

A Guide for Engaging Communities

AL YANNO, JR.

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Special thanks to our contributing writers Joey & Kelly Yergan, Jeff and Ruth Phail, Shaun and Annie Howard, and Paris Yanno. You are living examples of Jesus by engaging your communities with the Gospel.

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by Al Yanno, Jr.

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INTRODUCTION

Johnny Chapman was born in 1774 in Leominster, Massachusetts. He was a little different than most kids his age and was always looking for **adventure**. At age 18 he decided to take a journey from the east coast to Ohio and beyond. He would carry with him a leather bag containing apple seeds that he collected from apples that people shared with him along the way and cider mills that he visited during his journey. As he traveled throughout the countryside he would look for strategic places in open fields and along rivers to **plant his apple seeds**. Traveling back and forth he would care for the young plants that would eventually grow into orchards. His **apple orchards spread all over the countryside** and **people built settlements** near them.

As Johnny traveled planting seeds everywhere he went, he also **lived like a missionary**, sharing stories from the Bible with the people that he met while building relationships. His dream was to **produce enough apples that no one would ever go hungry**. Even though he was becoming a successful businessman, he was known to live and dress simply, choosing to give his better clothes to people with greater need. He also often gave his shoes away and preferred to travel barefoot. For 50 years Johnny faithfully planted apple seeds and the seeds of the gospel all over the countryside earning him the nickname,

Johnny “Appleseed”. The legend and impact of Johnny Appleseed **still lives on today.**

Johnny Appleseed’s life is a picture of what The Church is all about, planting seeds of the Gospel. Eventually, the seeds will produce disciples of Jesus which will multiply the gospel into other new disciples causing churches to emerge. As disciples multiply and churches emerge, the landscape of communities begin to transform because the church is engaging and impacting the culture through the principles and practices of the Kingdom of God. Jesus created the Church to destroy the works of death and darkness and to bring the authority and Kingdom of heaven into every part of life.

In Acts 2, on the day of Pentecost we see the Church being born. There is this supernatural outpouring of the Holy Spirit where the activity of the upper room begins to overflow into the market place and 3,000 people are saved. Their lives are radically changed and together they begin to impact the culture, even as the Holy Spirit was transforming them. It is quite clear throughout scripture that God is in the business of redeeming people and every part of creation. **Therefore, we must be committed to working towards both the redemption of mankind and the redemption of our communities.** It must start personally but must also overflow into every relationship and every part of culture.

3 Important Questions:

There are three important questions to consider when thinking about The Church and community engagement. (1) If your church would cease to exist tomorrow, would your community feel it? (2) What good news does your church bring to your community on a regular basis? (3) How is your community different because your church is present? **I believe that every believer and every church can become a powerful force of transformation both in the lives of people and in their community** by embodying the principles of this book. Let’s dive in.

CHAPTER 1

The Great Omission of the Great Commission

One of the last things that Jesus said before He left this earth was that His disciples should

“go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age”
Matthew 28:19-20, NIV

This passage is known as the Great Commission challenging disciples of Christ into a mission that will multiply new disciples of Jesus all around the world. The early Christ followers got off on a good start even in the midst of great persecution and resistance. In Acts 17 it was said of them that,

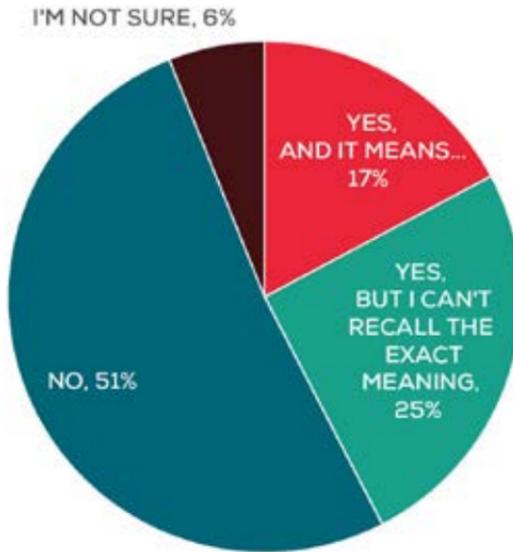
“These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also”
-Acts 17:6, NRSV

However, since the first century church, the Great Commission has seemed to shift to the Great Suggestion and now in the 21st Century to the Great Omission. Let me explain. The Barna Group recently did a study of the American Church and its attitude toward the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). They found that 51% of church

goers had never heard of the term “Great Commission.” Another 6% were not sure if they had and 25% had heard the term but could not recall what it meant. Only 17% of church attenders had heard of the term and knew what it meant

CHURCHGOERS: HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE GREAT COMMISSION?

Barna



October 2017, n=1,004 U.S. churchgoers.

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(Barna 2018).

George Verwer, founder of *Operation Mobilization* world missions' organization, once said that a church does not need to decide whether it will fulfill the Great Commission, but rather it needs to decide whether or not it wants to be a church, because to be a church is to fulfill the Great Commission (Verwer, n.d.). Could it be that believers in Jesus have settled for doing church but not being The Church?

Refining the Mission of The Church

How would you define a Church? This basic question can invoke a variety of answers based on who is being asked. Of course the word “church” in the Greek as used by Jesus in Matthew 16:18 is “ekklesia” literally means “a gathering of people called out from their homes into a public place of assembly” (Strong’s, G1577). This clarifies to us that a **“church” is not a place but a people. It is not an activity but an identity.** It’s not where you go, it’s who you are in connection with other believers. There cannot be a church without there being an assembly of people together. **Therefore, the mission of The Church is a corporate mission and not a personal one.** In other words, there is something that God has called me to do as a part of the Body of Christ and in unison with the greater Church.

So, if The Church (Ekklesia) is the gathering of the followers of Christ to a public assembly of worship, then why does Jesus tell them to “go”? These two concepts of gathering and going are not in conflict with each other but are rather part of the intended rhythm of The Church.

One of the most fascinating systems in the human anatomy is the circulatory system which is powered by the heart. The four parts of the heart work systemically to replenish the blood and the body with what is needed. Blood flows into the heart, is oxygenated by the lungs, and then flows throughout the body. This is the rhythm of the heart.

Gathering and going should always be the heartbeat or rhythm of The Church. If all Christians do is gather for worship, prayer, fellowship, conferences, and seminars then we are not accomplishing our mission. The gathering of The Church is essential for so many reasons. Together we express our love for God through worship, grow together as disciples through His Word, connect with each other in fellowship, seek Him together in prayer, and mobilize together for

Kingdom work. The gathering of The Church is to fuel and refresh us for “the going” to live life on mission with Jesus all throughout the week.

Three Levels of Community Engagement

Is there a difference between community outreach and community impact? I would say, “yes”. Community Outreach is often about evangelism events or acts of service to reach the community with the Gospel. These type of outreaches are valuable and helpful to introduce people to the Gospel and the church. Community Impact is about utilizing the gospel to not only transform people but transform communities. Community outreach tends to be sporadic and focused on one day activities spread out across a yearly calendar. Community Impact is about being consistently present and engaged in improving the quality of life in a city. **Community Impact is not just about changing a life spiritually but about changing a community and its quality of life by the Spirit.**

There are **3 levels of Gospel ministry that every believer and every church** should strive for in order to bring about true transformation to both people and communities. Each of these tiers of engagement should build upon each other. They should also lead to a more consistent presence and permanent effect on the community. Finally, each of these levels leads to a deeper commitment of relationship and transformation both with people and communities. The following is a brief description of each level that will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

Level 1: Blessing Your Community – This involves creating and establishing an **IDENTITY** with your neighbors and community leaders through relationship building and serving.

Level 2: Pastoring Your Community – This involves being a spiritual **INFLUENCE** in your city by consistently being involved and engaged in community life.

Level 3: Revitalizing Your Community – This involves bringing **IMPACT** to your community by shaping the culture and quality of life.

Each level of community engagement discussed in the following chapters will include exposition, principles, and a case study by a local pastor or church planter, and group questions to work through.

CHAPTER 2

Blessing your Community

Level 1

If you were to do a survey of your neighborhood, what do you think the neighbors, businesses, and community organizations would say about your church? What would they say about you? Do they know you or do you just exist and do life on the same street or in the same community? What does it really mean to bless your community?

Blessing in the Bible was a very important and God ordained practice. There are many examples of this very holy principle which can basically be categorized in two ways. **First, Biblical blessing was about the favor of God being declared or bestowed over a person or community.** Mark 10:16 says that Jesus took time to intentionally bless the children. **Second, biblical blessing also focuses on a state or position of fulfillment.** Jesus discusses this in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5). Blessing, in this context, is not about a life of peace and prosperity but rather about the favor and fulfillment in the Lord. The whole concept of spiritual blessing is that we are blessed to be a blessing.

Blessing our communities starts by being a good neighbor and establishing an **IDENTITY** in the neighborhood. The church should not be known as a building where people gather on Sundays, but rather as a community of Christians who are a positive part of the neighborhood. Because the church

is people and not a building, events and activities in this beginning stage should center around building relationships with neighbors, people of peace, and community influencers. It's okay to do outreach events such as Easter egg hunts, block parties, and family movie nights that attract people to the church campus if there are relationships being built and not just a church being promoted. In order to build strong relationships with neighbors consider mixing in several micro-events rather than just macro-events. Imagine several small block parties taking place around your city in people's backyards or neighborhood parks rather than just one large event on your church's property. These smaller events would both bless the neighborhood and provide a bridge building venue for lasting relationships that will lead to personal Gospel conversations.

Blessing communities through acts of service is a great way for a church to build a good relationship and rapport with the people. Non-church goers and unbelievers do not want to be treated like a project of the church to promote its growth and brand. Rather, they want to know that the people of the church truly care about them and are authentic in their friendship.

There is both a personal aspect (micro-effect) and corporate aspect (macro-effect) to being a blessing to one's community. Personally, every follower of Christ should live out their purpose by bringing the Gospel everywhere they live, work, learn, and play. Imagine what our neighborhoods would look like if every Christian was fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandment through the practice of blessing their neighbors. Imagine what our cities would look like if every Christ centered church were engaged in a regular rhythm of blessing their communities by bringing good news everywhere.

One tool that can be used in a personal approach is the BLESSED Rhythms. These are daily intentional practices that are designed to be incorporated in everyday life. Each one is a part of the B.L.E.S.S. acronym. ¹

Begin with extraordinary prayer and fasting.

Extraordinary prayer means to seek God's supernatural direction and presence as you pray for your neighbors.

Listen and learn about other people's story to reach them with the Gospel.

Eat together with others by opening up your table.

Serve by looking for opportunities to demonstrate God's Love to others.

Share the story of Jesus. Look for ways to be authentic as you incorporate yours' and Christ's story into conversations.

CASE STUDY: City Alive Church – Youngstown, Ohio – Pastor Joey & Kelly Yergan

Reaching the Lost

There has never been a better time to reimagine the way we do church, evangelism, and discipleship than right now. Here is what we see in one particular moment of Jesus' mission: *"Jesus went out again beside the sea. The whole crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. Then, passing by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, "Follow me," and he got up and followed him"*

-Mark 2:13-14, CSB

¹ For more information on the B.L.E.S.S. rhythms created by Dave Ferguson visit <https://www.stayforth.com/downloads/b-l-e-s-s-intentional-rhythms-to-bless-others/>



Jesus Searches

Jesus' ministry was on fire. Gatherings by the sea. Miracles changing lives. Crowds flocking to hear his sermons. It seems like he is off to a pretty good start. Fascinatingly, with a crowd of people seeking him, Jesus isn't really concerned with the crowds. He is looking for Levi sitting alone in his tax booth. He was searching for the person that wasn't searching for him. **That is because Jesus didn't love crowds. He loved people.**

The best part is that he didn't (and doesn't) only love certain people. He loves even the worst of us. We see in Jesus the revolutionary idea that has changed the world and that has changed my life: **God loves sinners. He loves the people no one else loves.** The people no one else is looking for. The people who are loners. The people who are right in the middle of their sin.

In this moment of time, the Church desperately needs people who are actively searching for those like Levi. Our churches are full of incredible people who need and deserve to be shepherded well. But are we searching for Levi too? And when we find him. What are we inviting him into?

Jesus Invites

We see from the rest of the gospel story what Jesus' invitation actually was. The beauty and challenge of it is that it is so unlike our invitations. He didn't offer them a prayer to pray, a chair to sit in once a week, a membership class, or a ministry team. **He offered them his life.** This is also modeled in the ministry of the apostle Paul who wrote to the church in Thessalonica:

"We cared so much for you that we were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us"

- 1 Thessalonians 2:8, CSB

This is the invitation of Jesus and the early church. **What would it look like if we offered our lives to people?** Jesus' plan for Levi involved Levi's whole life being joined to Jesus' life, his words, and actions. When Jesus journeyed on the road or traveled in the boat, Levi was right there with him. When Jesus ate meals in a home, Levi ate with him. Just as important in all of this is that Levi was invited to do all of this with others in Jesus' growing family of followers. When Jesus called him he didn't just get Jesus, he got the other disciples too. This is the kind of invitation offered to Levi. This Jesus went home with Levi.

Jesus Eats

"While he [Jesus] was reclining at the table in Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who were following him"

-Mark 2:15, CSB

Jesus is at home with sinners the same way a doctor is at home among the sick. The newly saved often know how to reach their friends, but long time Christians can have a hard time relating to outsiders. Not so with Jesus. Jesus goes over to Levi's house to eat with him and his friends. This wasn't a one-off thing either. Jesus had a reputation for his meals. Even though it is often overlooked, Jesus' meals were one of the hallmarks of his ministry, and one of the most radical things he did according to the religious leaders of his day.

He was always eating with people and often with the wrong kind of people, like Levi. He would go around explaining God's kingdom being like a banquet feast. He fed 5,000 people with a boy's lunch. Jesus restored Peter after his denials by making him breakfast on the beach. At the climax of his ministry, right before the cross, Jesus spends his final evening with his disciples having a meal where he offers them his own body and blood. So what we see Jesus do here with Levi is nothing out of the ordinary. This is what Jesus does. It's the ministry of the

meal. His whole ministry was about connecting with people deeply - entering their homes, their lives, and their stories. His approach wasn't something manufactured, it was more organic than that. It was humble, relational.

So What?

Implementing this radical invitation of Jesus goes beyond our evangelistic sermons or our outreach programs. It's about the entire structure of our churches. Now, more than ever, in this lonely generation, we cannot let church be reduced to an event people watch or a position they fill. Like Jesus it has to be in the home, around the table; on the way to Jerusalem, in the boat on the Sea of Galilee. **It's a continued and sustained nearness.**

At City Alive Church in the Youngstown area, we have tried to embody this radical life-on-life invitation of Jesus. By no means are we against systems. Rather, we are intentional about building systems that connect people to people. We are intentional about doing less with stages and more with tables. Less watching and more participating.

For us it looks like doing two things every week: Sunday Church and House Church. We recently started three house churches with plans for them to multiply every 1-2 years. These are just as much church as our Sunday gatherings. House churches are places where we share a meal, worship, pray, teach, and discuss God's Word, and will soon do localized outreach.

In this context, believers understand that evangelism and discipleship aren't about the building or even the pastor. Each member of the body owns the invitation of Jesus to be discipled and make disciples.

People like Levi are much more likely to show up to a neighbor's house for a meal than they are to come to one

of our Sunday services or outreach events. Evangelism isn't something manufactured, but rather, something that happens through real relationships with people they know care about them.

In house church things that typically fall under discipleship and pastoral care begin to happen organically because of the life-on-life approach. These things happen naturally as the people who know and care about each other begin to serve one another in love. It's the body ministering to the body.

We have a Connect Lunch after service monthly, where the whole church is invited to stay for a meal. We receive the Lord's Supper every week. We also, for a season, arranged our chairs in our Sunday Gatherings in a giant circle. Although it ended up being too impractical in the long-term with the layout of our space, we are always looking for creative ways to communicate this vision of church. Our structure often speaks louder than our sermons. Recently, the concept of Dinner Church has been gaining traction with quite a number of churches, with services happening while people are seated around tables. There are also a lot of fascinating things happening in various micro-church models.

It's really important to point out that there is no single model for church prescribed in the New Testament. No one-size-fits-all. I believe that's intentional. It's going to take all different kinds of churches to reach all of the Levis out there in our cities.

The important thing is that whatever model we have, we are facilitating an environment where people can live life in real, genuine communion with Christ and his body.

We need invitations that welcome the worst and loneliest of sinners. We need communities where they can find a brand-new life in the story of Jesus. We preach, he saves. We lay

hands, he heals. We gather around the bread and cup, he gives his body and blood. We immerse people in water, he raises them to newness of life.

The strength of the moment that we are in is that there has never been a better time to do church differently. I believe that Jesus, through his Spirit, will continue to build his church, and the gates of hell won't prevail against it.

KEY QUESTIONS:

- 1) Who are your neighbors and how can you bless them?
- 2) What are some unique community needs that you feel called to engage in?
- 3) Who are the overlooked and marginalized people in your community that Jesus would want you to go after?

CHAPTER 3

Pastoring your Community

Level 2

The Bible frequently uses the illustration of a shepherd to describe what it means to be a Spiritual overseer to people. In the Old Testament the term overseer is often used to describe those that God appointed to oversee the people of Israel (or a nation). In fact God Himself is described as a shepherd leading His people to green pastures (Psalm 23). Isaiah 40:11 says God will, “*tend His flock like a Shepherd*” (NIV). There are also several rebukes in the prophetic books to the Shepherds of Israel for the way that they led the people and the nation.

In the New Testament, this theme continues with Jesus referring to Himself as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for His sheep (John 10:14). When the New Testament refers to pastors, such as Timothy, it is usually in the context of a citywide church. There was no such thing as the Baptist church of Ephesus or the Pentecostal Church of Ephesus. There were no denominations or even individual non-denominational churches. There was only The Church of Ephesus.

I realize that it would be easy to dismiss this because it just seems unrealistic in today's culture of church. I am not making a case here for one citywide or national church. What I want to emphasize is the responsibility of every church to be connected to and to shepherd their community.

When a person comes to me to express that they want to plant a church, I always ask them “why?”. The “why” is more important than the “what”. We do not need any more preaching posts called churches that are led by people looking for a group to preach and teach God’s Word. What your city needs is a Spirit-empowered family of Christ followers that are passionately committed to bringing the Good News of the Kingdom of God into every part of community life.

Pastoring a city is about being engaged, embedded, and involved in the life of the Community. It is attained by gaining **INFLUENCE** and value to the Community. It is important to have the heart of the Good Shepherd, Jesus, for your city as a church. Are you willing to lay down your life for your city – to live sacrificially for your city?

Pastoring a city means that a church is committed to interconnecting their mission, ministry, and activity to bring the influence of the Kingdom of God to that community. The Church that Jesus created and empowered is not meant to hang out in buildings for a few hours every week (or a month) while professional pastors provide services for them and their family to be comfortable in their faith.

*“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd”
-Matthew 9:36, NIV*

People everywhere who don’t know Christ are looking for some good news. We have the Good News. What would happen if instead of having personal life and interests compete with church involvement, we would have a more strategic, intentional, and Spirit led approach to life? Imagine if healthy faithful Christ followers were equipped and empowered by their church and then sent out to live like missionaries to their community in every arena of life. What would happen if parents of athletes saw their kid’s team as a mission field rather

than a competition for playing time? What would happen if Spirit-filled business people led their company to have a heavenly purpose beyond just making money and increasing wealth? What would happen if Spirit-filled students, teachers, parents, and community people filled the hallways of our schools with the love and the presence of Christ? What would happen if talented Spirit-filled people were to become an influence in music, media, and the arts? What would happen if Spirit-filled people would run for public office or partner with government leaders to address difficult challenges in our local communities?

The answer to all these questions is that the Lordship and love of Jesus would become a powerful influence in every part of community life.

CASE STUDY: Christian Heritage Church – Avon, Ohio – Pastor Jeff and Ruth Phail

What does it mean to “Pastor your Community”?

For Christian Heritage, pastoring our community means **being present**. I pastor my community by serving as Police Chaplain of the Avon Police Dept., by leading the Avon minister’s monthly gathering, by leading and organizing the Summer Lunch Program, community prayer meetings, serving on the Cleveland Clinic advisory council, and a number of other events Avon has for the city.

Pastoring the city means **making our facility available** as a voting precinct and hosting large gatherings for the Coast Guard personnel after returning from a tour. It means making death notifications with the Police as their chaplain, providing intervention in domestic disputes, and performing funerals for city officials and police officer’s families. We also pastor our city by providing resources when they have needs like a sound system, tents, tables, and chairs.

Pastoring our city means being engaged in community life and activities. Avon rarely does anything without Christian Heritage. Even something as insignificant as the July 4th Bike Parade, the city calls and asks: “Will Pastor Phail pray the Blessing over the Bike Parade?”. It helps that we provide man power, a huge sound system, water and “freezie pops” at the end of the course.

It was at the Bike Parade a few years ago that the City Council President, Craig Whitherspoon said: “Christian Heritage is the cornerstone of our community”. This is what it means to pastor the community.

You may be thinking that we skipped a bunch of information like: How? How did you get here? To me this is more than important. **You don’t get to pastor your community by default. It takes time, hard work, lots of prayer, and listening to the Holy Spirit.**

1) Listening to the Holy Spirit

If I can be real honest, I’m a doer. I just want to get out there and get to work. My original plan was to join the Chamber of Commerce and “hob nob” with the movers and shakers of the city. But something prevented me. It was like the Holy Spirit was not allowing me to join this group and it frustrated me, because I wanted to do something. In Acts 16:6 Paul and Silas traveled through the area of Phrygia and Galatia, because the Holy Spirit had prevented them from preaching the word in the province of Asia at that time. I felt the Holy Spirit say, “That’s not what I want you to do. I want you to pray and wait on the Lord and I will tell you what to do.” Prayer is the hard work of ministry and when you labor in prayer, God is able to do far more for you than you could ever do.

Psalm 37: 3-7 says, “*trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord and*

He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and He will act. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your justice as the noonday. Be still before the Lord and WAIT PATIENTLY for Him". (ESV) Like I said, I was so ready to do something, not wait and pray, but that's ultimately what it takes to pastor your city.

Unless the Lord opens the doors, they won't be opened. God wants to give you the "keys" to your city, but for that to happen you must surrender to the Holy Spirit and His plan.

2) Prayer, prayer, and more prayer!

Prayer wasn't just the precursor to us having influence in the city; it was the fabric of all that we were to do in our city. Meaning, you don't just start with prayer and then go and do your thing. You start with prayer and then keep praying while you are obeying the Holy Spirit's directives.

Nothing Happened

The direction we received from the Holy Spirit was to landscape the Police and Fire Dept. properties and we did. And nothing happened. One of the things we have learned is that these "Acts of service" and obedience to God are more like planting seeds. They don't produce immediate results. It takes time to reap a harvest. In fact, we landscaped the Police and Fire Dept. properties for three years before anything happened.

Adding Fertilizer

One year after we landscaped the Police and Fire Dept. properties the Holy Spirit led us to prayer walk Avon. I was inspired by Mark Batterson's book, *The Circle Maker* and we felt like we were to circle our city in prayer. This was a five mile prayer walk starting at our middle school, all the way through the center of town, past all the city buildings, school board offices, most churches, businesses, shopping areas, concluding at our elementary school. Again nothing happened!

I was getting frustrated. I prayed: "Father, We're obeying you but nothing is happening". We continued landscaping the Police and Fire Dept. for three years and prayer walking Avon.

Pray for the Police

We continued to pray even though it seemed like nothing was happening. Through prayer the Lord gave us an idea to show support to the Police. We discovered that National Thank a Police officer day is the third Saturday in September. We printed up a paper and presented it to the Mayor and City Council detailing our efforts to show support to the Police. City Hall was very supportive.

We printed up window decals (for area businesses) and car magnets (for citizens) that said: "Pray for the Police" and we hung a huge banner on the front of our Church that faces I-90 that said: "Pray for the Police, Thank a Cop!" This was the breakthrough that we had been waiting for. It was after this that the Mayor contacted the Chief of Police and asked him to make me the Police Chaplain. However, even that took over a year to come to fruition. If there's any advice that I can give is: "Never give up".,

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."

- Gal 6:9, MEV

We continued landscaping the public service properties, we continued prayer walking Avon, we continued praying: Lord give us favor in the community. May the Light of Jesus shine brightly; but it took years for us to build the influence that we experience now. You can't get discouraged at the lack of fruit in only one or two efforts. You have to remain faithful and keep working and praying hard.

3) Lean into community needs with the Good News

After I was named Police Chaplain, I was sent to Chaplain's training to receive certification. It was here by the Lord's

leading I met Rev. Patrick Hunt a Pastor from Berea, Ohio. We were out of state, so it was nice to meet another Chaplain from Cleveland. In one of our conversations he told me about their Summer Lunch Program.

I asked, "How did your church serve children lunch all Summer long?". He said, "We didn't. We organized one church a week to feed the children for ten weeks". This idea stuck in my heart and I couldn't shake it. When I returned I ran the idea past the United Methodist and Lutheran Pastor's and they liked it and suggested we speak to the new School Superintendent. I didn't want to go to the Superintendent because a few years earlier he all but ran me out of his office over separation of Church and state.

Well, my friends won out and we went to see him and presented our idea of feeding kids lunch in the summer. What we didn't know was that He was trying to get a grant to feed kids in the summer and he had been denied. So when we came in with this idea of the Churches feeding the kids, he was quite receptive. He asked if we had a ministerial association in Avon. We did not. He said, "If you will gather the Pastor's you can meet here at my office". And that was the beginning.

The Lord brought to my remembrance all the landscaping and Avon prayer walks that I did not think were working; But they were working, just slower than I expected. By God's grace I was able to gather all but two Churches in Avon and two things happened that day: We started the Avon Ministers Association and we gathered churches to serve lunch to kids in the summer.

The Summer Lunch Program is way more than a meal. Each church makes a gospel presentation, hosts activities, reading time (because reading skills digress in the summer- hosted by the Avon Library), craft times, and more. For the last several years each child also received a new pair of name brand gym shoes for back to school.

4) Be Consistent

The Summer Lunch program presently includes eight to ten churches, Avon city schools, Avon Library, Avon Police and Fire, most restaurants in Avon, most grocery stores, all pizza shops, as well as occasional help from the Cleveland Clinic. We receive donations from the Lions Club, Meijer, Walmart, and Community Resources. We feed approximately eighty people per day.

The “Key” to the City

Since then, Christian Heritage has been included in every event the city of Avon hosts. We assist the city with the Safety Fair (providing tables and chairs, and volunteers to run the event), July 4th Bike Parade, Super Hero Day (for terminally ill children), and the Avon Tree Lighting.

When the Cleveland Clinic came to Avon, the Hospital President asked the Mayor who she should have on the Advisory Board and He said: Pastor Phail. Christian Heritage is the only church on the Advisory Council.

We continue to pray and wait on the Lord. We continue to prayer walk Avon and the apartments where we serve the Summer Lunch. The Lord truly has blessed us and given us great favor in the Community. Not a week goes by that we are not involved in some city function whether it's praying at the Memorial Day Service, the 9-11 Service, July 4th Bike parade, Super Hero Lunch, or pinning Veterans on Veterans Day. I am at the Police station weekly giving an inspirational talk, providing informal counseling, praying with sick officers, or rallying police officers for the summer lunch program. Pastoring your city is not something you can do, only something God can do through you. So, do the hard work of prayer and listen to the Holy Spirit and He will give you the “key” to your city.

KEY QUESTIONS:

- 1) Where is life lived in your community?
(ie. Schools, sports, arts, civic leaders, businesses, emergency services etc...)
- 2) Who could you have conversations with in order to learn about community needs and community life?
- 3) How can your church be more engaged in community life?

CHAPTER 4

Revitalizing Your Community

Level 3

Who is responsible for the health and welfare of your community? Depending on who you ask, you will get a lot of responses. Some will say that it's the responsibility of community leaders and organizations such as mayors, city council, police, housing development corporations, businesses, schools, and/or social service agencies. Others will say that it's the citizens themselves that are responsible for the condition of the city. But, what would God say? In Jeremiah 29:7 God instructs His people to, *"seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper"* (NIV). He also spoke through the Prophet in Isaiah 28:7 and said, *"Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings"* (NIV)

CASE STUDY: Chillicothe First Assembly of God – Pastor Shaun and Annie Howard

Revitalizing a Community with Purpose

This chapter is about more than defining what a community is. It is about what it looks like to revitalize a community. Bringing new life and regenerative principles to a community through the very present and very practical Body of Christ

uniquely written into the story of a city. Think of the Body viewing a city from atop a Jeremiah 29:7 vantage point. Imagine the joy and peace that has been tucked away behind the door of us seeking the welfare of our cities that we've been strategically settled into! What does that seeking look like in the vein of revitalization of a community?

Discover what is lifeless

Seems like a melancholy place to begin, but it's without a doubt the most strategic place to spark a revitalization. The community that you have been called to has a rhythm of life. That rhythm is the only song you can hear playing on the surface. The same melody flows through the coffee shops and the courthouse. Chords and notes that to the passerby would seem to be the anthem of existence for your community; yet underneath that tune of what is there are echoes of a song that once was the soundtrack of strength for that community. This is where you start the revitalization because you're not a casual passerby, this is the community that you're called to! This is where you have to look for the welfare of the city because your welfare and that of your family is directly tied to the discovery. Layer by layer and stanza by stanza you'll find where the song lost its source. In that moment, you will begin to both identify and mourn the brokenness of the once loved life song of your community and you will have taken your first step into this assignment of helping to shape a culture that becomes a community of hope.

Brokenness opens the avenue for activity.

Our bookshelves, tablets, and conferences are replete with activities to try. Most have great testimony to their success in a weekend of growth or a project that produced measurable results. Those all have their place and without question would create soundbites of celebration, but community revitalization is writing a story of sustainability and not soundbites that fade all too quickly. Where are the lifeless areas of your community? Where are people living in brokenness and are

you willing to be broken alongside them so that you can be a path to the hope that they thought impossible since the music stopped?

When my wife and I moved to Chillicothe, Ohio we were complete strangers to every aspect of our new city that we were about to call home. We didn't know any of the people and were completely in the dark about the vibrant role that Chillicothe had in the history of Ohio. This city carried the old Shawnee Native American word for being the "principal town" where the leader of the Shawnee nation would live. Living up to its name, the town was of great historical significance in the State that stands alone as having scripture forever etched as a motto - "With God all things are possible!"

However, the city we moved to had a different melody. There was apathy and apprehension. Crime seemed to be increasing and a highlighted stanza was the increase in opioid addiction. There was a growing number of women who were listed as "missing" and that story line began to envelope the city with a feeling of hopelessness. The community of faith seemed to be separated and at a loss as to how to approach the growing brokenness. Brokenness doesn't care if you see it or not. It just keeps widening its separating arms until it rips a community apart. That's where you must step in with the focus of Jesus.

Step into the vacuum of hopelessness and weep for the brokenness.

In that moment, you should feel overwhelmed. There in the moment of frailty you'll find the strength of God more discernible than at times of feeling amped and adequate at your favorite leadership conference.

Begin to map out the areas that are broken. Write them down and include not only where they are sinking in the quicksand but what gave way to position them in that hopeless spot. This is where you have intentional conversations with

what I call the “R.A.’s” of the community. The R.A.’s are the radial arteries. This is that artery in your wrist that is the go-to location for finding the pulse of how the body is functioning. The R.A.’s in your community will each have a different reading but converging on the same prognosis of the community. For me, they included some of the following:

Education: School nurses, teachers, bus drivers, & counselors. They will tell you the brokenness in statistics of children living with grandparents or couch surfing through high school. This is where you will hear the numbers that fill in the blanks of hunger needs, depression battles, and academic unpreparedness.

Government leaders: The mayor and city council members will tell the story of their wards and the general challenges facing the city to move forward. You’re not in this conversation for political warfare, this is a discovery assignment of community brokenness. Listen to where their heart breaks in reciting the hopelessness and cry with them as you uncover the fractured pieces of the place you both call home.

Safety Services: The local police departments, fire departments, and health care. As with the previous two R.A.’s, build relationships where possible. The conversations within these service personnel will narrate the story of statistics that show rising hopelessness. Overdoses, homelessness, crime and crisis will surface and you will begin to see how vastly the music has changed.

Business owners, musicians & entrepreneurs: These are going to offer the biography of dreams in the city. The call to plant a business within your community is a glimpse of cultivated ground that God has made ready for the potential of new life and sustained production to take root.

Clergy with longevity: Talking to those who have invested years of speaking to the obstacles. Their stories will unveil the story of adversity and grace. At the risk of being biased, I believe that Pastors give a fuller printout of healthy seasons as well as arrhythmias of community life. Lean in and listen. Within the walls of these conversations you may well make some of the most vital relationships that will contribute to your longevity as well. While this is not an exhaustive list it should serve as an origin to instigate a pursuit of identifying the lifeless sections of the city. We all want the city that we've been called to serve to be dreaming God-sized dreams and vibrant in the sounds and image of life, but the avenue to drive dreams forward will always begin in the identification of where your city has lost its breath.

Discern who is displaying life

Growing up in Kentucky, a familiar morning enjoyment on the farm of a grandparent was a feast on the table for breakfast. The food was packed to the gunwales with all of the time-honored country staples. Gravy, cat head biscuits, bacon, fried potatoes, honey, jelly and sorghums, tomatoes, and of course over-medium eggs that had been cooked to perfection in bacon grease. The table was full of life! Everyone was telling a story, catching up on the news and talking about the plans for the day. We were enjoying an amazing meal but it was a magnet to what was really taking place. We were synching up with one another. The plans and stories were revealing who we were and what we were intentional about accomplishing together. There was team dynamics taking place around a plate of biscuits and a platter of fried eggs.

Those eggs became an illustration for me that I still carry and apply to so many areas today. In preparing the eggs, my great-grandmother taught me a valuable lesson about brokenness. I know the common adage about having to "crack some eggs in order to get an omelet", and while that's good on its own for application it is not the lesson I learned at the skillet. When

my Granny cracked the egg and it plopped into the skillet there was a piece of shell that fell into the egg as well. She went right to work to get it out. Instead of using a utensil, she picked up half of the broken shell that she had laid to the side. I watched her place that near the piece of shell and it almost jumped into the broken half. I'm not sure the science of how that works, but she looked at me and said - **"Sometimes only broken things can help other broken things out of a mess."** That piece of wisdom became a lesson that I still use and enjoy the perspective of today.

When you have areas of lifelessness identified, the next step is to **find those who also recognize the brokenness and show the passion to display life.** This is relationship building with intentionality. The intentionality is in finding those who have a dual reality stirring on the inside of them. They have a love for the city you call home and are just as broken over the lifeless realities of the community as you are. Secondly, they understand that they are not the cure but rather have the pleasure to contain the cure. This is crucial. These people will be from different areas of influence and vocation yet purposefully sown into the fabric of your community in the season of now.

In Chillicothe, Annie and I spent 7 years pouring into the life of a developing congregation and at the same time falling in love with a community that we were called to serve. Falling in love with our community began to turn the spotlight on others who also shared that same love and refused to sing lyrics from the playlist of collapse. In that seventh year the eggshells began to find each other in the middle of the mess. I had developed great friendships and regular conversation time with people in education, government, business, medicine, safety services, and clergy.

Those conversations began to streamline around the "how" we could step into the varied areas of brokenness in our city. We determined that while hosting community church

services were enjoyable and generated bursts of excitement, they were not in-grafting enough to do the heavy lifting of revitalizing. With intentionality we began to discuss how we could strategically leverage the church and community leader's strengths to heal fractured pieces.

These friendships and conversations in 2012 allowed something beautiful to take shape: Hope Clinic. In January of 2013, a free health clinic launched in our city. The idea was to be a home mission that was not tied to any one particular church but rather an established presence of Jesus in tangible existence to offer care to those without insurance. We had a large part of our community whose incomes were not low enough to have Medicaid assistance and yet were not financially able to afford the already high and rising cost of healthcare insurance. We had physicians and medical staff in most of our churches who stepped forward with willing hearts to dedicate time and talent to this clinic that operates on Monday evenings. Churches and local businesses pledged support in finances as well as volunteers that would register, operate children's play areas, run I.T. departments, prayer teams for those wanting prayer, join the food bank in giving fresh produce and groceries to those visiting the clinic, and provide complete hot meals for the volunteers.

The Hope Clinic is still in operation today and remains completely faith based and community supported. The services have expanded to now offer free vision care, dental services and medication assistance programs. Each Monday is fully staffed with volunteer Physicians, CNP's, and nurses. Now, over 65 Churches and dozens of businesses in agreement with Hope Clinic's mission of faith supply volunteers to make sure that each week our community is met with the presence of Jesus at the place where they need physical care.

Look for the relationships that can birth "hope" in your community. So many amazing developments are taking root in former lifeless areas of our city. New churches have been

planted, our historic downtown is in a wave of revitalization, counseling services have been established, rehabilitation homes are emerging with success, collaboration between congregations is becoming common and the impact is evident. People speak about our city with more hope today. In 2019, Chillicothe was awarded the “Best downtown revitalization effort award for Ohio” from Appalachian Partnership for Economic Growth.

In 2020, the relationships of our city were once again called on for help during the pandemic. Feeding programs were established between our church and other congregations so that school children had 2 meals a day and families were served with groceries through the community of faith. The mayor instituted the Community Response Team that had some of the same leadership from the founding of Hope Clinic as well as community leaders from United Way, NAACP, Adena Health, and clergy. This team collaborated to stay on par of caring for our community through combined efforts. The city received the “Community Resilience Award” in November of 2020 from the Entre Con Business and Leadership Conference for instituting and living “a model of how stakeholders in a community can collaborate and generate big results.”

Dream as if your community depends on it. In the thousands of cities, towns, and villages in the United States you have been called to dream for that city that you call home. The schemes to stop the dreams will be relentless in our time too. The weariness of walking through the mess that we have all contributed to will seem overwhelming at times. In the middle of all the darkness don't forget the influence tucked away in your dreams. The revitalization of shattered communities may have a seed in the next dream you have.

Personally, you have to settle the proposition that you are called to that city as an established certainty. Everything you do will rise out of that certainty. The growth and health of the

local congregation as well as the revitalization of the city will become the vocation that you accomplish from the certainty of that calling. As a vocation, what you preach and what you put into practice inscribes an ethos through your life for the community to recognize. Living in that perspective will cause you to engage in relationships and be known as a broadcaster of Hope. That's how I believe the dreamer stays ready for the palace moments of revitalization seasons.

Joseph engaged in relationships at every opportunity. Even to the place of engaging with a butler and baker while dreaming in the dungeon. He engaged in conversations with hope, even when it seemed impossible. He always pointed to God when it seemed that everything broken was easier to point out. That consistency is what allowed him to walk through the palace doors that would eventually lead to the rescue and revitalization of more than a city - but a nation and his family! Keep yourself engaged in the life of your community because you don't want to be absent or unknown should a dream of famine take place.

Create Unity

These moments will give you beard-oil realities. That's the picture God wanted us to see in what unity looks like in the 133rd Psalm. You'll carry that beard oil into your family, your church, your business, the grocery store. That's where you pick up community authenticity because you start to see flashes of unified individuals. You get it - if even for a moment. This is why beard-oil was compared to Mt. Hermon's dew because it delivered the nutrients and possibility of life-giving soil. That's why I engage in consistent relationships and service opportunities in my community. That's why I have kept a two-year-long coffee date with fellow eggshell dreamers! It's a respite tucked away on a weekday morning that keeps us climbing the hill consistently looking for the sprouts of revitalization.

Look for the doors being built through your dreams. Challenge

your congregation, Pastor. Challenge your employees, business owner. Create an environment hungry to see the work of God on display everywhere that hopelessness has erected a billboard. You're in the city God made a way for you to be in. Make the good news clear! Dream for your city! Engage in relationships! Broadcast hope! Celebrate every time you see Jesus changing a life! Be the one made alive until you see others come to life around you!

Your city doesn't exist to enlarge you; you're strategically sown there to enlarge your city!

KEY QUESTIONS:

- 1) Have you developed a love for your city? How do you know?
- 2) Do you have intentional relationships that share tears and prayers over the brokenness and the Hope of Christ for the cure?
- 3) In what ways will your church work together with the greater body of Christ to address issues that threaten the health and future of your city?

CHAPTER 5

The Church and The Father's Heart for Human Dignity

The value that God places on every human being from womb (Psalm 139) to tomb is quite evident. Through the prophet Zechariah, God spoke,

"This is what the Lord Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other'"

- Zechariah 7:9-10, NIV

Biblical Justice originates with God Himself and is woven into the overall fabric of the Old and New Testaments. Just because the culture has reinterpreted and redefined it to accommodate social and political agendas, does not release The Church from God's mandate to make sure that every person is treated with dignity and value. God clearly instructs us to help the poor, be the healing agency of race relations, to care for the orphans and widows, and to be hospitable to the immigrant or refugee. Every church should pray about and in some way be engaged in these Biblical justice issues. To dig deep into each of these issues would take another book. However, we want to take time in this chapter to highlight *Father's Heart*, which is a ministry that addresses vulnerable children including orphans and foster kids.

CASE STUDY: Father's Heart - Directed by Pastor Paris Yanno

What is the Father's heart? We see over and over again in the Word of God that God the Father's heart is for the orphans, the fatherless, the widows, and the foreigners. God has made it clear that it is not only His heart but He has mandated His church to care for these vulnerable people groups. James 1:27 says, *"Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you."* (NLT) Isaiah 1:17 tells us to, *"Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows."* (NLT) Perhaps God in his infinite wisdom knows that if we take care of the orphan we will transform our communities.

Did you know that there are states that determine the future number of beds that they will need in their prisons based on the number of children in their foster care system? Seventy five percent of inmates in the American prison system have spent time in foster care. Sixty percent of those caught in sex trafficking have spent time in the foster care system and fifty percent of the homeless population comes out of the foster care system (Weigel, 2021). Right now in Ohio we have 15,500 children in foster care (ODJFS, n.d.). These stats and information can be overwhelming. I believe God's people want to help but the problem seems so big and overwhelming that they just don't know where to start and what to do. Let's tackle this issue of foster care by breaking it down into three practical areas that the church together can be engaged to help transform their community.

The first is through prevention. We want to prevent children from entering the foster care system. One way that we do this is by providing needed support for fragile families and families in crisis. In 2021 there were 3,495 children removed from their homes in our state of Ohio due to neglect (ODJFS).

Neglect is often times the result of struggles related to poverty. The inability to meet the basic, concrete needs of family are often a part of the equation that leads to neglect. For instance, a single mom of four small children without a support system has a flat tire and is forced to choose between getting her tire fixed so she can get to work or pay her rent so she doesn't get evicted from her apartment. If the church can provide support and get her a new tire, it helps to preserve that family.

You may be wondering how the church can get connected to families in need in their community. CarePortal (<https://www.careportal.org/>) is a great tool that can help with this. It is a technology-connecting platform that brings the needs of hurting children and families in your community to your attention. Caseworkers and school staff uncover the needs. CarePortal makes local churches and community members aware, giving them a real-time opportunity to respond to meet the need. CarePortal is designed to connect the church to the family in need so they can build relationships and minister to the family.

The simple act of a CarePortal volunteer delivering a crib to a single mom, turned into a lifelong friendship that resulted in a young mother forgiven, healed, and whole. Today that young lady and her husband are leading a ministry in their church to young people aging out of foster care. What a fantastic way to bring the hope of Jesus to those who desperately need it. Let's live out our faith and see individuals forgiven, healed, made whole, families preserved, and communities transformed.

The second area the Church can help counter the foster care crisis and transform their community is by providing intervention. The church can do this by raising up more foster and adoptive families and providing support for them. Just imagine if there were more than enough Bible-believing, Jesus-loving families to care for the children in our foster care system. What changes would take place in our communities?

Everyone is not called to foster or adopt children but we can all do something to help. Families that sacrificially open their home and their hearts to children in the foster care system should never have to do it alone. Fifty percent of foster parents quit within the first year of fostering because it is very difficult; however, Ninety percent will stay fostering for at least two years or longer if they have a good support system around them. (Promise 686).

We desperately need foster and adoptive parents but more importantly we need to support them. God has given us all the responsibility of caring for the orphans (those in foster care), He may not be asking you to foster or adopt a child but perhaps you can make it possible for someone else to foster or adopt by providing support. Here are some simple ways you can provide support: commit to pray regularly for the family that is fostering or has adopted, bring them a meal once a month, provide babysitting for them, help with yard work or housekeeping, and help with transporting children to appointments. Your support could be the factor that allows that family to keep fostering or provide a permanent home for a child which helps prevent children in foster care from being bounced around from foster home to foster home.

The third way the church together can help and transform their community is by connection. Connecting with youth aging out of the foster care system. In 2021, 750 youth aged out of the Ohio foster care system. (ODJFS). These youth are more likely to engage in risky behaviors and are more likely to experience hardships such as homelessness, joblessness, early parenthood, and substance use. By connecting and building relationships with these youth the church can provide some much needed support, stability and guidance. This is not an easy task, most youth in the foster care system have a hard time trusting people and they may even reject a loving relationship. Rush Church did not let these obstacles deter them when they felt like God wanted them to adopt a girl's

The Church and The Father's Heart for Human Dignity group home. Many of the girls in the home have started attending their youth group as well as their Sunday morning services. Rush Church has been very intentional about building relationships with the girls in the home. When the owner of the girl's group home saw what an impact it had made on the girls in the home, she asked if they would adopt their boy's group home as well. Now they are involved in both group homes. When the youth from the group homes age out of the foster care system and have to leave the group home they now have a church family that is there to support them and help them. This is just one example of how your church can make a difference in those aging out of the foster care system.

We have talked about three areas where churches can be involved in making a difference in the foster care crisis. In most cases it is not a good idea for a church to tackle all three areas, but every church should focus on one or two areas, whether it is helping to keep children out of the foster care system by prevention or raising up foster parents and supporting foster families through intervention or connecting with youth that will be aging out of the foster care system. "If ten percent of churches in every county in the country were actively engaged in foster care, it's likely that there would be more than enough for kids and families before, during and beyond foster care" (More Than Enough Together). Let's all do our part to carry out the mandate from God to care for the orphans. For more resources and information you can go to fathersheartohio.com.

CONCLUSION

Can we really make a difference in our communities? Why don't we just settle for being a healthy church and growing our congregation? Trying to transform our community seems impractical and unrealistic.

These are the questions and comments that often arise from pastors who get stuck concerning the mission of Jesus in their community. My answer is simple – “What would Jesus do if He came to your community?”

Perhaps a real-life example would help us understand how Jesus can use people to literally transform the eco-system of their community. Charles Mully grew up on the streets of Kenya as an orphan abandoned by his family. Eventually he was taken in by a family to work on their farm in exchange for food and a place to stay. He saved up his money, bought a van and started a transportation business. His business grew and prospered so much that he became a millionaire living in a gated mansion estate. As a follower of Christ and a man of prayer, he had an encounter in which God told him to sell everything he had and invest it all in the street kids of Kenya. So, he sold his business and home and started an orphanage in a remote and barren area of Kenya. He, his family and 100

orphans began to dig wells, run irrigation, and plant trees. Over many years, the extent of this effort transformed the ecosystem of the area from barrenness to a fertile and lush paradise.

Imagine what's possible if every church and every Christian began to plant seeds of the gospel everywhere they went, lived, worked, and played. Imagine if we saturated our cities and communities with the good news of hope in Jesus. I believe the fields of souls would be ripe unto harvest for the Kingdom of God. I believe new churches and ministries would emerge from everywhere meeting the needs of people and communities. I believe the eco-system of the culture would be transformed by the culture of heaven on earth.

What do you believe? May we never forget our biblically based Ohio state motto, "With God all things are possible"! Let's go make the impossible possible. Let's reach **Ohio for Jesus!**

Appendices

Appendix A

Mission Action Plan

Here is a template that can be used for your Mission Action Plan (MAP). You can also scan the QR Code or follow the link to an Excel Spreadsheet that can be used to track your MAP and how many connections that your church is having to the community.

www.ohiocmn.com/bookresources



Mission Action Plan



GOAL: Aim for 4 -6 different ways to engage community

Gospel Strategy:	Possible Discipling touches		
<u>BLESSING THE COMMUNITY:</u>	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Yearly</u>	<u>Comments:</u>
Personal / Neighboring			
Small Groups (10 people x # added)			
Community Outreaches (# x #people)			
Special Friend Day Sundays			
Community Serve Days (# x #people)			
Micro-Events (at homes or parks)			
Working with Non-profits			
<u>PASTORING THE COMMUNITY:</u>			
<u>Community Life Involvement:</u>			
Summer Lunch / Parks programs			
Schools, Sports, Arts, Social Agencies			
<u>Community Needs:</u>			
Addiction / Recovery			
Care Portal			
Elderly & Shut Ins			
<u>REVITALIZING COMMUNITY:</u>			
<u>Community Collaborative Projects</u>			
Corporate Prayer Gatherings			
Neighborhood Clean Ups / Projects			
Community Development Initiatives			
Adopt A School			
<u>Biblical Justice Ministry</u>			
Foster Care & Adoption Initiatives			
Poverty Initiatives			
Biblical Racial Reconciliation			
Working with Refugees			
Faith-Based Anti-Abortion Initiatives			
TOTALS:			

APPENDIX B

Church Multiplication Key Result Areas and Every Disciplines

CHURCH MULTIPLICATION KEY RESULT AREAS

RAISE UP PLANTERS

Discipled leaders understand the biblical and practical priorities of church multiplication as God's vehicle to reach more communities with the gospel and continually raise up new church planters.

ENGAGE COMMUNITIES

Discipled leaders compassionately recognize the strategic door our broken culture opens for impacting community influencers and hurting households and takes advantage of this by engaging communities.

PLANT CHURCHES

Through raising up new church planters and engaging local communities we will plant churches.

EVERY DISCIPLINES

Every...

Week

- Pastors, Directors & Discipled Leaders personally pray for new churches to be planted all over Ohio
- Pastors, Directors & Discipled Leaders personally choose one community influencer for focused prayer

Month

- Pastors and Directors lead in corporate prayer for targeted church planting efforts
- Church reaches ten times its average attendance via marketing resources
- Each household influences another one with compassion & service

Quarter

- Pastors, Directors & Discipled Leaders share a Testimony of Ohio church planting effort with congregation
- Pastors, Directors & Discipled Leaders each choose a community influencer for acts of kindness/blessing
- Pastors and Directors give response opportunity for God's call to vocational planting
- Church leads (or joins) a community outreach for service & evangelism

Year

- Disciples are invited to collaborate with nearby church planting efforts
- Pastor refers potential church planting candidates for OCMN assessment
- Church routinely serves one need-based and one community program

APPENDIX C

Ohio Ministry Network Organizational Identity

Mission

Developing leaders to multiply disciples of Jesus by the Spirit's power.

Vision

Recognizing a broken society is the outflow of a weakened church, the Ohio Ministry Network of pastors and church leaders seeks to awaken a sleeping giant to develop and deploy Spirit-empowered leaders for healthy, multiplying churches and ministries to see people forgiven, healed, and whole through a unified ten-year strategic initiative called Ohio for Jesus.

Values

We value **DESPERATION**

In response to staggering brokenness all around us, WE VALUE a relentless pursuit of God's presence and power via worship, repentance, prayer, fasting, Spirit baptism, Bible engagement and holy living.

We value **HONOR**

As an outflow of our love for God, WE VALUE Scripture's mandate to esteem, include and serve each

other with honor, including spiritual elders, community influencers, those in the minority, and the marginalized or suffering.

We value **EXCELLENCE**

Maximizing the effectiveness and authenticity of the Church, WE VALUE modeling a lifestyle and ministry approach marked by biblical intentionality, transparency, and stewardship.

We value **COMMUNICATION**

As Great Commission partners, WE VALUE the strategic networking of personnel and resources to communicate the gospel while modeling New Testament patterns of teaching and dialog.

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About the Author



Al Yanno has been the Director of the Ohio Church Multiplication Network (OCMN) since 2018. OCMN's mission is, "to be a catalyst to a culture of church multiplication throughout Ohio." Before serving in this role, he ministered in Youngstown,

Ohio, for 27 years. He was the Executive Director of Heart Reach Ministries, a faith-based nonprofit working with inner city youth and their families, as well as the planting pastor of Metro Assembly of God, a multi-ethnic church in the heart of the city. Al holds a Master of Ministry and a Master of Business Administration from Mount Vernon Nazarene University. He is married to Paris, and they have served together as partners in ministry during their entire marriage. Paris is the Director of Father's Heart, a ministry that equips churches to care for foster children and their families throughout Ohio. The Yannos have 6 kids (3 adopted them) and 2 grandkids. The Yannos newest adventure is planting a micro-church network called Mosaic, which seeks to raise up disciple making missionaries to saturate the Columbus area with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

