Millennials: The Unreached In Our Midst. A Practical Theology of Reaching Millennials Through Organic Church Principles and Repurposing the Church

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MILLENNIALS: THE UNREACHED IN OUR MIDST.

A PRACTICAL THEOLOGY OF REACHING MILLENNIALS THROUGH ORGANIC CHURCH PRINCIPLES AND REPURPOSING THE CHURCH

MASTERS THESIS

PRESENTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE COLLEGE OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES AND RELIGION OF SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE MASTERS OF ARTS IN MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP

BY

JANELLE A. ANDERSON

FEBRUARY 2017
Acknowledgements

God, unending thankfulness belongs to you because, even when my heart struggles to reside in a posture of humility and gratitude, you give your love to me. Without your sustenance, my Lord and Savior, I would not be alive. Thank you for life—and the six and half years of Hope we celebrate! Without your affection, my heart would not yearn for you nor would it yearn for those you seek. I am a product of my experience with you. Every piece of my life has your fingerprints on it.

While all glory goes to God for what has been studied, learned, and can now be shared, many thanks also belong to others:

To my parents, for their love, support, encouragement, and endless hours of reviewing papers in the middle of the night. You taught me how to love and to never give up. To my sister, for being the best cheerleader and the brightest light when everything seems too hard to persevere. You are the best family; thank you for never letting me give up.

To my mentor, for teaching me to base ministry on the Word of God, the direction of the Holy Spirit, and a deep study of the people God called me to reach. Cheers to being a life-long learner! Brian Kelly, you challenged me to seek out new ways to reach the unreached; you told me to do whatever it takes to reach them—no matter who objects or doesn't understand it; you taught me to leave fear behind. I hope that this final thesis reflects the courage you hoped I would develop.

To my best friend, Corey, for keeping me sane and well-fed during this program; without you, I would have toppled over the edge and not finished the work I started. Thank you for volunteering; I cannot even begin to express my gratitude. To the Desperation team, thank you for your patience and willingness to serve God, our family, and even me. We wouldn't be who we are without your creativity, passion, dreams, and strength.

My education at Southeastern has changed me and challenged me. Professors, thank you for not pulling punches, pushing me to think deeply, and especially for teaching me to never let knowledge remain in the mind. I have truly learned the joy of application!

A final thank you to the Body of Christ: thank you for teaching me how to love God and others. I learned about who God made me to be and become from you. Now, I hope that you allow me to return the favor. This work was created to be a gift to you—a reminder of who you were created to be and become. I pray that you find life anew through this gift and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Family, friends, mentors, professors, pastors, and strangers: this work wouldn't be the same without each of your diverse perspectives and voices. Thank you for sharing this exhilarating journey with me!
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CHAPTER ONE:

A STORYTELLER PRESENTS: "THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH"

As the bus exited the station, the group could hear her distressed cowboy boots clomp-clomp down the aisle and the sound of her silver, bronze, and gold bird pendants clicking together against the brown belt drawn snugly around her waist. She had an ethereal presence that made the group wonder where she came from and kept them guessing at what she would say next. “I will be your tour guide for the next few minutes as we explore an often forgotten people group right here in our midst! I’m glad you could join Networth today—a tour company focused on helping you learn about the values and culture of a social media fueled people group.¹ Please keep your hands and feet in the vehicle at all times, remain seated and buckled! This journey can be a rough one; every six months we need to re-write these tours—this culture is constantly changing and evolving!” she gushed as she moved from the rear of the bus gesturing for the tour group to look out the windows.

She was a petite young woman, with eyes almost as bright as her turquoise sundress and hair that faded like the sun in the evening from a light brown to a dirty blonde as it cascaded down around her shoulders and framed her face. “I always say that the best way to get to know someone is to see where they spend their time! A few of our stops will have snacks and/or drinks for sale, including the coffee shop just around the corner. I hope you’re feeling up for a Caramel Macchiato or Chocolate Covered Strawberry Frappuccino! These are some of the most popular drinks as of late—one of them is actually not on the menu though. The baristas here are all in their early 20’s and

¹ Networth is a fictitious company that seeks to help Millennials be understood by the greater public—focusing on their seemingly network-based self-worth.
love a chance to experiment and try something new if you’re feeling brave enough to let them! If you look to your left, we’re passing a local music venue. At least once a week there is a concert here, mostly attended by this mysterious people group.

My favorite set of stops on our tour today will be near the end! As part of your tour package, we’ve included a pinch of competition. At the last three stops—all of which are thrift stores frequented by this elusive, ever-changing people group—you will have the opportunity to put together and model an outfit for under $15. I know that sounds impossible, but it’s a common feat and pass-time for this people group. Whoever comes up with the best outfit will receive it for free, courtesy of your tour company, Networth! We’re really glad you could join us today.”

As they continued through the city, the tour group found themselves intrigued by this paradoxical community: the people they learned about were both seeking and being sought; they were optimistic about the future but severely depressed; they seemed to have so much to say, but the community gave them no voice. When they returned to the station, one man pulled the perky young woman aside and asked her how she learned so much about this people group. Her response was short and simple: “I’ve lived among them my whole life and just learned to ask questions.” He was quick to grab one of her business cards from the station when he left his tip; he vowed to email her when he returned to the church office and muttered to himself, “perhaps she has the answers to our dilemma—maybe she can help us reach this people group.”

The purpose of this paper is to assist the reader in gaining a deeper understanding of Millennials and to help them begin to reach them with the hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ—with a focus on Millennial culture and organic church model concepts. While
this group was both discovered and investigated as they’ve grown up, the research will never be complete. The author will attempt to explain a snap-shot of their values, how their culture is shaped, how this group responds to a variety of life-forces, how they connect, as well as how they can effectively be reached—focused on applying concepts from organic church models. While it is too lofty of a goal to express the Millennial culture in its entirety, a snap-shot must be attempted if there is to be any promise of reaching them with the gospel.
CHAPTER TWO

WHO ARE MILLENNIALS?

To help the reader create a foundation for Millennial culture in their mind, there is something that must be communicated first: Millennials are typically referred to as the “under 30 age group” of adults right now. The label refers to those born after 1980—the first generation to come of age in the new millennium. However, Millennial culture has infected people from other age groups as well. This Millennial culture is also known as “post-modern” or “emerging” culture. For the sake of this paper, the author will refer to Millennials/Millennial culture as the age group as opposed to the mindset, understanding that many of the statements made will apply to a majority of Western civilization. The reader must keep in mind that the specific contextualizations will need to be adapted to particular subcultures to be effective—this paper will focus on a Millennial church adaptation in Lakeland, Florida with a strong lean toward Organic Church models.

While a “tour” may suggest a bit of a dramatic representation of Millennial culture, there are many pieces of it that ring true—including the need for intentional study to learn about this unique, ever-evolving culture. Found in the tour format above, the hidden script of individualism can be observed and understood—values such as these: creative expression, experimentation, eclectic fashion with a vintage and “one of a kind” look. These values are characteristic of this people group. Millennials highly value a mix-and-match approach to everything from fashion to music to religion—any doubt of that can be erased by examining the number of white, suburban youth purchasing “ghetto” rap music, the popularity of thrift stores and DIY (Do It Yourself) projects/websites, the

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claim of Christianity being closed minded and obsolete, and the many other paradoxes of this group.

"How Can I Help You?" Principles Extracted From The Culture

Millennials’ values can be categorized by three statements—statements the group silently screams: "I want to be heard"; "I want to contribute"; "I want to be accepted."

These three statements can be mined as principles for understanding Millennials. These statements were encouraged by their parents and have formed the identity of most Millennials, pressurized to the point of explosion by the societal life-force of conformity. The Western world can clearly see the three statements exploding into an obsession with artistry like water balloons filled with paint. While some stereotypes would suggest this is an obsession with self; the author would like to disagree. She sees this as more of an obsession with deep connections. Artistry allows individuals to express their true feelings and experiences with the world—while still veiling the true meaning from most—throwing open doors to allow individuals to connect on a variety of levels, as well as experience deep levels of community more often.

“I Want To Be Heard”

Millennials value creative expression and having a voice. If there is any doubt of this desire to be heard, here are a few statistics that might blow those doubts away: There were 59.4 million Wordpress sites around the world last year and 87.8 million Tumblr blogs.³ Tumblr is an image and text based blog that allows users to post and re-post; Wordpress is a type of website template that allows someone with no web design skills to create and launch a website. These word/image sites are not the only form of expression

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being used. Many Millennials have transitioned from these text-heavy expressions to
image-based expressions. Every second, 58 photos were posted to Instagram in 2012.⁴
Staring this fact in the face, there is no way to deny the popularity and importance of
image to Millennials. This propensity to share images using social media is just one piece
of the proof of artistry. Millennials so deeply value image and expression that they
embrace the concept of permanently attaching themselves to their own, or someone else’s
artwork: four out of every ten Millennials have at least one tattoo.⁵ While not all tattoos
are image-based, even the invention of new fonts helps expressions take on an artistic
flair even when dominated by text.

While the Western world is based on a different communication style, Millennials
may find themselves designated as “tribal communicators.”⁶ Tribal communicators are
seen highly embracing the medium of storytelling, despite the fact that Western
Civilization has gone through the Tribal Age, Age of Literacy, the Print Age, and is now
in the Electronic Age—as simply outlined in many communication theory books and
websites.⁷ The author firmly believes that a transition back to many of the Tribal Age
characteristics is subtly taking place. A few of these are: involving more of the senses,
encouraging more involvement and participation, personal interactions, and most
importantly, the highly valued concept of story-telling.⁸ This is showcased in the growing
popularity of NaNoWriMo—an abbreviation of National Novel Writing Month. Every

⁴ Ibid.
⁶ David J. Hesselgrave, Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary
⁷ G. Walker, “Media and Technology Communication Theories,” Oregon State: Comm 321,
⁸ Ibid.
November, writers around the nation gather together to push each other to reach 50,000 words in a Novel competition. In 2013, there were over three hundred thousand participants registered on their website. As you can see, Millennials long to be heard, to have a voice—to express their ideas, art, and music—but that isn’t where it ends.

“I Want To Contribute”

As seen in NaNoWriMo, internet communities are crucially important to this people group. To discuss the Millennial culture without discussing the influence of technology and the internet would be foolish. Millennials were the first generation to be “raised” on the internet/internet-ready devices. While the home computer, becoming popular in 1981, was bulky when it began to invade the life of the consumer, it has consistently slimmed down to the obsessively popular iPhone, at about half an inch, and its counterpart Android device is down to approximately a centimeter in width!

The use of social media to find or create a community to connect with is worthy of great investigation. There are “fandoms,” communities both online and off that are centered around a specific show/artist or interest. These are best showcased by the use of the “hashtags” that surround the Dr. Who television show fandom. Hashtags are key words or phrases—no symbols or punctuations are allowed—that follow the pound sign (#) and are tracked on social media (ie. #DrWho). As per the author’s calculations, based on information provided by Statigram (a website that monitors Instagram), there have

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been 347,104 Dr. Who hashtags used on Instagram alone as of November 2013. Clearly the fandoms of the internet are only going to continue to grow.

While some stereotypes have cited the Millennials as a “me-generation,” others disagree. There are many ways that these articles all cite Millennials as “me-centered,” due to their privileged way of life, especially in the realms of education and financial capital, a sense of entitlement. It cannot be overlooked that many Millennials had parents that created the inner script of being “special” and “important” in their childhoods. They were encouraged that they could be whatever they wanted when they grew up; this inner script was helpful in creating a healthy self esteem in some Millennials, but others became obsessive with it and allowed themselves to move from healthy self-esteem to inflated self-esteem or developed an entitled mindset.

While hashtags, fandoms, and internet communities are crucial pieces to understanding the desire to contribute, a greater example of this obsession with contributing, or “making a difference,” can be seen through the End It Movement. The End It Movement is a grass-roots movement to help end Human Trafficking around the world. This awareness mission began in February 2013 and has raised almost $300k for the purpose of alerting the world of the 27+ million people involved in human trafficking around the world by November 2013! This cause has been carried on the backs of young people, as it has used social media outlets like Twitter and Instagram to help “End It.” The author has found over a thousand posts by the EndItMovement user name

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alone—not to mention any of the thousands of posts made by other users, tagging “EndItMovement” on Twitter in 2013. This movement has given humanity, especially focused on assisting Millennials find their voice, a means to helping end these globally-recognized monstrosities. Millennials seem to all want to change the world. The author, working as an Academic Advisor at a religious university, estimates that of her 200+ advisees this year at least 10% of them have expressed a desire to combine the church’s efforts with social justice movements through the use of Non-Profit Organizations. This “Synergistic Collaborations” model is growing in popularity; the young people in the church long to partner with local Social Services agencies to bring holistic hope to the community.14

Always seeking the ability and means to make a difference in society and in the global community, Millennials have sought out ways to contribute to non-profit organizations, social justice programs, and awareness campaigns through their use of social media. They have also shown an affinity for cause-oriented purchases and donations.15 Millennials hope for community in all aspects of their lives, seeking it in friendships, clubs and communities, non-profit organizations, cause-oriented purchases, as well as through social media outlets. This leads to the final statement Millennials hear repeating in their hearts and minds.

“I Want To Be Accepted”

Millennials are seeking acceptance. One of the top five reasons Christian Millennials have stayed in the church is the great ability of the church to create space for deep, “meaningful relationships.”¹⁶ Without these deep relationships, Millennials do not find that their needs for community are being met. Twice as many Millennials stay in the church when they have a “close personal friendship with an adult inside the church,” according to one outcome of Barna Research’s ten years of research on Millennials.¹⁷ The author, having reviewed over 300 Religious Attitude surveys—mostly from the Lakeland, FL area—has seen “Accepting/Welcoming Community” as the most important factor the individuals would seek when looking for a new church if they were going to look for a new church.¹⁸

These needs are often present in the physical realm as desires for stability, provision, and family. Millennials seek a place of stability to voice their concerns and push back against the culture within that safe place. They seek a place to contribute their efforts and be compensated—to find their basic needs met through their contributions, albeit a variety of expectations depending on the setting (community in the church, wages from the workforce, and opportunities obtained through their relationships). Millennial culture is full of this desire for acceptance—perhaps it is based in the broken homes, strained or purely surface level relationships with family members, or even in the defunct church communities they have experienced. Thankfully, it can lovingly and carefully be filled by the Family of God.

¹⁷ See Appendix A for Dr. Brian Kelly’s Religious Attitude Questionnaire.
¹⁸ Ibid.
Overall we see that Millennials have the desire for three silent screams to be acknowledged and met: "I want to be heard," "I want to contribute," "I want to be accepted." These three desires are easily met by the church—especially through the use of organic church models and concepts derived from them.

"Meet and Greet"—Basic Cultural Trends

Despite the inner script of individualism and the great ability for personal success, the desire for belonging is so strong within this people group that they often become victims of mass conformity. The “hipster” designation, or stereotype, was started as a subculture in the 1940’s and grew to be part of popular culture in the 1990’s and popularized in the 2010’s. This short trend has had a great effect on the Millennial culture and can now be recognized on college campuses across the nation. The author noted that between the Spring 2010 and Spring 2011 semesters, “hipster nation” arrived there—almost overnight! There were hints of it in fringe society during Spring 2010, but it was a full-fledged movement by Spring 2011. Less than one year, the culture shift was so drastically felt that the campus’ “look” dramatically changed.

The quick adoption of this mindset is a small example of what can be seen in fashion magazines and coffee-shops around the nation, as well as a perfect example of the contagious nature of the ever-changing Millennial culture. It seems that Millennials have lost the desire to be truly unique, though not the ability to do so: hipster fashion is based on an eclectic “thrift store” look—every piece being different, unique, cost-effective, and almost irreplaceable.

Above all, they wanted to be recognized for being different—to diverge from the mainstream and carve a cultural niche all for themselves. For this new generation, style wasn’t something you could buy in a department store, it became something you found in a thrift shop, or, ideally, made yourself. The
way to be cool wasn't to look like a television star: it was to look like as though you'd never seen television.\textsuperscript{19}

While the pieces are unique, the fashion trends are still the generalizations of those pieces—all type-casted into a certain outfit or two—helping to compound the desire in Millennials to be different from someone.

In an attempt to set themselves apart, Millennials have decided to focus on being different from other generations. They have set goals to be successful in many areas; however, these may not overlap into the areas that their parents had set goals. A prime example is as follows: Millennials do not value having a successful career nearly as much as their parents. In fact, 52\% say their number one desire is to be a good parent.\textsuperscript{20} Their parents’ values leaned much more towards success outside of the home.\textsuperscript{21} The author’s curiosity is sparked by this concept; perhaps the Millennials seek to be successful as parents and value success in the home more than outside the home because of their parents’ focus was not inside the home. This idea has not been substantiated by research as of yet, however, and should be a future research topic in the field.

\textbf{CHAPTER THREE}

\textbf{How Can We Reach Them?}

Hope—The Importance of Reaching Millennials

The answer to the question of how to reach the lost is one the church has sought out for centuries. The church should always look for a way to reach those outside of her

\textsuperscript{19} Matt Granfield, \textit{Hipstermatick: One Man’s Quest to Become the Ultimate Hipster} (Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2012).


\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
sphere of influence. With Millennials, the approach must differ from her attempts to reach out to previous generations with the gospel. The Center for Disease Control suggests that there are 4,600 lives lost every year to suicide between the ages of 10 and 24—not to mention all those that attempt suicide but are not successful. This hopelessness is becoming a bridge from the Millennial generation to the next generation—a bridge that must be redeemed with the introduction of the cure for young adult and teen suicides: hope. The hope of Millennials has been dashed on the rocks of society and must be revived by allowing these young people to connect with God and one another. Connection to a God-centered community is the procedure that can bring the cure (hope). A counterfeit medicine can be found in community that doesn’t connect with God; it covers the symptoms and brings temporary relief, but does nothing for the long-term cure of the individual. This need for acceptance is great and it impacts every part of their lives.

"I Don't Care What Simon Says"—Leadership Studies

Another aspect of “Acceptance” the reader must keep in mind is the team-oriented style of Millennials. While they may not value group projects, Millennials value team-leadership in the church. This means that they will demand value to be placed upon the incorporation of wisdom and experience from other generations as well as their own understanding of culture, society, and Scripture—enlisting a more intergenerational approach:

Kinnaman observed that many churches approach generations in a hierarchical, top-down manner, rather than deploying a true team of believers of all ages. Cultivating intergenerational relationships is one of the most important ways in

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which effective faith communities are developing flourishing faith in both young and old. In many churches, this means changing the metaphor from simply passing the baton to the next generation to a more functional, biblical picture of a body—that is, the entire community of faith, across the entire lifespan, working together to fulfill God’s purposes.23

This intergenerational ministry approach—a team approach—allows Millennials to both be accepted in the team and contribute in leadership roles to develop experience while utilizing their creative means of expression to influence the church and the individuals on the team. Intergenerational ministry, or team leadership, is one of the best ways to help Millennials find their place in the church, as it satisfies all three of the silent screams of the generation: they are heard through creative expression; they are able to contribute to the church and to the furthering of the gospel; they are able to find true acceptance in Biblical, covenant community, while sharing that acceptance with others. While the author strongly advocates this type of ministry and leadership—especially since the data on Millennials seems to support it—this is not the only type of leadership that is valued in Millennial culture.

Organic: Health-Craze or Church Model?—Organic Church

An Organic Church Expert

To begin a conversation about Organic Church requires that the experts be named and discussed to fully understand the background of this movement. This movement of more relational church models was part of Christianity for as long as Christianity was practiced. Christians were meeting in homes and renovated/repurposed homes, expanding through households (otherwise known as relational networks), and expecting every

member of the fellowship to share in the many pieces of the gathering times. All were expected to do the work of the ministry through teaching and admonishing one another, and singing to God.\textsuperscript{24} No one has ever been expected to remain as an observer in the midst of the Church. Relational, intimate, and engaging communities of faith are the rule, not the exception, in the first generations of the Church, as seen in Colossians 3 and Ephesians 4-5. Paul knew the importance of including new converts as productive members of the community, as did other leaders. The community of faith is encouraged to ward off deceitful and false teachers because they \textit{all} have the anointing from the Holy Spirit and do not need any person to teach them because the Holy Spirit is constantly teaching them.\textsuperscript{25} This leaves a great deal of responsibility on the "common believer" to discern false teachings—not just the leaders of the community of faith—a weight that they could not bear if they were not mature. However, the route to maturity is lined with challenges and pain, not padded walls and protective gear.

As of late, this model of relational church has been popularized and re-termed by Neil Cole. Cole suggests that the term "Organic Church" is the best fit for this model of Church because of the deep metaphors in Jesus' words, stories, and parables that revolve around the images of farming and cultivating fields. Cole explains the need for this type of organic model, the advantages of such, and the three strong organic (farming) metaphors for growth in Christian communities of faith.\textsuperscript{26} The three metaphors come from Mark 4, when Jesus sits on a boat and teaches the many people who have gathered at the Sea of Galilee.

\textsuperscript{24} Colossians 3:12-17 (NIV). All Bible verses referenced will be the NIV unless otherwise noted.
\textsuperscript{25} 1 John 2:26-27.
Mark 4:3-20: The Parable of the Good Seed and Good Soil

Here Jesus describes the scene of a farmer scattering seeds all over the property, without regard for where it landed, and He shares the story of those seeds that have fallen in different types of soil. Jesus explains how seed that has been scattered represents the Word of God (the gospel message) and that the types of soil represent the different heart conditions of those hearing the message. This parable is more about the soil than the seeds. The seed is always good seed if it is the pure gospel, the Bible itself, that is shared with unbelievers—it always has the power to take root and grow into a source of life and transformation. However, the soil is not always prepared for the seed. Many churches invest time and resources into bad soil when they do scatter seed (evangelize), but rarely scatter seed in the first place. Jesus calls His children to scatter seeds indiscriminately, but to invest in those seeds that bear fruit. Cole shares his own experiences of investing in bad soil and challenges readers to stop pouring out precious resources into soil that refuses to bear fruit. While it is an interesting perspective and should be considered in the manner of reformatting ministry, the author sees room for more grace in pushing people to grow in the church before calling them fruitless and hopeless causes. Cole does, however, state that "bad people make good soil: there's a lot of fertilizer in their lives," suggesting that there is the greatest hope for those who are often considered the most hopeless of causes in the Church.

Mark 4:26-29: The Parable of Growing Plants

This parable is short, but explains how the seeds grow into plants: the farmer spreads the seeds, goes to bed, and finds the seeds growing all by themselves without

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27 Ibid.
28 Ibid., 72.
knowing how! Cole shares how the translation "all by themselves" comes from the same word as the English word automatic—expressing how easy the work of scattering seeds (the gospel message) must be if the seeds grow automatically.\(^{29}\) This is an interesting idea, but it is also difficult to accept as a Christ-follower. Cole understands how hard the work of sharing and growing disciples seems, but pushes the reader to think carefully: the farmer doesn't make the seeds grow; he only scatters them and waits for nature to take its course.\(^{30}\)

In the same way, the Church must learn to lean on God, the creator and sustainer of all kinds of nature, to grow the seeds that are scattered when the message of hope is shared. While explaining how all are qualified to help with the farm if God is responsible for growing the seeds into something more, Cole also says that the Church focuses too often on growing the seeds, not sowing the seeds.\(^{31}\) The process of sowing is in the hands of the Bride of Christ, but growing the seeds is entirely in the hands of God.

Mark 4:30-32: The Parable of the Mustard Seed

In this parable, Jesus shares the power of a little faith—giving a completely new level of meaning to the age-old saying: "never despise humble beginnings." Jesus talks about a tiny seed—smaller than every other kind of seed—that eventually grows up and is larger than all the garden plants. He likens this to having just a little faith and implicitly challenges them to watch how powerful it can be to have just a little faith in Him. Cole redirects this idea of starting small to a more macro view; instead of focusing on a believer having just a little faith, he focuses in on how just a little of something with God can grow to be much, much more than that. Cole encourages the readers to begin with

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\(^{29}\) Ibid., 85.
\(^{30}\) Ibid., 84-85.
\(^{31}\) Ibid., 86-87.
reproducing disciples, not churches—to let things take their natural route of growth: one small piece at a time.\textsuperscript{32}

This approach to church planting is distinctly different from most reproducing church movements, but is much more realistic and in line with what God calls the Church to be: a community of believers sharing in the work of the Lord. The work of discipling another believer can be done by \textit{any} believer growing on the path of maturity; however, the launching of another church is much more daunting a task. The Church must resume her place as a sending station, sharing the message of hope, developing/discipling new believers, and empowering each new believer to cultivate a distinct community of faith to which they can bring others to encounter God.

Cole pushes for the need for missional communities of faith—or homegrown faith communities—because of their distinctiveness and natural fit for new converts in specific subcultures. Cole recreates Colossians 3 through his efforts to reinstate the priesthood of all believers. He challenges the readers to implement this by sharing stories of how he helped brand new converts start new churches to invite their households (relational networks) to become part of the Christian faith through these new communities of faith that operate in their native culture.\textsuperscript{33}

The defining characteristics of Organic Church models, though defined differently by different authors and implementers are as simple as they are desirable: (1) Deep Relational Community; (2) Implementation of the Priesthood of All Believers; (3) Communities Reflecting Native Cultures; (4) Transformative Encounters with God;

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 97-98.
\end{flushright}
(5) Sharing Hope with Others.\textsuperscript{34}

To a non-believer, nothing is a more powerful witness to the power and love of Christ than encountering a group of people that share a native culture but are transformed and pursuing God wholeheartedly. Reflecting back on the new information learned about Millennials, this statement raises a question: Why isn't traditional Church working with Millennials? The answer is more complicated, but the author believes it can be broken down into a few brief hypotheses: Millennials are not, as a whole, involved in traditional churches and thus non-believing Millennials are not seeing their native culture transformed. Millennials are not seeing a faith community that reflects the answer to the cry of their hearts to be accepted, to be heard, and to be able to contribute. Millennials aren't seeing a compelling gospel encased in loving relationships; they're seeing an exclusive, offensive institution. While these are largely the opinion of the author, many different authors have mentioned similar concepts in their books on Millennials and Organic Church.\textsuperscript{35}

\textit{Applying Organic Church to the Church at Large}

The beginning of the end is nigh; the writing is on the wall; if no change is experienced in the Church, there will not be a viable church. Faith must be re-connected to the community of believers, to the Church, if believers are to grow in depth and number. However, in Lakeland, FL, many self-identified Christians are not part of a church.\textsuperscript{36} The growing trend, especially with Millennials, is to believe in God but not assimilate into the local church. Interestingly enough, a recent poll done by MTV with

\textsuperscript{34} Cole, 66-100.
\textsuperscript{36} Kelly Survey Results; See Appendix A.
13-24 year olds shows "...a high correlation exists between spirituality and happiness." Millennials desire spirituality but avoid local churches. Some say that they don't need the church to find God and that nature holds more of His presence. Others say they are too busy to attend church; still others suggest that the community at the church is anemic or ingrown and they're better off without it. Overall, there is a mass exodus from the Church; the Christian community is seen as optional. Innumerable stories recount the separation of God from His communal people in this way. Books like Nudge, They Like Jesus But Not The Church, Sticky Faith, and Unchristian show the need for new ways to reach people and draw them back into the community. More and more often, people are claiming spirituality but withdrawing from "organized religion."

Responding to the Concerns of Millennials

A reasonable question, in the context of all of this new information, is "how would Organic Church make a difference with this age bracket?" Simply put, it answers each of the three silent cries of the generation. Organic Church works with Millennials because it provides "the opportunity for intimate and accountable fellowship, in which personal encounters, human warmth, and trusting, long-lasting relationships can be experienced." All of which answer the silent cries of the generation:

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37 Ibid., 33.
38 Dan Kimball, They Like Jesus but Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2007), 74.
39 Ibid.
41 Ibid., 73.
I want to be heard. The beauty of a round-table, or team-oriented, type of leadership and followership is the space given for every voice to be heard. Organic churches are accessible enough for people of all ages, demographics, and depth of faith to be heard.

I want to contribute. The contributions of all attendees creates a more dynamic flavor to the community—without those contributions, the community is shallow and bland. In Organic Church models, the roundtable effect is strong and there is always another seat at the table and plenty of work to be shared.

I want to be accepted. The author believes that, due to the smaller nature of Organic Church and the focus on relational glue, any true incorporation of Organic Church model concepts would strengthen the relational ties and create space to welcome new people into the community.

Additionally, the spiritual maturity that comes from having a voice or "contributing" combats the trend of a lack of discipleship in the Church. How? Through the space for all to participate in and take ownership in what an organic church is doing to expand the Kingdom. The Rainers suggest, "the majority of dropouts leave the church because of a lack of discipleship." Organic Church concepts can be applied in many ways, as not all churches can divide themselves into small church communities and take on these very distinct flavors. Not every church has developed the leaders (read: discipled the believers) necessary to start these types of churches. However, the "traditional church" cannot entirely ignore the value of these models either if she hopes to survive and make an impact on the next generation. While the author believes a full-blown

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Organic Church model is the best way to reach the Millennials, she also recognizes that not all churches, or pastors for that matter, are ready for that kind of change. There is another way though. There are simple principles that can be extracted from the Organic Church context and applied to more traditional models to increase the effectiveness of local churches without having to scrap everything and start over in an Organic Church model.

There are so many principles that can be extracted and even more ways to apply them in the context of the local church! For the sake of brevity, the author will list out some of the clearest and most tangible concepts to provide a general list. While being a believer that lists never change people, the author hopes deep thought and prayer will be spent on searching for applications to all models, especially the following popular approaches: Mega-Church models, Small Church models, and various Church Planting models. The author will be considering mostly the "Launching Large" approach to Church Planting for the purpose of this discussion. The applied concept of an Organic Church is one that has the potential to make the greatest impact on the Body of Christ. However, the reader must always keep this in mind: Every ministry context is different; the pastors and leaders of each community must decide which concepts would create the biggest change in their community and prayerfully implement their own list of Organic Church characteristics. The following five principles or building blocks are included to help readers see the tangibility and accessibility of these ideas, not to become a legalistic approach for all communities.
The Building Blocks of Organic Church

Deep Relational Community

In the first generations of the Church, they met together in homes daily, sharing meals and their lives to encourage one another in their faith and to pursue God together. They labored together to share the gospel and suffered together in the midst of persecution. This liminality, as Hirsch calls it, of suffering together bonded these believers together with an unshakable and irreplaceable relationship. It is the type of relationship that is both missing in the Church at large and is most needed by Millennials. This is the first step for Churches to begin to reach out to (and keep) Emerging Adults who are struggling to find themselves and find stability in their lives. This can be seen in small churches or in small groups. Millennials are looking for a safe place to open up and be themselves—the church could open her doors and welcome them in droves if she would dedicate herself to the maintenance of a warm and welcoming community characterized by the love of Christ.

Implementation of the Priesthood of All Believers

Most traditional churches focus on the pastors and leaders as being the only ones qualified to do the work of ministering to the Body of Christ. The books of Ephesians and Colossians both press for all believers to minister to, encourage, and challenge one another. The Church must return to this model of body-ministry to make room for all believers to participate in creating transformative encounters with God for themselves and for others. The cry of Millennial hearts is to be part of something larger than

\[\text{Acts 2:46.}\]
\[\text{Alan Hirsch, The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 217-242.}\]
themselves by contributing to a mission and to have a voice that is recognized and heard to help bring about positive changes. There are no sidelines in ministry—all must participate in keeping the Body of Christ healthy and strong—nor are there any sidelines in healthy communities of faith.

Communities Reflecting Native Cultures

Both Millennials and those outside this demographic age bracket are searching for hope. The Church holds the secret to all hope in Christ but seems to fear unknown or non-traditional expressions of relationship with Him, though this is not necessary.46 Every community of faith should reflect the people in that community. As a community, each local church expresses the artistic heart of God. However, not every community has all of the same colors. Some communities will have more reds and purples—reflecting the beauty of sunsets; others will have more greens and blues—reflecting the beauty of the forest; no matter what colors (experiences and cultures) exist in the group, it is a distinctly different mix and variation of color from any other community of faith. God loves diversity and desires for His Church to reflect that love. The Church must lose her fear of non-traditional styles of worship, preaching, teaching, and encountering God. Some people will find God in candle-lit services with incense burning throughout the room; others will find Him in outdoor tent revivals; still others will find Him in churches that meet in coffee shops and bars; and there will be some who discover God in traditional church buildings with stained glass windows. It does not matter how or where they find God; it matters more that they find a healthy expression of God's love in their native cultural language.

46 Mark 9:38-41.
Transformative Encounters with God

Organic church models focus on the relational aspect of the community of faith. As discussed earlier, this often is seen through deep relationships with other believers, but it is also crucial that the reader recognize that this need for deep relationships goes beyond other humans and incorporates deep relationships with God. Organic Church models provide people with the opportunity to encounter God in a small, non-threatening, intimate space that is full of warmth from human relationships. In simple sacred spaces, people can encounter God in a powerful way. "The need to create spaces in our lives and our ministries for people to experience a microcosm of their world is great; we must help them encounter the Living God by developing services, environments, and atmospheres that welcome them to seek Him."\(^{47}\) Here believers and unbelievers alike can experience and encounter God without fear because of the trust developed between the community members. Unbelievers are able to recognize people from their own cultures with similar experiences and backgrounds to their own, and to see the deep life-change that has occurred in their lives, thus giving them hope and challenging them to accept the hope of the world in their own lives through these encounters with God.

Actively Sharing Hope with Others

Doing Organic church, as Cole stresses, means helping create disciples, not churches.\(^{48}\) This means that scattering seeds, or sharing the message of hope, is the most important task of the community of faith, as it fulfills the Great Commission. It is also the easiest, as explained above, because God does the hard work of growing the seeds after

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\(^{48}\) Cole, *Organic Church.*
they have been scattered. The Church must learn to intentionally share hope with a dark and hopeless world if she will ever be what God has called her to be. There are no sidelines in Christianity, nor in ministry, so all believers must begin to be empowered and then challenged to share their faith with their relational networks.\textsuperscript{49} They must learn to gather together seekers and new converts to challenge them in the way Paul suggests in Colossians 3: "Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts."\textsuperscript{50}

**Methods**

*What Do Millennials Think of Church?*

The Church stopped being essential to life so people stopped attending.\textsuperscript{51} Rainer is one of the leading published voices in the field of Millennials and the Church. He has written many books on the subject, all of which would make great resources for a church looking to engage Millennials or the unchurched and dechurched America.\textsuperscript{52} *Essential Church* is packed with knowledge and research about Millennials dropping out of Church.\textsuperscript{53} Due to the nature of this book, it also issues many challenges to the Church at

\textsuperscript{49} Bradley Billings, “From House Church to Tenement Church: Domestic Spaces and the Development of Early Urban Christianity; The Example of Ephesus,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 62, no. 2 (Oct 2011): 541-569.

\textsuperscript{50} Colossians 3:16.


\textsuperscript{53} Rainer and Rainer, *Essential Church*. 
large about how to reach Millennials and keep them instead of losing them during the
"Emerging Adult" period, as defined by Arnett.54

What is the greatest reason that most dropouts leave? They simply want a break
from church!55 If Church is viewed in such a nonchalant manner, it is obvious why
people are leaving the church in droves. In fact, every year 7,000 churches close their
doors, but only 4,000 new churches open.56 How will churches stay open long-term if the
young people leave? The churches will begin to die off with their members. The Church
is perceived as not essential to faith anymore and the Church has made it harder to get in,
but easier to get out. However, "[m]embers of essential churches do not have an easy way
out. The church becomes such a vital part of their lives that neglecting the fellowship of
believers is not a painless option."57 How can the Church make this ideal become reality?
How can she "close the back door" of the church and retain Millennials?

As explained earlier, the three cries of this generation are as follows: "I want to be
heard"; "I want to contribute"; "I want to be accepted". The cry for community is so
strong in this generation that the lack thereof in the Church is deeply responsible for the
growing number of church dropouts. The research behind Essential Church touches on
all of these, however, the strongest seems to be "I want to contribute." Rainer tells many
stories, including one of a young man who walked away from the church. He summed up

54 Jeffrey Arnett, "Emerging Adulthood," American Psychologist, May 2000,
1255&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
55 Ibid.
57 Thom S. Rainer and Sam S. Rainer, Essential Church? Reclaiming a Generation of
his story in a few words—words that struck painfully and resounded: "I didn't want to wait around to serve, so I left."\(^{58}\)

There must be a place for these young people to serve, to participate in the creation of services, ministries, etc. Rainer suggests, "an entire generation is walking away from the church because they feel their contributions are not appreciated or welcomed."\(^{59}\) If this is how Millennials view the church, their departure is the only sensible response! The author would propose that the many non-profits and cause-oriented groups are exploding with growth from Millennials for a very simple but profound reason: Millennials seem to be leaving the church—sometimes even the faith—and finding a new place to serve: a place where their contributions, commitment, and efforts are recognized and celebrated. These new places are not stagnant or staunchly committed to decades past; they are innovative and embracing the edge. These groups are unafraid of the future and charge toward it to bring change to the world.

There has to be hope for the Body of Christ; she was meant to be the beacon of light for the world to find their hope in Christ. Christ-followers cannot let the Church die. Instead, they must infuse new life into the Church. There are two ways to do that: (1) Create new church communities by starting from scratch; (2) Apply life-giving principles from these new types of church communities to older church communities. The best thing to do is both. Every church community should be different and every different church community will reach different people. Therefore, we need a multitude of different church communities—each taking on the flavor of a piece of the community at large. There are many books written and conferences conducted on starting new churches, but

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\(^{58}\) Ibid., 13.
\(^{59}\) Ibid., 39-40.
less of an emphasis made on refreshing and revitalizing older churches. The hope of the church is going back to the basics and implementing Organic Church concepts.

The author is currently involved in leading a church plant that seeks to reach Millennials. These suggestions are the values that the Millennial team members have expressed as needs and as possible doors for Desperation Church’s ministry to reach those who are far from God. Desperation Church (DC) is implementing these different values and community-pieces as priorities one-by-one as the team grows to support these ministries. DC has already seen an impact from the implementation of some of these community-pieces. Millennials have found a place of belonging there, have connected to one another and to God, and have found an outlet for reaching out to the community and helping bring positive change to those in Lakeland. If a church truly seeks to touch the lives of Millennials they will consider making the following community-pieces priorities in their faith-communities, as applicable in their missional context.

*Missional Communities of Faith*

As seen through their desire for acceptance, a place or community of belonging has become of utmost importance to Millennials. This need sparked the idea of Missional Communities of Faith that Kelly promotes in his classes. MCF’s are smaller groups that are connected to a local church that are dedicated to living out the Gospel as an incarnational ministry among the people the MCF’s long to reach. Some of these MCF’s will eventually become strong enough to be churches of their own, like Desperation Church (DC). The author will discuss DC in greater depth later on as a reflection of applying organic church model concepts to reaching out to Millennials. Another
definition of MCF’s, crafted by Big Island Faith Communities of the East Hawaii Island is as follows:

We define “faith community” as a missional community made up of Christ followers and seekers living out the mission of God together while doing regular life; each of us operating in our unique designs, gifting and passions. These communities will demonstrate and declare the gospel in many different tangible forms and allow those who do not yet know Christ to come and explore what it means to be a Christ follower.60

Missional Communities of Faith give Millennials a chance to find a safe place for connecting to one another and to other generations. Without these connections, Millennials are half as likely to stay involved in the church after they turn 18.61

Developing faith communities that allow room for doubts and tough questions also is crucial in determining their participation in religious organizations. Young Christians voice concerns that the church does not allow room for life’s biggest questions and intellectual doubts—approximately 23% and 36%, respectively.62 No people group seems to strive for connections more than Millennials, as documented by 75% of all Millennials have at least one social networking profile.63 Millennials need both a place to belong and a place to doubt and question the claims of the church—a safe place that encourages them and walks through their struggles with them, sharing in their pain, confusion, and frustration—to be able to once again (or for the first time) call the church “home.”

62 “Six Reasons Young Christians Leave the Church,” Barna Group, September 2011, https://www.barna.org/barna-update/teens-nextgen/528-six-reasons-young-christians-leave-church#.Up_aR9J4yVr. “Some of the perceptions in this regard include not being able ‘to ask my most pressing life questions in church’ (36%) and having ‘significant intellectual doubts about my faith’ (23%).”
Small Community Groups and In-Service Connections

Young people need community. They search for it in so many places that cannot provide it—including social media, as studied earlier. Small groups are a great way to begin to reach them. These community groups should be diverse and challenge members to be open and honest with one another—allowing for a transition-friendly amount of accountability for new Christians or seekers. Millennials long to change the world, but do not yet know how to change themselves. Discipleship groups can be a perfect fit for this age group after they develop trust in the community, as these groups incorporate coaching, mentoring, Bible study, spiritual disciplines and devotional reading. Without community connections through small groups or discipleship groups, the Millennial group will likely not apply anything learned in a Sunday morning service. While this seems like it could not possibly be true, Millennials tend to grow and learn through group discussion more than through lecture. Even if their knowledge-base is expanded through lecture, they will rarely “fall in step” with their actions until they see these new steps lived out in community. Community groups will never lessen in importance with this group. The church, if she longs to reach them, will need to help them connect to God and others.

The author would propose that many churches have developed a terrible case of unfamiliarity among her members. If those who have already begun the transformation process initiated by the powerful love of Christ are not well-connected in the church, how will newcomers ever connect to the Body? She fears that most newcomers will not be assimilated. The church must not only open her doors and her arms to embrace those who do not know Christ yet or have not yet begun the transformation process, but must seek to
connect them to the community there. It is all too easy to show up late, experience God through worship, be encouraged through the teaching of the Word, and slip out directly after the closing prayer. Healthy churches are characterized by people gathering around the pews or chairs after service or in the fellowship hall! The church must connect Millennials during her services if she hopes to see them again. Without the intentional efforts of the congregation, Millennials will exercise their new-founded stealth and sneak out of services before we can even catch their names. They long for connections, but struggle with the awkward nature of approaching strangers; without intentionally friendly people in the church, they will not find the connections they seek.

The church must encourage her members to be excited about connecting with new people—whether these new people have been attending the church for two weeks, two years, or two decades. She must not allow her members to be complacent in their relationships with an “us four and no more” mentality. The church can reach Millennials by allowing for times during the service for them to meet and greet strangers, embrace friends, and learn the names of those around them. This is also a perfect place to incorporate small group prayer or discussion concerning application of the sermon. If the Church seeks to create community among strangers, the church will be able to call the estranged and the stranger by name—encouraging them that someone cares about them.

Authentic Relationships

The most authentic relationships will be developed in community groups, where people are encouraged to be transparent with each other, to study the Word of God together, and to seek God together. While it is crucial for Millennials to connect with one another, they do not just need connections with other Millennials. This age group also
deeply longs for active mentoring relationships and solid, supportive friendships with their elders. Studies by the Barna Research Group have shown that 59% of Millennials who remain in the church have a deep, influential friendship with an adult at church.\textsuperscript{64} The percentage is even higher for those that are mentored by someone in the church. The church must stir up the desire and passion of their adult members to mentor and connect with these young adults.

\textit{Avoiding Gimmicks and Advertising}

At times, churches look for special "tricks" or tools that 'work every time' to try to bring in new people. The key to connecting with new people in the community is to build individual relationships, not to send mailers, throw a block party, host a concert, or advertise on Christian radio. If a church is looking to connect with unreached people but really wants to use the radio, they should be putting modern and welcoming invitations on stylistically relevant secular stations, not Christian radio stations. These tools can work to reach people who are open to the gospel, however, reaching people and discipling them are two different goals. The Church is called to disciple new believers, not just build amicable relationships with the community. Millennials will be less attracted to the fancy lighting system they noticed than a deep conversation with someone from the church community on their first day. While offering food at church functions can help with Millennial attendance, deep relationships are a far greater lure than a new iPod or gift card. No gimmicks are needed to reach a people group that already longs for relationships and connections.

Dealing with Doubt

Doubts are healthy expressions of an individual seeking and struggling with the tenets of Christianity. Blind faith allows no room for doubt and exiles those who do find themselves in times of doubt. The church’s parents and grandparents, as well as distant ancestors, have struggled with God in their doubts and confusions. The author contends that this is what created such strong, unshakable faith. If the church would encourage people, especially Millennials, to discuss their doubts and work through them in the context of community, she would find the recipe for a stronger, unbreakable faith.

“Doubts cannot remain in Christ” is the position of the author—not that they cannot exist in Christ. God is not afraid of doubts or questions—that is only a problem the church faces. The church must learn to deal with doubts in a manner of which God can approve: full of grace and love, allowing for the exploration of doubt and the questioning of faith, and encouraging truth to be embraced as the end of the journey without pushing blind acceptance.

Christ’s sacrifice is strong enough to handle any question; the church may not have the answer, but must leave room for the question to be asked and the answer to be sought in community. God may not answer it right away; He may choose to never answer these questions (this side of Heaven), but we cannot silence the curiosity of a generation that longs to be allowed to explore Christianity before they commit to it. No one in the church would sign a contract without reading it and understanding it first—in the same manner, deciding to follow Christ should be explored—and the basics of the commitment understood—before the commitment is made. When the church can make room for
questions, and suffer with those far from God through their times of doubt, she will be able to effectively reach Millennials, and others that remain far from God.

*Slow But Sustained Growth*

The most difficult part of committing to be Organic in the church is the speed of growth. It will often feel like no growth is happening. However, the important thing to remember is that Organic Church is an entirely new type of Church—especially for those who have been in the Church their whole lives. People must first be taught about their role in expanding the domain of hope, and they must be taught how to do so, before the Church will begin to see growth in numbers. This growth seems slow—in fact, it is slow—but it is sustainable. A church with a slowly climbing attendance is better able to reach, retain, and even re-train more people to pursue God and others than one that is suddenly bursting at the seams. Though it can be frustrating, a slow and steady growth can be better; this is the type of growth that can be expected from an Organic Church, due to the nature of the church structure. Building relationships with the "outside world" is a long process for those who have learned to avoid "the world" for fear of being corrupted or tainted. Jesus would be out in the world, so His people should be out there bringing Him to the world through their lives and their love. Nothing will change until the perceptions of "success" and "growth" change.

*Affecting (Lasting) Societal Change*

This phrase seems vague, but it has great importance with this demographic. Millennials place great weight on changing the world. Even their purchases, as the author explained earlier in this paper, are influenced by the ability to help make a difference. In a recent study, 84% of the Millennials surveyed agree that “knowing I am helping to
make a positive difference in the world is more important to me than professional recognition." The values of this generation are going to cause a not-so-subtle shift in their professional life.

While this shift occurs, Millennials will need the encouragement and similar motivation for serving in the church. Recognition is becoming less important than personal impact. The Church, if she would recognize this trend and incorporate Millennials into meaningful service projects, would open doors for them to invite unreached friends and coworkers to help serve and improve the community they are part of—before they even attend Sunday morning services. The open door for people to enter the Church will increasingly become the back door: our community groups and community service projects. Millennials, because of the great value they place on making a difference, will be effectively discipled through churches that place a high priority on serving the community in practical and tangible ways.

Non-Threatening Environments

While Millennials are technology natives, they are not church natives. They are the first generation that has grown up largely outside of the church (unchurched, as opposed to de-churched, those who have left the church). Understanding this fact is the first step in understanding that Millennials do not feel comfortable in churches. The church must create safe and non-threatening environments if she hopes to draw these young people.

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into her loving embrace. Characterized by the following tensions, truly non-threatening environments: encourage people to share, but never force them to open up; have people that open their lives up for examination, to show newcomers that the message of Christ affects the way they live; grant newcomers the honest invitation to “come as they are” and be accepted as such; gently challenge people to change as they open up to the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and more than anything else, are characterized by the love of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit in every meeting. Millennials are looking for a safe place to open up and be themselves—the church could open her doors and welcome them in droves if she would dedicate herself to the maintenance of a safe and non-threatening environment characterized by the love of Christ. While this is surely the goal of any Christ-centered community, it is often missed due to the unbalanced tension between holding "proper theology" and embracing sinners.

*Powerful Message/Worship*

All the previous admonitions have been practical and possible for the church to begin to cultivate with little to no help from the Holy Spirit. That vein of guidance ends here. This is where the Holy Spirit must be welcomed, acknowledged, and sought after—even more than the church must seek after those far from God. Millennials, right or wrong, have been conditioned to seek quality and excellence through their educations and professional trainings. Excellence can be achieved apart from the Spirit, however, it will still lack what these young people truly seek. Millennials, whether they admit it or not, are always seeking a connection with God. One study suggests that since Generation X, there has been a higher suspicion of religious institutions and acceptance of “personal
experiences involving religiosity.”

There is a great spike in the number of people, that self-identify with no religious affiliation—approximately 33% of Millennials. Thirty seven percent of these put other language to it, language that suggests they are “spiritual, but not religious.” To examine the effect of behaviors on the religious “habits” of young adults, a different study suggests that “young adults are vastly more likely to curb their attendance at religious services than to alter how important they say religion is in their life or to drop their religious affiliation all together.”

What does this mean for Millennials and the church? They are seeking something the church could provide and they are more likely to stop attending church than to stop believing in God. Millennials want to experience God. Though it may seem a contradiction, they are willing to experience God outside the church—in fact, some prefer it, citing the hypocrisy of the church as a sign of her false religion.

The author would propose, however, that the church being full of hypocrites actually solidifies the message of the cross: Christ accepts sinners just as they are, seeking to transform them into His likeness through relationship with Him. Their fears and doubts—while understandable—could be washed away if they encounter the Holy

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72 For more on this premise, check out: Kimball, *They Like Jesus*.

73 II Corinthians 5:17; Revelation 22:17.
Spirit.\textsuperscript{74} A powerful message is a message from God. The leadership in the church must be seeking God long before Saturday night. It cannot be left until the day before church services take place to seek God for His Word for the congregation and any visitors. A message from God must be sought long before it is time to present it. This message must be reflected in the musical worship, as well as through the teachings and even the prayers. A holistic service must be planned—leaving plenty of room for the Spirit to rush in and change the plans for that day. Perhaps the greatest way to prepare for powerful worship and teaching is in the preparation of the private devotional life of the leaders of church, as well as worship leaders and prayer leaders, as they are held to a higher standard.\textsuperscript{75} A sense of dedication to the will and word of God must be present in their lives. To impact and assist in the transformation process of Millennials, the church must be seeking God long before the services begin, and not cease their pursuit of Him when the services conclude. When the church is intentional about seeking God and allowing room for the Holy Spirit to move among them, she will be able to truly minister to anyone that stumbles in the door—but especially for Millennials seeking an opportunity to experience God.

\textit{No Sidelines Ministry}

No Sidelines Ministry is something that once was a staple of Christian community, though it was never called that during the first centuries of faith. In passages like Colossians 3 and Ephesians 4-5, the Church is seen as a \textit{highly} participative community. There were no sidelines to hide on, nor any star players with special titles and roles that did all the work. All people in the community were expected to bring

\textsuperscript{74} I John 4:18.
\textsuperscript{75} Hebrews 13:17.
something to share—whether it was physical food or spiritual food. God clearly can use whoever He wants, but the Church often pretends that only trained leaders, pastors, or teachers can bring the Word of the Lord. All of God's people are meant to encourage and admonish one another. This concept will be crucial to reaching Millennials; as discussed earlier, Millennials are looking for a way to contribute. They are impatiently awaiting a chance to help improve something that is clearly broken in their eyes—they are waiting for a chance to help. The Church must become a safe space to try new gifts, ministries, and even learn new skills. It must be a place that encourages taking risks to follow God, helping people discern God's voice, and allowing all people to be part of the community in an active, participative, and empowered way.

The church, a beautiful embodiment of the love of Christ, is able to reach out to Millennials in a spectacular and special way. If she would push her members and leaders to recognize the needs of Millennials (also known as Emerging Adults), she would find the fields white: ready for the harvest. These needs have been accurately discovered by a study of Religion and Emerging Adulthood by Barry and Nelson—they suggest that:

...emerging adulthood may best be characterized as a time during which young people (a) question the beliefs in which they were raised, (b) placed greater emphasis on individual spirituality than affiliation with a religious institution, and (c) pick and choose the aspects of religion that suit them best. According to this study, the greatest bridge for the church to reach Millennials will be to allow room for questions, encourage individual spirituality and communal spirituality, and discourage syncretism entirely. To help balance their desire for a “buffet style”

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76 I Thessalonians 5:11-20.  
77 Acts 2:42-47.  
Christianity, the church should encourage Millennials to practice ancient disciplines in her community groups.\footnote{80} She could also embrace the “ancient-future” style of church: seeking her historical roots in ancient Christianity, while still looking for new and innovative ways to reach out to the world.

"Translation, Please?"—Roadblocks to Reaching Millennials

As the author briefly mentioned earlier in this review of College Culture, the Millennial mindset is not just prevalent in those born in 1980 and following. This mindset of postmodernism is actually redefining the popular societal mindset in America and has almost completely infiltrated the media and marketing in the States for over a decade now. As the beginning bracket of Millennials are now at least 34 years old, they have great buying power and their purchases control the market for the most part.\footnote{81} If the reader considers the vastness of the effects of Millennial culture, he or she can see how similar popular culture is to it; America is bent towards Millennial ideals and values, is obsessed with social media and the Internet, and has an inherent animosity towards Christianity because of the hypocrisy witnessed in the church.

Overall, the cultural divide is limited—a greater divide is present and noticeable between the culture of the church and societal (Millennial) culture. This culture is open to some of the gospel principles—instructions that are generally positive and harmonious: to love one another and to invest in things with long-reaching significance. The greatest hindrance of the gospel will be the exclusive claims of Christ. He claims, “I am the way

and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”82 This exclusive path to God will create a deep cavern between a pluralistic and syncretistic generation and the truth of the Bible; a cavern that can only be traversed by the bridge of the Cross of Christ. It must never be abandoned or ignored, but rather discussed openly to allow Millennials to truly understand and embrace the work of Christ. Paul warns in a similar culture that the Cross is foolishness to those who do not yet know the truth of Christ, but is a sign of the power of God for those who are drawing near to Him.83 While the exclusivity of the gospel will be the greatest hurdle, it will not be the only one for the gospel to overcome.

For many Millennials, the gospel feels out of date or irrelevant—it no longer speaks to their needs and/or concerns. The author perceives that this is mostly the presentation of the gospel that needs updating, as the message is as timeless as it is holy. Another issue concerning the presentation of the gospel is the ersatz spirituality presented by so-called believers. When lifestyles do not line up with the gospel that is proclaimed, Millennials will reject the entire message.

While these are all causes for concern and adjustment in the church, the author firmly believes that this people group longs for the truth and the hope found only in the message of Christ’s sacrifice. Reaching Millennials will require a reinventing of the image of the church; it will demand a newly crafted presentation of the timeless gospel message; and will hold communal connections as a requisite. However, it is possible to reach them! With the right contextualization—and careful avoidance of any syncretistic tendencies (or "religious buffets")—Millennials could be reached and transformed by the

82 John 14:6.
83 1 Corinthians 1:18.
gospel. Millennials are desperately seeking hope! They know it not, but they are seeking Jesus.
CHAPTER FOUR

"WINDOW SHOPPING FOR SOLUTIONS" – APPLYING ORGANIC CHURCH CONCEPTS

Try It On; Fitting Rooms for The INVEST Ministry Paradigm

All of the information in the world wouldn't help anyone if they forgot the importance of ancient yet simple, day-to-day principles—like cleaning water before ingesting it and applying pressure to avoiding bleeding to death. The world has already witnessed this horrible occasion of forgetfulness in the smaller ecosystem of the Church.

The perfect example of this tragedy is the current state of the Church. The church has lost the basics but has all the modern technology and discoveries. She has all the statistics and formulas she could ever need but has forgotten some of the basics of the faith. She has lost the ability to take care of herself and will not survive this gap in knowledge if not informed. She must be saved. She is the hope of the world. What can be done though? How can she be saved?

To propose a "new" tool would be foolishness, as Ecclesiastes says "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun." Instead, as the Reasonable Intentions piece of this thesis, the author proposes an old one: re-incorporating all five gifts listed in Ephesians 4 (Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Shepherd, Teacher—or APEST) to fulfill the calling of the Church. At this point, the Church has relegated the few to do the work of the many. She has amputated six of her ten fingers and six of her ten toes; her ability to lift, walk, reach, run, carry, and even

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84 Ecclesiastes 1:9.
move is now severely limited. While this all seems so abstract, it is easily brought back down to the tangible: the Church has cut off three of the five gifts God gave to her from having a voice in the community and has taught those that possess these gifts and others to remain silent and frozen in a spectator's seat. She has silenced the prophet, cast out the apostle, and rejected the evangelist. In most recent years, the Church—through seeker-sensitive models—has tried to smooth over the relationship with the evangelist gift that God gave through Jesus and the Holy Spirit so long ago. However, this isn't enough to change the state of the Church and bring fresh life back to the Church; she is still missing too much of herself to be effective.

There are many ways to remedy this situation—the author has included pieces of the strategic plan for Desperation Church: a church built for and by Millennials—in the appendix for the reader to "window shop" for ideas. One possible way to bring refreshment to the Church has great potential and is incredibly simple: she must be taught to invest. She has simply forgotten what "body ministry" looks like and how it can be effectively done. Investing is a crucial part of life. "In investing, what is comfortable is rarely profitable." Just as financial investments must be taken seriously, investing in the Church must be carefully planned and done with sincerity. It must be a duty and privilege to invest in the Church.

The process the author would like to present is an acronym and the program that stands behind it: INVEST. The reader will learn about a program designed to implement a great deal of research and discussion that has been growing all around the world

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86 Ibid., 17.
87 Alan Hirsch, “Renewing the Church” (lecture, Southeastern University, Lakeland, FL, June 2014).
through Hirsch's books and teachings on APEST gifts in the Church, and those that work towards similar aims.\(^9\) The author was able to participate in this discussion through a microcosm of the larger experience in a cohort course at Southeastern University.

Upon reflection, the author realized that she had no idea how to combine all of this new knowledge about APEST gifts and their place in the local church. After starting to brainstorm about how people could be forced in the church to move to a "new" (read: ancient) system, these were the questions the author asked herself:

- How do I empower people to find out their gifts?
- How do I convince them to use them?
- Why Organic Church?
- How will Organic Church empower people to use their gifts more?
- What does a daughter church look like?
- How will Desperation Church set a culture that demands people's participation without being demanding or needy?
- How can we convince them to INVEST?

She had no idea she would stumble upon the answer to her predicament in her own questions until she reread what she had smashed onto the screen with frustration in all caps. This word had plagued the author for a year as a constant shadow. She had been frustrated by her lack of investment at times, but more often than that, had challenged her team to invest in the things they said they cared about—to follow through and show integrity. Entirely fixated on that one little word, she knew she had been given the answer. The author had to ask them to INVEST, but before she could do that, she had to give her share and INVEST in them. She needed to give them a(n):

I. Introduction
N. Network
V. Velocity
E. Experience

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S. Synchronization
T. Trial
This section will explore what it means to truly INVEST in the local church and expand a single idea into a set of general practices that can be applied universally. The reader must keep in mind that the specific contextualization will need to be adapted to particular subcultures to be effective—this paper will focus in on a Millennial church adaptation in Lakeland, Florida with a strong lean toward Organic Church models.

Introduction

The Church separated herself from the APEST gifts long ago—so long ago, in fact, that some Millennials have never even heard about APEST ministry, much less seen it in action. The author would bet that it has been many decades, perhaps even centuries, since anyone saw true APEST ministry in action. Perhaps it has been thought extinct! However, what the Lord designs to sustain His bride will never die—it has gone into hibernation instead. The only way to start using APEST ministry again is to teach it to those who are passionate and willing to learn it. One of the defining factors of Millennials is their expressed desire for three things: to be accepted; to contribute; to be heard. The desire to contribute makes them the perfect candidate for testing out a "vintage" system of ministry that requires some elbow grease—especially given their propensity for DIY (Do It Yourself) projects that repurpose old or broken things. They could be the hope of restoring purpose to the Church if given the artistic freedom to reinvent her using timeless treasures.

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90 During the first discussion on APEST in the Summer 2014 series on Ephesians at Desperation Church, only 5/10 members had ever heard of “APEST.” Most of the five who knew APEST were in staff meetings discussing it prior to service. Only two members had heard of APEST previously.
They must be taught before they can begin the restoration process: they need an *Introduction to APEST Ministry*—a "crash course" in Ephesians 4! They must be taught what these letters stand for and how it works. They must be taught that they cannot remain silent and frozen in the stands. "The individual investor should act consistently as an investor and not as a speculator."\(^9^1\) If they are granted the freedom to participate, they will. If they are given the chance to repurpose and renovate these old systems, they'll be seen all over the United States "workin' the vintage look," drawing an innumerable amount of eager participants from various age groups. It must be shared: not only is participation permitted, it is encouraged in Scripture!\(^9^2\)

This *Introduction* is called "#NoSidelines" at Desperation Church—it is the theme of the fall semester for 2014 and it will be a ground-breaking experience for the team. It can be done as a workshop or a semester/season-long series. Desperation Church will be doing this during Friday night services. These weekly services are structured differently than traditional church services—they are centered around community and therefore people are seated around small tables. This encourages dialogue and discussion at the end of services and community throughout services. These sessions could also be performed in small group meetings in a larger church body. The schedule for the sessions is as follows:

1. Intro to APEST (Ephesians 4)
2. #NoSidelines
3. Apostle
4. Prophet
5. Evangelist
6. Shepherd


\(^{9^2}\) Colossians 3:15-17.
The first session explains Ephesians 4, the context and audience of the letter, and sharing the definitions that will be used in the rest of the sessions. It also includes a brief review of the history of APEST gifts in the Church—including major arguments against it.93 This must incorporate thirty minutes or so for reflection and questions at tables. The second session encompasses the hardest discussion of any session: what the Church will expect from people and what application APEST gifts will have in the future of the church. This discussion is centered around a theme that hopefully will catch fire in their hearts as students are prepared for their future ministries: #NoSidelines. The desire is that when they transition out of Desperation Church (and their 4 years of college) and move on to new cities and new ministries to love and serve, they will lead others to the same decision Desperation Church has reached: not encouraging people to be benchwarmers and instead will rally them to actively be part of the cause for Christ. Everyone is called to participate in APEST ministry—not just leaders of the Church.94 The Church will need every spare hand serving if she is to survive the tumultuous future she faces.95 This week will also cover a brief overview of the INVEST process proposed in this paper.

The next session (session 3) begins the five part series on the different gifts. In session one, the general definitions are given, but here they are explained in depth. It is recognized that these APEST gifts are given long before conversion and often appear in
personalities from childhood. However, as the gifts are renewed when an individual accepts Jesus as Lord, to help both new and seasoned Christians understand what gifts they might be graced with, a typical profile of these different APEST gifts/roles is given, including their pre-conversion appearance as well as their post-conversion appearance in personalities. As this is delineated for each gift, individuals have a chance to begin to connect these gifts to their lives and see where they have propensity for strength and where they have space for growth. Following each of these five sessions is a conversation centered around small tables or small groups (3-5 individuals) with a leader to help guide individuals through the process of ordering their gifts and finding their strengths and growth-areas.

The next session (session 8) is a Discovery week. This week is based around small group discussion at tables with a leader as well. However, instead of discussion being the closing piece of the service, it will be the main piece of the service. Team members will be able to process through the last five weeks—compiling all the knowledge they’ve gained from the five in-depth studies of APEST gifts—and discussing the new knowledge. They will also work through creating a personal profile to determine likely primary gifts. They will not be informed of the upcoming ceremony until after they have finished the conversations that night. The leaders will take notes on their discussions with each team member to be compiled for the ceremony.

At the end of the series, team members go through a ceremony like the one showcased in *Divergent* where the new class of citizens select their "tribe," based on a combination of desire and test-results. However, there will be three distinct differences

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96 Ibid., 9.
97 *Divergent* directed by Neil Burger (Lionsgate, 2014).
between the INVEST ceremony and the one shown in *Divergent*: (1) team members will not select a tribe based on their desires, but will be nominated by the leaders for a tribe based on the profile developed during the Discovery session with a leader; (2) instead of a combination of tears for losing children and cheers for gaining recruits expressed in the movie, the ceremony at the end of the INVEST process is full of celebration; (3) new tribe members will receive a small token to remind them of the tribe they belong to now instead of releasing a drop of blood into the vessel that represents each tribe. This is a fully joyous occasion because it is not a division of the family of God, but is instead a process to help these team members find where they fit in the body of Christ.\(^98\)

To seal the ceremony, the leader of the church will bring one seasoned member from each tribe forward to pray over communion (*koinonia*)—here recognizing the unity of the Body of Christ brought together through His blood, shed for all.\(^99\) The team members will go through other training later on to help them fully understand and embrace the other gifts, but this ceremony helps them connect with a network—which is the crucial next step for their development.

*Network*

The most important part of teaching APEST ministry is the three-stage apprenticeship. The first is Network—a time where they shadow someone who had selected the same strength for development and learn what using this gift can look like and all the dangers inherit in this gift. They must be taught and then trained; they are in the Novice stage of learning. The Church needs to give developing Christians mentoring relationships that encourage them to serve in their local church and outside of it. They

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need a *Network* of individuals that understand them and can push them to pursue Godliness in a way that reflects their gifts. This can also help them find their ministry role in the local church. Twice as many Millennials stay in the church when they have a “close personal friendship with an adult inside the church.” As they begin to shadow a mentor, they will learn what their gift looks like and can ask any and all questions concerning their gifts. They can also begin to see why their gift is important in the grand scheme of the local and corporate Church.

*Velocity*

Every movement must build *Velocity* for it to be sustained. Velocity can be defined as the speed of something in a given direction. For Desperation Church and the INVEST process, it means two things: First, it references the second piece of the apprenticeship that the developing Christian needs to continue in growth. This part of the apprenticeship resembles the Apprentice stages as described in *Lead Like Jesus*. The first piece of the apprenticeship is for the Novice stage and is mostly shadowing and learning by watching (Network); here in the Apprentice stage (Velocity), the individual is learning by doing—practicing their gifts under supervision and thus building momentum or *Velocity* in their learning experience. During this stage, the Apprentices are also launched into the second meaning of *Velocity*: learning to practice Life Rhythms under

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their mentor's care and direction. Here is an overview of the set of Life Rhythms Desperation Church has selected to practice weekly:

V - Voice — Resolving conflict by making room for other voices in the discussion.
E - Eat — Share meals with friends & strangers to develop community in your life.
L - Love — Express care/compassion through investing time.
O - Offer — Give to the Lord financially; time to the church; friendship to all.
C - Confess — Participate in Discipleship Groups and seek out times of confession.
I - Integrity — Do your actions match the claim of Christ? Do you follow through?
T - Truth — Incorporate daily truth-seeking: Scripture, prayer, and sharing Christ.
Y - Yearn — Spend time with God alone in worship and prayer, silence and solitude.

These practices are important to help team members embrace their calling to love the Body of Christ and to love the world. Some of these Life Rhythms are practiced alone, but most are designed to encourage interaction with those inside and outside of the Body of Christ. These are also measured differently in terms of investment. Voice is expected to be practiced as-needed, while Eat is expected to be done three times a week—once within the church, once outside of the church, and then one to go either direction. Love is expected to be two hours a week that a team member invests in relationships in their life—this looks like spending time on people instead of just spending time with them. Offer is to be practiced by giving an hour a week to serve those the team member does not yet have a relationship with; Confess should be an hour a

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104 At Desperation Church, we have moved away from the term "accountability partners" as it is often used as an excuse of passivity (i.e., they didn't ask or call this week). Instead, we push team members to actively seek out time of confessing their needs and their sins and asking for prayer and help to overcome what they are facing.
week—using the Velocity Life Rhythms to measure growth with a confession partner—through the Discipleship Group meetings; Integrity is to be practiced constantly, but is included to ensure that someone is always asking team members about their integrity.

Truth is the daily practice of seeking God and expressing the truth of Scripture to others through the life lived under the claim of Jesus is Lord. Yearn is included in Friday night services and is expected that team members spend an hour a week, outside of church, seeking God through a combination of silence, solitude, and worship. These practices, while powerfully re-shaping the lives of team members to pursue Christ more and to pursue others relentlessly, do not require a great deal more time than team members are already spending. The intentionality of time well spent is a discipline that young people must learn to succeed and to grow in their faith. They seem rigid at first, but methods of developing disciplines should be rigid. There should be a goal to aim for—a standard to measure—though grace is the heart of the growth process.

Velocity as a whole is crucial to the apprenticeship process because it helps solidify the relationship between the apprentice and their new network, between the apprentice and their newly discovered gifts, and between the apprentice and God—the giver of all gifts. Without this stage of supervised practice, apprentices do not develop the confidence to practice their gift without direct supervision nor the security to be constructively criticized or challenged in their previous ideas or execution of these gifts. Without supervision, they are severely stunted in their growth.

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Experience

The third and final stage of Apprenticeship is Experience—the Journeyman stage of learning. This stage allows the student to practice their studied gift without the direct supervision of their mentor. At this point, they are prepared to succeed on their own—and must be given the chance to do so. They have shown their mentor that they understand what their gift looks like in action, their place in the Body of Christ, the value of their gift, as well as how to practice it in the community.\(^{107}\) While they are skilled enough to be without direct supervision, they will still check in weekly with their confession partner and will regularly meet with their mentor to discuss questions they might have or practical issues that arise as they work on their own in the community.\(^ {108}\) During this stage, the apprentice will begin to be prepared to become a mentor for the next set of apprentices. This preparation may include workshops on "mentoring skills," especially focusing in on listening and questioning skills.\(^ {109}\) These two skill sets are crucial to being a good mentor because they force the apprentice to admit to themselves the real cause of the problems they face, and help them to begin to seek the answers for themselves. This allows them to create a few possible solutions on their own and then work through them with their mentor to find the best solution instead of running to their mentors to ask for the answer immediately—eliminating some dependence on mentors and allowing them to begin to be responsible for their own growth.

\(^{107}\) Ibid., 132-135.
\(^{108}\) Ibid., 133.
Synchronization

To further the growth of each individual, the team members will be asked to synchronize their gifts to the life of the body of Christ. If they find a ministry outlet that fits with the God-given gifts, desires, and passions—then they will be expected to partner with that group to help serve the church and the world through that ministry. However, if they do not find a ministry that meets the need of which God has enlightened them in their current context, they should begin a new ministry and synchronize it to the overarching mission and vision of the church. The importance of this stage is often underestimated; if team members cannot synchronize their gifts and natural abilities to the heartbeat of God, as felt through the local church, there is a much deeper issue at hand. Christians of all ages and maturity levels should be challenged to seek God, and to align themselves with His vision and passion for the community where they live. The gift of the individual is not what is held in high esteem but the giver of the gift instead. To help the team remember the importance of the corporate gifts and not the individual gifts, they partake in different experiences as part of their apprenticeship.

Trial

Every gift has great value. Every team member must recognize the importance of the others on the team. To help them find their place and value all of the gifts given to the Body of Christ, each team member will participate in four trials. Trials are opportunities for team members to participate in all the gifts by going beyond their "tribe" to visit other tribes. Some trials will be more natural than others for team members. Each trial consists of a preparation meeting, a small series of events/activities/practices, and a de-briefing meeting.
Trials are especially important and can be extended in areas of secondary and tertiary APEST gifts. These extended trials will resemble the INVEST process Trials that the team member underwent originally, but will be with a new mentor in the new tribe. The purpose of each tribe hosting trials for non-tribe members is to allow the visitors to see the importance of the other gifts, as well as how they can resonate with other tribes as one people of God.\textsuperscript{110} The events, activities, or practices will be determined by the mentors of the tribe, but preparation and de-briefing meetings will have both original tribe mentors and trial-hosting tribe mentors. This allows for greater discussion and understanding of the various perspectives expressed in the trials. Ideally, trials will begin near the end of the Experience stage to allow apprentices to be somewhat solidified in their skills and tribe before venturing out and experiencing new gifts.

The INVEST process is one that can easily be exported into different age groups and demographics. The greatest challenge to the process will be humility. It is not easy to admit the need for training and teaching to effectively practice the gifts that are naturally in your personality. The difficulty must be dealt with carefully—pushing individuals to study the fourth chapter of Ephesians as a basis for what is taught and why it is crucial to the survival of the Church. To adapt the INVEST process to other, more senior demographics, the first session may need to be extended into a five weeks series, four of which will cover the various key points of Ephesians 4: (1) The Importance of Unity in the Body of Christ; (2) The Gifts Given By Christ; (3) The Maturity Required to Be the Body of Christ; (4) The Identifying Marks of Christian Fellowship. The fifth week in the series (5) should recount the historical pattern of exiling the APE or generative gifts, in favor of retaining the ST or maintenance gifts. This extended series is crucial to help

\textsuperscript{110} I Corinthians 12:1-31.
bring full understanding of the problems and solutions, as well as the mandates in Scripture. This is important, in concept, for those who are more familiar with the traditional church "way of doing things," to help them distinguish between Scriptural mandates and church tradition.

The INVEST process is simply a practical application of the knowledge gained in the afore mentioned course and the study of Ephesians 4. There certainly are many other ways to bring the APEST gifts back into practice by the church as a whole—however, this model may be helpful to guide leaders in the implementation of such a challenging new order of ministry and existence in the local church. There is one body through Christ’s sacrifice—all made equal and in His image—and all must take part in the pursuit of God and His will. All must participate in body-ministry if the Church is to survive—she cannot depend on a handful of leaders to sustain her any longer. It is time for the body to rise up and care for itself—to involve all people in ministering to the world. This is what it will look like to have all of the Church begin to show her Organic roots. The author has created and compiled a handful of reports and questionnaires that can be helpful in assessing the effectiveness of the INVEST Ministry Paradigm at different stages. The importance of APEST Ministry is often underestimated in the context of Organic Church. The author believes that implementing the INVEST Ministry Paradigm will help established churches begin the process of growing closer to being truly organic in nature; therefore, hopefully, being more effective and more in line with

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111 Southeastern University's Summer 2014 Cohort MAML Course with Alan Hirsch.
112 Galatians 3:26-29.
114 Please see the Appendix for all measurements for assessing the effectiveness of the INVEST Ministry Paradigm, including leader reports, pre- and post-questionnaires, and self-report measures.
the mission of Christ by inspiring and empower
ing all members of the Body to be
witnesses in the world and follow Christ as if something is at stake.
CHAPTER FIVE
CALMING YOUR INNER ARSONIST: START SHIFTS, NOT FIRES

Repurposing The Church

The Church has great purpose. She was designed to carry the light of hope—the light of Jesus—into the darkest parts of the world. However, somewhere along the way, the Church lost her confidence in Jesus and became afraid. She once sought to make this light stronger and called all light-bearers to come together and let their light be brighter together. After some time had passed, the Church forgot how dark the world was outside of the circle of light. Her people began to be afraid of the dark and refused to go out alone; eventually, they would refuse to go out at all. She lost her purpose and began to hide. The extra candles were stockpiled and rationed, as were the extra lighters and matches, and the light was only "refilled" when all came together. There was little that the light did to push back or fight off the darkness. Eventually, the light-bearers began to hate the darkness instead of having compassion on those who were trapped in it. This fear and anger separated her from those she was designed to reach.

It is easy to become angry and disappointed in the Church. It is easy to give up on her. However, do not give up hope—she can be restored. Do not lose hope for her yet; the story is not complete! The candles are still in their trunks and the matches with them! The light can still be brought into the depths of darkness and push back the power of the enemy and rescue those entrapped by darkness. For far too long, the Church has cut herself down instead of building up the rest of the body. The author is intimately familiar with the desire to walk away from this seemingly hopeless relic. However, burning down the church and starting over will not help. Destroying the roots of the faith does not give
a fresh start. Instead, there must be a shift in how the Church, and faith, is viewed. Hope is still powerful; the Church still has a place. God is always in the business of repurposing things—He makes good out of situations that have evil written all over them. He is always making things new.

Millennials are passionate—obsessed even—about "DIY" or "Do It Yourself" projects. In 2012, there were 1.36 Million visitors every day for Pinterest, an app used mostly for collecting and sharing DIY projects. Millennials account for 44.7% of users with known age demographics (18-34 years old). These projects are the epitome of repurposing one thing to make another out of it. Nothing is worth throwing away or burning down; it all can be repurposed. In the same way, the Church must put on these DIY work goggles and put the time and effort into this project. It is worth everything. The Church must be restored, but not restored to the traditional model's glory-days, but instead it must be restored to the life-giving and alluring manner of existence she once had.

Making the Shift

Perhaps success should not be measured by the number of boxes checked yes, the number of anonymous hands raised, or the countless first time faces the Church never sees again. The Church could change. She could become what she once was, but forgot how to be; the church could renovate and be restored to life. Every church is naturally organic at her roots; many local communities are simply repressing the organic nature and choosing to follow successful business models—accidentally adapting habits that

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115 Romans 8:28.
116 II Corinthians 5:16-21.
worship success, fame, and money. This was known as idol worship in the Jewish faith and was forbidden by God; this command has not been lifted: the Church is called to follow, serve, adore, and worship God alone. The author would press that the church should embrace a shift toward Organic Church. The shift in values and what is invested in could start a shift in the effectiveness of the Church.

Every church will contextualize "success" differently in the environment of that ministry; however, they shouldn't be so different from the principles outlined in Matthew 28. Jesus defined success as going, making disciples, baptizing people, and teaching them to obey Him. Jesus warns the disciples not to worship money, yet the Church is often found obsessing over it through a focus on tithing, budgets, and building projects. It seems that the Church has traded in Jesus' definition for the world's definition of success. Kelly often pushes his students to re-invent success by defining it before they become deeply involved in ministry. Coming to grips with a new definition for a "successful ministry" can be the hardest thing a ministry ever does, especially if this is a re-defining moment for them. “Success” must be contextualized. However, there is something that can be applied in Pentecostal circles: Success is being and becoming a Missional Pentecostal Church.

**How Can The Church Be "Pentecostal" Without Being "Missional"?**

The simple answer to this question is that it cannot. The author will address both characteristics but cannot justify leaving them separate. The Pentecostal Church must be

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119 Exodus 20. The Israelites struggled with the command many times, including 2 Kings 17:33-41.
120 Matthew 28:19-20.
121 Matthew 6:24.
122 Brian Kelly, “Pastoral Theology I: Defining Success” (lecture, Southeastern University, Lakeland, FL, Fall 2012).
a Christ-centered, Mission-based, people-focused family—dedicated to communicating the gospel of Jesus through our words and actions, to the Sought.\footnote{123} She must make evident through the integrity of her word and the depth of her faith that she is outwardly focused, following through with what she commits to do as the representative of Jesus here on earth. The community also must teach children and new converts that the Church is not a building but a living community that can survive or perish based upon decisions and actions.

The Church is Pentecostal because it is filled with the Holy Spirit and Missional because it was sent out with a specific task to complete. This is seen occurring in Acts 2. The traditional view of Acts 2 is that it demonstrates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the events that follow; however, Acts 2:42-47 also presents the Great Commission\footnote{124} in story-form—sharing with the readers exactly what it looks like to see the Mission of God in context of the first century church. When people asked God what it looks like to act out the Mission of the Church, He has directed them to see the power given in as well as the proper use of that power in Acts 2. The Pentecostal Church should practice all of the purposes of the church in the following ways to be true to the Spirit-filled nature of the Church. There are several distinctions necessary for the Missional Pentecostal Church; they are as follows:

The Church must focus on the multi-faceted nature of prayer. Prayer was designed to make room for conversation with the Triune God, allowing people to connect with God in a radical manner through the Holy Spirit now that the sacrifice of Jesus has


\footnote{124} Matthew 28:19-20.
made a way for His people to draw near to the Father. Prayer was implemented as a spiritual discipline to help believers pursue God. Prayer is the avenue from which healing comes and is the path in which people experience healing—both internally and externally. The Church also experiences prayer as the foundational support of encouragement, through the practice of intercessory prayer.

If the Church is to be "Pentecostal," it must embrace the Holy Spirit and allow her to move in a free and orderly way in services. This also means including the Holy Spirit in sermon preparation and presentation—as well as in planning of series and even special events with the Church. To allow free movement in services and meetings, trust must be developed between those that lead worship, conversation, and teaching—otherwise, it can hinder the movement of the Spirit by an inability to trust others to hear from God in the moment. Leaders must plan but plan with flexibility—the intention is that of breaking plans if God begins to do something new. Planning should incorporate a time or attitude that is open to prophetic utterances, especially those that are intelligible, during our meetings. At Desperation Church, this can be seen during times of music-led worship and even includes the expression of new, original songs in the category of prophetic utterance. Prophetic simply means speaking to a need, and should describe the attitude of the Church—even if the community often loses their way in this area.

The Pentecostal Church should be encouraging gift-based ministry. The Holy Spirit has given every believer different gifts as she sees fit and the Church must respect that by crafting ministry positions for those with a gift set in that area, not a warm body

125 John 14:6-7.
127 Ibid., 217, 236-237.
128 I Corinthians 14.
129 Ephesians 5:15-20.
to meet a need.\textsuperscript{130} There may be times that a "warm body" is the only resource available, but this cannot be a permanent solution. Every believer must be serving in his or her area of giftedness to prevent burning out and giving up on serving God because it feels forced and unnatural! Ministry is creative in the Pentecostal Church—full of emotion, passion, and innovation. Leaders create and recreate with God in ministry, allowing people to express themselves and their experience with God through various mediums. The community longs to encourage the sharing of testimonies, but lost the passion for expression. Art is a form of testimony that can be embraced and utilized for the glory of the divine Gift-Giver and Storyteller. The Pentecostal Church is encouraged to embrace both the head-knowledge of God that the Church has promoted for centuries—even as far back as Jewish roots—and the heart-knowledge of God that is possible due to the presence of the Holy Spirit in daily lives. The community must express the experience of the realness of God, not just the assertion that He is real.

Finally, the Pentecostal Church must champion the equality of all humanity. As previously discussed, there are many ways that the Church has historically, and perhaps accidentally, partnered with the Great Oppressor. God created all of humanity to be equal, as they have the Imago Dei within them.\textsuperscript{131} Due to this history of collaboration with evil, the Pentecostal Church must verbalize and constantly affirm this view of equality and the freedom from oppression of all peoples. However, the marred history of the Church, partnered with the world's demand for proof and follow-through for all statements of ethics and belief, requires that these statements become more than words.

\textsuperscript{130} I Corinthians 12:8.  
\textsuperscript{131} Genesis 1:27.
The Pentecostal Church must communicate the equality of all people verbally with the
evidence of diversity in leadership and a commitment to Mission-based work or outreach.

How can the church begin to effectively combat the tension between her calling
and her destructive habits? It is impossible to reconcile the two; calling must be ignored
if habits aren't altered. Can the Church change? Is there hope? Yes, a thousand times:
yes! The Church will not change, however, as a whole without beginning to change in her
many parts. How can each local church change to begin to resemble the original calling
in Matthew 28? The author would suggest that beginning to implement some, if not all,
of the many different principles from Organic Church models would drastically curb the
"vision drift" from which many churches are now suffering.

**Future Research: Proposed Assessments**

The use of Organic Church is not new—even the principles exported from
Organic Church models are not new to the church-world. However, the use of these
principles in an environment tailored toward Millennials or even with them in mind is
still relatively new. There is little written on the subject of Millennials and Organic
Church. While this slows progress, it also leaves immense room for further research and
study. In hopes of this further research and study becoming a reality, the author has
worked through and created some guidelines for creating the ideal measurement of
success for churches implementing Organic Church principles. These should include,
church-wide: number of baptisms (instead of anonymous conversions), number of
individuals that have completed a small group based discipleship program, percentage of
the church involved in small groups/discipleship groups, percentage of the church
involved in ministry teams (especially using the INVEST Ministry Paradigm), and
percentage of the church giving consistently (money and/or time) to the church. Hopefully future scholars and ministers can partner together to create these measurements and make further suggestions for the expansion of knowledge in the context of Millennials and the Church.

In the realm of being and becoming a Missional Pentecostal Church, the following have been developed as adequate measurements and assessments for determining if the Missional Pentecostal Church (MPC) is truly effective. They will be presented in bullet-point format for ease of use and reading:

- The number of visitors and new converts will assess focus of the MPC, the use of evangelism, and the effectiveness of discipleship;
- The number of outreaches will assess focus of the MPC;
- The number of baptisms performed annually will assess discipleship;
- The amount of money/percentage of budgets directed at outreach and other ministries will determine the apparent Mission of the MPC when compared to Christ's Mission;
- The amount of giving per capita in the MPC will determine focus of the members;
- The amount and style of events on the calendar will determine the natural ability of the Church to reach out to and develop relationship with unchurched/dechurched people, thus assessing evangelism, focus, and Spirit-led planning;
- The amount of unchurched/dechurched visitors will assess the outward focus;
- The percentage of volunteers in the church will determine focus of the MPC members;
  - The average "life expectancy" of a volunteer will assess gift-based ministry;
  - The diversity of leadership in the MPC—and the way leadership is structured—will show the implicit view of equality held by the MPC;
- The percentage of small group membership in the MPC will assess fellowship and discipleship;
- The percentage of second-time and third-time visitors will determine the effectiveness of the meetings/services, the relational quality and relevant ministry of the MPC;
- The promotion of certain matters or events in the pulpit will express the priorities of the MPC, as well as the Mission-based focus, evangelism, the view of prayer,
the dedication to discipleship, as well as planning with room for the fruit of being Spirit-led to grow.

These are additional aspects that can be researched in the future to help develop organic churches that are missional, organic, and Pentecostal. The author hopes that these categories and further research proposals will also assist non-Pentecostal communities searching for methods to measure effectiveness in their calling.

The Church has a great deal of assessment that must take place to maintain the basic health and proper focus that God intended for the Church to have. The Missional Pentecostal Church is what the Church was created to be and to become as they learned to love one another. The community is called to impact the world with the hope discovered in Christ Jesus—to comfort the broken with the comfort received from God. A combination of the above assessments would create effective measurements, but only a Spirit-led Missional Pentecostal Church will begin to make changes and strive to be the Church, as it was created to be and become. What is Pentecostal must also be Missional if it seeks to be truly Spirit-led and not merely deceive itself.

The purpose of a believer’s life is to serve God by helping Him create His kind of community (read: Church) here on earth. This purpose can be fulfilled by the Church, despite the deficiencies explored in this paper. The Church can reach Millennials. It will require sacrifice and change, but it is possible. The Church can embrace the opportunity to fulfill the needs of Millennials: "I want to be heard. I want to contribute. I want to be accepted." Fulfilling these needs in a meaningful and genuine way creates the God-ordained opportunity to minister to the brokenness of Millennials and help them pursue

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132 II Corinthians 1:3-4.
133 Matthew 28:16-20.
God holistically—incorporating both modern and ancient traditions and styles in the pursuit of God they are learning to embody every day.

There is a prolific God who is daily creating new ways to connect with the world—with those who have been disconnected or who have disconnected themselves from the Church. The Church is not the only way for God to connect with humanity; God is not limited by humanity's shortcomings. The Church is privileged to participate in the Gospel and the Kingdom of God. It is the joy of the Church to bring His Kingdom from Heaven to Earth; it is the responsibility of the Christian to connect their broken sphere of influence with the presence God. Though not the only way, the author has presented her case that Organic Church models and principles are a valid form of creating this connection, perhaps even the best chance the Church has at reaching the community effectively. The heart of the Gospel is for the world to experience hope in Christ and for the Church to develop believers into followers of the Way. For that dream to become reality, the community must live out the mission with passion every single day for the rest of their lives. The Mission is simple yet profoundly difficult:

1. Pursue the Sought. 2. Train the Found. 3. Repeat.
Bibliography


Kelly, Brian. “Pastoral Theology I: Defining Success.” Lecture, Southeastern University, Lakeland, FL, Fall 2012.


Appendix A.

I. RELIGIOUS ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Results from Religious Attitude Questionnaire Surveys in Lakeland, FL 2008-2014

Data was gathered from haphazard convenience sampling frame in neighborhoods in downtown Lakeland and surrounding Highland City and Southeastern University. Surveys were administered to respondents in a public venue either on the street, their doorways, sidewalks, or any other place where people could be encountered in the public sphere. A total of 394 respondents were analyzed. Demographic data was not gathered for all respondents but of those that were recorded numbers were fairly equal as to gender and marital status. The following charts provide data concerning certain trends among the population polled.
II. **Religious Attitude Questionnaire Table**

If you were looking for a place of worship, what would you look for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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<td>Valid No Response</td>
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<td>14.2</td>
<td>14.2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting/Place of Belonging</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Preaching/Teaching/Worship</td>
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<td>19.5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs (Kids, Youth, College, etc.)</td>
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<td>11.5</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>74.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faith Tradition</td>
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<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>80.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>19.5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. **Pinterest Usage Graph**

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IV. **Strategic Plan for Desperation Church**

Mission Image: At Desperation Church, we believe in the power of image to convey deeper meanings to a generation that speaks in images and metaphors. For those who are new to this idea, we have included an explanation of our Mission Image:

Overall, Desperation Church longs to be the bridge that helps those in Lakeland that are currently being sought after by God—the never-churched and the no-longer-churched people—to find their place in the Family of God and begin the journey to know Him more. Each step from the community of Lakeland toward the community of God is explained below:

Desperation Church seeks to **Reinvent** the image of the church in the eyes of the Lakeland community, creating a bridge to those that would never otherwise include the Body of Christ in their lives, to suggest to them that they can “try on faith” and be a part of our community. We hope to help individuals **Redefine** their relationship with God by
providing examples of individuals in right relationship with God and help them understand how God truly feels about them through a deep study of the Bible. We desire to build strong Relationships with these individuals through discipleship to allow them to ask tough questions, doubt everything, and belong before they believe fully—giving them the chance to act on our earlier suggestion to “try on faith.” In the future, we hope to build Rescue missions into Desperation Church: resources for both local and overseas missions—through traditional church methods, networking, and synergistic collaborations methods (working with the social work professionals).

Statement of Purpose

Desperation church was formed by a group of Pentecostal, Spirit-filled people drawn together by desperation to seek after the hope found in Christ as described in the Holy Scriptures. Our purpose is to minister to college-aged and other young adults between the ages of 18 to 30 in the local Lakeland region by four steps: First, Desperation seeks to help reinvent the image of the church in Lakeland by showing a different side of the church. The second step is to help them redefine their relationship with God; the third? To build relationships with the sought and help them try on faith and experience true community—community that allows questions and doubts. Our fourth and final step is to help both our local and global community by developing a network of Rescue: compiling and connecting resources to the community for the purpose of drawing people out of their desperation in more ways than one.

This is displayed through (1) functioning as a community of faith that transparently demonstrates lives of integrity, passion, selflessness, compassion, sacrifice, and joy; (2) extending this faith community to reach local young adults in between the
ages of 18 and 30; (3) providing a safe and non-judgmental place to foster discipleship of young adults by encouraging the discussion of doubts, mending brokenness, and restoring relationships; (4) extending this safe haven community of love and acceptance to the community of Lakeland; (5) and finally, building outreach avenues to the local community that will eventually extend into the rest of Polk County.

Answering the Unique Call of God

Desperation Church answers the unique call of the Lord regarding misperceptions of the church. Through a transparent community of acceptance and integrity, Desperation Church hopes to undo negative stereotypes of Christ and the role of the church by building a safe haven for open dialogue about doubts and confusion. Desperation Church seeks to restore young adults between the ages of 18 to 30 to peace and hope in Christ by using our actions rather than being dependent on our words. Our desire is to constantly build bridges with the community and replace despair with hope.

Desperation Church will follow a unique culture of accountability in which each member in leadership will demonstrate the free ability to vocalize conflict and correct other members in a loving manner, in one-on-one conversations. Each member of leadership will participate in a rotation of service where participation can occur in every ministry i.e. the Worship Pastor will lead in Pulpit ministry while the Lead Pastor serves on our Welcome Team, etc. This fosters the culture of accountability and trust between church members and team members.

Cultural Distinctive(s)
Desperation Church carefully selected Friday nights as the main service to help create a transition zone for those not yet ready to embrace the church and attend a Sunday morning gathering. Friday nights seem to be a more neutral space for inviting people to encounter God. The important part is being willing to do something different to reach a people group that is not being reached with the current model, practices, and habits of the Church. Another distinctive for Desperation Church is The Forge. The Forge is a secular non-profit that seeks to support the city of Lakeland by helping to build community and multiply resources for the foster care system in Lakeland, as well as the efforts to stop sex trafficking and assist people in dealing with sexual trauma. This is a crucial part of the vision for Desperation Church as it brings together unlike people to create something useful to impact the community and improve the city. The Forge will be disconnected from Desperation Church but they will often partner together to do fundraisers, etc. to help foster community and develop resource-networks for these important ministries in the city of Lakeland. Jesus instructed His family to care for those who were constantly harassed and hopeless in their society (widows and orphans). Desperation Church believes that today, the hopeless and harassed are those forced into slavery and sex trafficking, and the children who are incessantly wounded by being a number in a system instead of a part of a family.

MORE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN CAN BE OBTAINED VIA EMAIL REQUEST TO DESPERATION CHURCH: DESPERATIONFL@GMAIL.COM
Appendix B
V. MEASUREMENTS FOR THE INVEST MINISTRY PARADIGM

Appendix B1
Pre-Series Questionnaire/Discussion

What is APEST?

How do you feel about APEST Ministry?

Where in Scripture does this model come from?

Who is responsible for "doing ministry" in the Body of Christ?

Why do we need all of APEST?

What are Life Rhythms?

Do you currently have any Life Rhythms?

For what is VELOCITY an acronym?

How consistently do you practice VELOCITY?

Are you currently involved in a ministry in or outside of your church? Please explain.

Have you ever helped with a ministry for which you were not gifted?

How was that experience?

Do you consistently try new things or assist ministries of which you are not a part?

Do you enjoy this? Why or why not?
Appendix B2
Leader/Observer Reports

INVEST: APEST Ministry
(This report is to be completed upon arrival in Network, before Synchronization, and after the Trial phase)

Is this person gladly participating in the INVEST Ministry Training, or are they expressing frustration/apathy with this training?

Does this person seem to understand APEST Ministry? Are there any unclear points?

Do they seem to be excited about #NoSidelines, or is there hesitation there?

VELOCITY: Life Rhythms
(This report is to be completed before Experience, before Synchronization, and after Trial phases)

Is this person practicing Life Rhythms regularly?

Which do they seem to be struggling with consistently?

Which do they seem to be fulfilling consistently?

INVEST: Experience
(This report is to be completed once a month throughout training in the Experience phase)

Has this person adjusted to learning new skills? Are they teachable?

Does this individual understand their "skill," or do they need more instruction?

Does the individual understand how to use their "skill" and demonstrate ability?

Has this individual expressed any regret of selecting/being placed in this particular tribe?
   - If so, how have you been able to encourage them?
   - Are they interested in seeking a new tribe?
   - Is the tension based upon interpersonal conflicts or a poor fit for this tribe?

Have they been practicing their gift on their own—not just with the tribe?
Has this person been meeting regularly with their Confession group?

Have they regularly attended tribe meetings?

**INVEST: Experience #2**

(This report is to be completed at the end of training in Experience and after Synchronization phases)

Has this person adjusted to learning new skills? Are they teachable?

Does this individual understand their "skill," or is more instruction needed?

Does the individual understand how to use their "skill" and demonstrate ability?

Has this individual expressed any regret of selecting/being placed in this particular tribe?

If so, how have you been able to encourage them?

Are they interested in seeking a new tribe?

Is the tension based upon interpersonal conflicts or a poor fit for this tribe?

Have they been practicing their gift on their own—not just with the tribe?

Has this person been meeting regularly with their Confession group?

Have they regularly attended tribe meetings?

In your opinion, is this individual ready to mentor others entering into this tribe?

If so, have they expressed desire to mentor others or lead a tribe excursion?

Have they attended the listening / questioning skills and mentoring workshops?

Does the individual have respect in the tribe? Describe their interpersonal skills.

If not, how can other leaders resource you to help them continue in their growth?

What do you believe is standing between them and being ready?

How long do you expect it to take—at their current pace—for them to be ready?

Has the individual selected a ministry to join?
If so, have they met with that ministry's leader yet?

Have you discussed this? It is the best fit, in your opinion? Why or why not?

If they have elected to start a ministry, have they completed the necessary steps?

Is this individual prepared to lead people:

   Mentally?

   Emotionally?

   Spiritually?

Has the individual mastered VELOCITY Life Rhythms yet?

Are they consistent in their service? Are they dependable?

Do you believe this individual will be able to lead a team in ministry? Why or why not?
Appendix B3

Post-Series Questionnaire/Discussion

What is APEST?

How do you feel about APEST Ministry?

Where in Scripture does this model come from?

Who is responsible for "doing ministry" in the Body of Christ?

Why do we need all of APEST?

What are Life Rhythms?

Do you currently have any Life Rhythms?

For what is VELOCITY an acronym?

How consistently do you practice VELOCITY?

Are you currently involved in a ministry in or outside of your church? Please explain.

Have you ever helped with a ministry for which you were not gifted?

If so, how was that experience?

Do you consistently try new things or assist ministries of which you are not a part?

Do you enjoy this? Why or why not?
Appendix B4
Self-Report Measures

INVEST: APEST Ministry

(This report is to be completed upon arrival in Network)

Are you enjoying participating in the INVEST Ministry Training, or do you feel frustrated or apathetic about this training? Please elaborate.

Do you feel you understand APEST Ministry? Are there any points that are unclear?

Are you excited about the concept of #NoSidelines, or are you hesitant about it?

VELOCITY: Life Rhythms

(This report is to be completed before the Experience phase, before Synchronization, and after Trial phases)

Are you practicing Life Rhythms regularly?

Which do you seem to be struggling with consistently?

Which do you seem to be fulfilling consistently?

Have you noticed any significant change in the quality of your life?

Do you feel any closer to God or the community now, living with VELOCITY?

INVEST: Experience

(This report is to be completed once a month throughout training in the Experience phase)

Have you adjusted to learning new skills?

Do you feel that you understand your "skill," or do you need more instruction?

Do you feel that you understand how to use your "skill?"

Have you been successfully utilizing your skill? Do you feel like you need help?

Do you feel any regret of selecting or being placed in this particular tribe?
If so, how have you been able to deal with this?

Has your tribe leader been encouraging you?

Are you interested in seeking a new tribe?

Is the tension based upon interpersonal conflicts or a poor gift-fit for this tribe?

Have you been practicing your gift on your own—not just with the tribe?

Have you been meeting regularly with your Confession group?

How regularly have you attended tribe meetings?

In your opinion, are you ready to mentor others entering into this tribe?

If so, have you expressed the desire to mentor or lead a tribe event to your leader?

Have you attended the listening/questioning skills and mentoring workshops?

Do you feel you have respect in the tribe?

Describe any conflicts that have occurred.

If not, how can your tribe leader resource you to help continue your growth?

What do you believe is hindering you from being ready?

How long do you expect it to take—at your current pace—for you to be ready?

Have you selected a ministry you would like to join at the end of your Experience phase?

If so, have you met with that ministry's leader yet?

Have you discussed this decision with your leader?

If so, did they believe it is the best fit? Why or why not?

Did you agree with them? Why or why not?

If you have elected to start a ministry, have you completed the necessary steps?

Do you feel prepared to lead people:

Mentally?
Emotionally?

Spiritually?

Please explain.

Have you mastered VELOCITY Life Rhythms yet?

If not, where are you still struggling? What is your plan for improvement?

Are you consistently serving? Do you follow through with what you say you will do?

Do you believe you will be able to lead a team in ministry? Why or why not?

Please list a leader at the church we can contact as a reference: _______________________.

(If you have attended less than 6 months, please list a reference from another church or a close friend we can contact. Please include their phone number.)

Please name the tribe leader you meet with regularly: __________________________.