communities—and even developing strong leadership for those communities—doesn’t end the journey. We need to see whole movements of churches worldwide reaching the whole range of communities out there. If we want to see spiritual transformation at every level—individual, group, societal, and worldwide—this is the journey that finally gets us there.

Key Questions:

How are you mobilizing apostolic leaders?

How are you sending ministry teams?

How are you crossing cultural barriers?

How are you multiplying disciples, groups, and churches?

How are you starting new movements?