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DRIVERS

Drivers are beliefs that actively move us forward. Guiding us toward fulfilling the purpose for which God has connected us in fellowship.

Larry Neville

PC Global 7 DRIVERS

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We use the term “Drivers” because they are beliefs that actively move us forward. They guide us toward fulfilling the purpose for which God has connected us in fellowship. If we follow these, we will see continued fruitfulness in our lives and a strong heritage that can guide us to a promising future.

Larry Neville



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The First Driver: God Requires Workers

“I looked for someone who might rebuild the wall of righteousness that guards the land. I searched for someone to stand in the gap in the wall so I wouldn’t have to destroy the land, but I found no one” (Ezekiel 22:30 NLT).

God has chosen to use *people* in His plan on the earth. God never forces His way in, demanding our allegiance as a tyrant would. Instead He calls with gentle patience. We come to the recognition of Christ because the Spirit draws us to Him. We are usable when we answer His constant beckoning. *Workers* responding to the call of God to reach the lost. God chooses to use faithful Christians to harvest lost souls. Humanity hurts because it needs the healing of Christ. Jesus commissioned His followers to connect with these people.

I believe that if Jesus were to stand in the midst of a crowd of believers today, he would say many of the same things He did to His disciples in the New Testament. Jesus saw that the world needed to be reached. As He passed through the streets, *“he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd”* (Matthew 9:36 ESV). He told His disciples, *“The harvest is so great, but the workers are so few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send out more workers for his fields”* (Matthew 9:37 NLT).

This tells me that there are not enough workers

Those who know God labor for His kingdom. Working to gather the harvest for the kingdom of God is not the job of a select few believers. You do not have to be strong, qualified, or super spiritual for God to use you. God looks for someone who is willing to follow wherever He might direct. God calls laborers. If you have answered the call of God, then you are *someone* who God wants to use.

Anxiety and fear have no place when answering God's call. God always equips those whom He calls. Bringing people to Christ does not require convincing rhetoric, superior musical skill, or superior use of technology; Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit sufficiently draw people to salvation. God does not need our human prowess of persuasion to attract people to the gospel. While He can use them, our strength is founded in Him and not in our own ability. When we surrender our qualifications to God, Christ empowers us through the resources He has given. God gives talents and personal gifts that prove effective when directed by God.

The Art of Sacrifice

Laboring requires time, effort, and sometimes even blood, sweat, and tears. At times we might feel broken and tired, but God never abandons us. Faith requires sacrifice. Jesus said, *"Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me"* (Matthew 10:38 NIV).

When a rich young man questioned Jesus on what he must do to be saved, Jesus answered, *"You lack only one thing . . . Go and sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me"* (Mark 10:21 NLT). Jesus did not hesitate to challenge would-be disciples. The rich young man went away with sorrow and distress because he knew that following Christ meant sacrificing things he valued. Although Jesus does not always require us to sell our belongings, He does know what will hinder us from following Him with abandon. Perhaps Jesus saw the man's wealth would inhibit him from carrying out his calling.

The Bible brims with examples of people compelled to sacrifice something connected to their identity. God wants our identity to be established in Him and not in things that we deem important. He challenged Peter when he said to him, *"Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."* Follow required Peter to leave what he knew, fishing, and take on a new calling. Jesus challenged Matthew right in his place of work.

Both Peter and Matthew answered Jesus' call to sacrifice and felt the blessing of connection with the Messiah Himself. By earthly standards, Peter and Matthew would have probably been criticized for their willingness to give up their jobs or social status.

God challenged Saul on the way to Damascus: *“He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?’”* (Acts 9:4NIV). A Jewish leader and a prime persecutor of the growing Christian sect, Saul probably lived as an established member of the Jewish community. As a leader with the authority to convict and persecute whomever he chose, feeling the call of God upon him and answering it required Saul to give up his esteemed community position to follow the very God whose people he killed.

God sometimes uses the most seemingly ill-suited people to fulfill His master plan. Saul's participation in God's plan happened unexpectedly. Saul did not fit his calling for ministry according to earthly standards. God challenged him to give up a part of his life and take on his new role.

Jesus gives an eternal reward to anyone who sacrifices everything.

Leaders often fear challenging people to sacrifice their will, take up their cross, and follow Christ wherever He may lead. They are afraid that if someone leaves everything to engage in a ministry of sacrifice, they might fail. If God pioneers a work or ministry, it cannot fail. God sustains and brings life and new growth to ministries even if they only exist for a season.

Giving things up might lack true reward in the present, but Jesus promises a reward far better than we could ever obtain in this world. Those who offer their lives in holistic and undivided devotion to God will reap the benefits eternally through life in heaven. Suddenly the idea of sacrifice becomes bearable and even exciting.

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The Holy Spirit Chooses the Laborer

The Holy Spirit chooses laborers to engage in ministry. In Acts 13, the Holy Spirit sanctified Saul and Barnabas for the particular ministry which He had ordained. The life of a church or movement depends on people who willingly engage in ministry. The Holy Spirit selects those whom He wishes. *“You sent us to this city.”* I will always correct that statement. I have never sent anyone out to a city. The Holy Spirit has only used me as an instrument to help people recognize God’s anointing on their calling and gifts. I have recognized opportunities in cities or churches and have presented couples with the opportunity to go if they felt that the Holy Spirit had called them. God ultimately chooses laborers; pastors do not.

We do not pick people to minister; our call is to help them discover, develop, and strengthen their spiritual gifts and callings through accountability and discipleship. In gift-based ministry, the Holy Spirit nominates specific people for certain ministries. He ordains and equips them and gives them the passion to fulfill that which He calls them to do.

The Holy Spirit can choose to use anyone for ministry, regardless of age, training level, or knowledge. God uses people who, by secular standards, do not have the proper requirements to lead in ministry. In both the New and Old Testaments, God used people regardless of their own personal reputation or ability. First Chronicles 26:13 describes, “They were assigned by families for guard duty at the various gates, without regard to age or training, for it was all decided by means of sacred lots” (NLT). This passage describes the instruction on how the Old Testament Tabernacle should be organized. God instructed leaders to select men without regard to age or ability through sacred lots. They sought God for who He would provide to fulfill the roles for the Tabernacle service.

God bases His selection on the willingness of the vessel.

We will miss many of those whom God has called if we use the same processes as the world to select leaders. Many leadership books today limit who can be productive in the ministry to a select few who have leadership skills that are easily recognized. I wonder who judges whether the potential man of God has reached the pinnacle of perfection required to serve in ministry.

Would Jeremiah pass the modern test?

What about Isaiah who ran naked for 3 years?

In Isaiah 20 the Lord instructs him, “Take off all your clothes, including your sandals.’ Isaiah did as he was told and walked around naked and barefoot” (Isaiah 20:2 NLT).

Would Hosea and his wife, a prostitute named Gomer, be picked for ministry today?

What about Paul who had killed Christians?

Peter who denied Christ three times?

The Old Testament prophets were often farmers who God called to service from between the handles of a plow. Some were simple gatherers of fruit; others were king’s attendants. God can use us. The Holy Spirit equips and recruits people from within a church to satisfy the needs of that church. As evangelistically driven Christians, we want to see people get saved and grow then disciple them to fill the needs within the church. This should be the primary way we find people to serve in ministry rather than pulling them from other people’s churches. If our ministry builds on Christ and guidance from the Holy Spirit, then we should be thrilled to see the Spirit of God moving in the ministries of other people.

Likewise, God uses church ministries, such as planters and missions, to extend Christ's arms into unreached areas of the world. These ministries provide Christians with a means to carry out the specific task for which God has equipped them. This happened for Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:2-3: "While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off" (ESV). The church prepares Christians to actively pursue ministry. For Paul and Barnabas, the church lifted them up and sent them out with blessing and encouragement as their support base.

Workers Are a Result of Radical Release

I registered at age 18 for the Selective Service, America's registration of men who could be drafted into the military. With great need, the Selective Service rapidly pulled young men to serve in the Vietnam War. At the time of this writing, there is no major war and, consequently, no draft. Unlike the military, who can be more selective about who they take in, the gospel calls for any recruit who is willing to follow Christ into the throes of battle.

The gospel, a message of urgency, requires a quick delivery before it is too late. Christians cannot sit complacently, waiting for someone else to carry the message of the gospel. Time demands action. If God has saved you, then He has called you. The message is yours to carry and disperse. Sadly, churches think there is no war and no threat. Because of this, we take our sweet time in evangelism, and we are selective about who we release into the ministry, especially on who will pioneer churches.

We want only those who we feel will be successful or who will deflect fame and renown back to our church, those who we perceive as the selected with clear leadership qualities. What we really need is to get on a war footing, drafting believers into dedicated service. Changing the world with the gospel's message requires radical release.

The advancement of the gospel often involves certain losses. You may lose friends or loved ones who do not share the same values as you, your reputation, or something dear. History boasts tearjerking stories that tell of inspiring men who fought for American freedom. They sought to protect their families and the liberty for which they stood. Some of these men became casualties of war, never able to see the freedom for which they fought prevail. Today, we look back on the people who fought for our nation with honor and dignity. The fact that they lost their lives does not make them failures but quite the contrary. Their sacrifice brings them dignity and honor. We would never call them failures for this. The casualties could not convey the great cost of the battle. Loss does not automatically assume failure but rather great cost. There are some realities difficult to accept in any war. The cost was high when the Allied forces decided to go after Hitler and take Europe back in World War II.

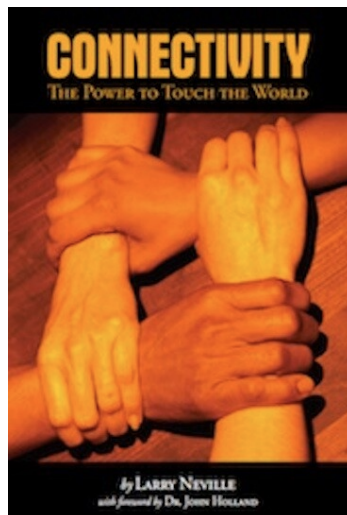
The invasion of Normandy will forever be remembered as over 9,000 soldiers lost their lives that day. The Allied commanders did not withdraw, nor did they say, “We didn’t train them well enough.” No, they were at war. If they did not gain territory, they would lose the war. Sulking would have hardly helped the war effort or those who were still fighting vigorously. Similarly, if the church sends troops to the ends of the earth, it presents great risk and costs time, effort, and sometimes loss

Should we stop sending or become so selective that only a few can go? The end goal of sharing the gospel proves more precious than that which we deem valuable on earth. Matthew 11:12 contends, “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force” (ESV). This promises that the carrying out of the message of Christ will require dedication and force, but it is gaining ground.

God requires *someone* radically committed to the gospel’s cause, *someone* who sees the need and understands the duty they have to fulfill it, and *someone* who can overcome loss in order to reap a far greater heavenly reward. Cities must be taken for Christ. Nations need people who will evangelize. That *someone* is in the church. Perhaps *you* are that someone.

Launching a ministry usually demands taking risks in faith.

Nothing about stepping out in the calling that God has prepared for you qualifies as safe or sure. Too often a congregation releases someone into ministry only to be disappointed by the lack of success in the ministry planted. The church often attributes this failure to a training deficiency or a faulty system that requires more selectivity in who they choose to go. So they hold back, raise the standard of requirements for ministry leadership, and quit sending anyone. Just because something may seem meaningless does not mean it has failed. God does not base success in the kingdom on how *we* think something should look. A friend of mine, Dan Hardway, said, “Most groups if they send ten out and seven fail and three make it, they will say we need to train better and hold back. Then the ratio of success will be higher.” My philosophy is the more who are sent, the more who succeed.



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The Second Driver: Be Spirit-Led

“I promise you this—the Holy Spirit will come upon you and you will be filled with power. And you will be my messengers to Jerusalem, throughout Judea, the distant provinces—even to the remotest places on earth!” (Acts 1:8 TPT).

Personal baptism in the Holy Spirit empowers us to do ministry. This ministry takes the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ into all the world. The Spirit of God working in and through our hearts results in a ministry that thrives with spiritual fruit.

As in any denomination, traditions and rituals of man’s agenda litter the Pentecostal movement. People often think Pentecostal equates to a style, a method, or emotion when it really has nothing to do with style or aesthetics and does not refer to a culture or a personal preference. Whether a preacher uses five points in his sermon or worship includes a drum set does not determine whether a church is alive. A contemporary church might accuse a traditional church of being dead because they do not shout enough, and a contemporary church might be accused of radicalism. The truth is some people eat fast and some eat slowly. Some people are extremely emotional while some are not.

Preference of worship style or preaching methods has nothing to do with the Holy Spirit, who is comfortable in any setting that seeks Him earnestly. Whether dancing to Indian worship music in India or with the African drums in Kenya, God can be present. The preacher may be enthusiastically running down the aisle and shouting as he preaches or sitting on a stool speaking calmly. Pentecost must be separated from personal or historical style and culture. The ministry of the Holy Spirit and not about our own methods of worship.

Holy Spirit and Fire

We find the first statement on baptism in Matthew 3:11, proclaiming that it comes with the Holy Ghost and fire. Many people seem to have the Holy Spirit but not the fire. This baptism is not a controlled fire for warming a few cold saints but a consuming fire that sets ablaze the spirits of humanity. Hebrews 12:29 insists, "For our God is a consuming fire" (NLT). God is not tame; He wants to zealously occupy a believer's full devotion. He gives the baptism of the Holy Spirit freely to those who seek it, burning as a passion within the heart to accomplish the will of the Father.

Heightened concern with the secular perception of the church has caused people to crush the evidence and excitement of the Holy Spirit. Somewhere in history, the idea of being acceptable to the world has crept into the church's psyche. Attitudes have shifted causing a detached attitude in the church of Christ. When someone is ablaze with God's consuming fire, people view them as a fanatic. People have control issues. We want to control the Holy Spirit while the Holy Spirit wants to control us. The Spirit requires change in the hearts of those who believe. The pure and holy Spirit of God cannot dwell in a filthy house built by man. The Holy Spirit burns and cleanses the impurities from those whom He indwells.

Spirit Driven and Spirit Led

We are naturally so contrary to goodness that it can only be through God's Spirit that we can offer a glimpse of who God is. The stain of sin saturates us until Christ washes us with His redemptive blood. Knowing this, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another" (Galatians 5:25 ESV).

The Holy Spirit works constantly in us to accomplish the Father's will. Ephesians 3:20 affirms this power that transforms our lives: "Now glory be to God! By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope" (NLT). Through prayer, God gives us power and uses us more effectively in His service. As we allow the Holy Spirit to overhaul our minds, speech, and deeds, Christ's beauty shows through our mess and strengthens us. God will only "do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20 ESV) when we continuously submit to the Holy Spirit.

The Nature of the Holy Spirit

When we think of the Holy Spirit's nature, we often associate Him with the image of a dove. We know the story where John the Baptist baptized Jesus, and as He came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit landed on his shoulder as a dove. A voice came from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17 ESV). We assume the Holy Spirit's nature like a dove, with an extra measure of gentleness.

The meek and mild dove only exhibits one aspect of the nature of the Holy Spirit. The idea that the Holy Spirit will always be manifested in a soft, dove-like way presents an incomplete picture. The dove is not to show the gentleness of the Holy Spirit but more so to show that the Holy Spirit of God can be easily grieved.

The nature of God in the Old Testament and the nature of Jesus in the New Testament help us understand the nature of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. When writing to the Corinthians Paul says, "By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you . . ." (2 Corinthians 10:1 NIV).

Gentleness only conveys a portion of Christ's nature. We also know the Holy Spirit provides gentleness in the fruits he entrusts to the saints. So I am not saying that the Holy Spirit is not gentle or that the dove is not a figure of the Holy Spirit. Although vital, the gentleness of a dove lacks the full picture and does not give us a complete understanding of Him or His nature.

I have come to understand we become like the god(s) we serve. A pastor from Madras told a story about a man in India who his father, a preacher, witnessed to. The Hindu man told him that he lived with four wives. When the preacher asked him why he, a poor man, kept so many wives, the man answered, "My god has many wives, so why cannot I have four?" This man provides a perfect example of how influenced people can be by the god they worship. The gods of religion are all-consuming; even a false religion requires a person's total devotion.

If worship of false gods requires emulation, how much more does God require it. Worship demands knowing the nature of God so we can emulate Him to the world live in. If the church only views the Holy Spirit in the form and nature of a dove, that is the only nature we will take on. We will be soft, gentle, and defenseless to the influence of the world. For some reason, many Christians have latched on to this as the only important attribute of God, believing it is the only way to be a Spirit filled Christian. Their prayers, worship, and evangelism show this. The overall attitude of the church takes on a passive nature. God's proven character goes beyond the unbalanced portrayal we have assumed.

I want this God to go before me into my future.

In the Old Testament, Moses spoke to the children of Israel about going in to take the Promised Land. He acknowledged that the nations were greater and stronger than they were with large cities that had fortified walls built up to the sky. He said the people were strong and tall, “So I want you to know today that it will be the Eternal your God who will go across *the Jordan* ahead of you. A blazing fire, He'll destroy those nations” (Deuteronomy 9:3.Voice). Here we see the actions of God toward and on behalf of His people. He moves as a consuming fire. He reveals himself as a blazing fire. I want this God to go before me into my future. This is the Holy Spirit of God I want as I go fight against the tactics of the devil.

As we look through the Bible, especially in the book of Acts, we do not see the Church of Jesus Christ displaying only gentleness and timidity. To understand this, let's look at what happened to the people in the book of Acts as they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter gives us the first picture. Now remember a few weeks before, Peter had denied Jesus three times. Because of this instance, Peter felt great fear and shame. Having received the Holy Spirit, Peter displayed boldness and excitement at God's work through the Spirit in the hearts of believers (Acts 2:14). What happened to Peter? Standing before this mob of people who had recently crucified Jesus was not a dove-like characteristic; it was an act of boldness, power and raw courage. Here we begin to see the nature of the Holy Spirit.

Peter's vigilance and authority was not the result of previous training or confidence in his own human rhetoric but the obvious overflow of the Holy Spirit within them. The religious Sanhedrin council noticed the intensity of Peter and John's passion for the gospel. Acts 4:13 states, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus" (ESV). Yes, they had been with Jesus, but there was more to it than that. They were with Jesus for three and a half years and did not have this boldness before. This boldness came from the baptism of the Holy Spirit. God's power came into their lives showing through them in a newfound boldness. Acts 4:31 describes, "And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness" (ESV)

Strength, power, and courage are all attributes of the personality of the Holy Spirit.

Through the Holy Spirit, people who are weak become strong; people who live in fear begin to live in faith; people who are timid become bold, and the passive Christian becomes aggressive.

The Bible reveals the nature of God so we can become like the God we worship. Peter and John had become like Jesus, so much so that the religious elders had to recognize that they had been with Christ. Oh that the world would say that about church leaders today, that they have been with the God of the Bible.

Many people want to make God what they want Him to be. They want to design and tailor the Holy Spirit to fit into the present day religious systems and be acceptable. It all comes back to our perception of who should be in control. Do we control the Holy Spirit or does the Holy Spirit control us? Trying to control the Holy Spirit brings us nothing but defeat. His power is far beyond our grasp. The Holy Spirit moves with passion and fervency like a fire burning up the brush in its path. When a fire is big enough, it cannot be controlled. A fire consumes and burns up the perishable material, leaving only ash and dusty remains. For things that are imperishable, a fire brings refinement. We want a God who is a consuming fire, who refines us and removes that which cheapens our value.

The Third Driver: Radical Evangelism

“It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: ‘There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent’” (Luke 24:47 NLT).

What you believe about evangelism will affect your vision. According to 1 Timothy 1:15, “Here’s a statement worthy of trust: Jesus the Anointed, *the Liberating King*, came into the world to save sinners, and I am the worst of them all” (VOICE). We firmly believe that God’s purpose in the earth is redemption. This is the core value of our heritage. Knowing this absolute, that Christ saves and redeems those who believe, the work of the Spirit urges us to engage in evangelism that is radical.

Jesus Was Passion About Evangelism

Consuming passion for the evangelism of the lost motivated everything Jesus did and said. He felt so strongly about the believer’s call to reach the secular culture that He commissioned them to do so in Matthew 28:19-20. To his disciples it was a definite command. Evangelism is not an optional accessory to our life, but the heartbeat of everything we do.

Evangelism Requires Action

Christians often receive a negative reputation for their standoffish piety, only mixing with the world in condescension and judgement. Radical evangelism does *not* mean over eagerly addressing the unbelievers’ sin but reaching them in their sad state and inviting them to new life in Christ. Our job in evangelism is to be the gentle character of the Holy Spirit while He cleanses and convicts. Unfortunately, as sinful humans, we often develop an imbalance in how we interact with nonbelievers. For this reason, we need the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives to convict us when we lose sight of our Christian love.

Jesus Christ offers the best example of love, loving far beyond the boundaries by which the popular culture of His day restricted Him. He loved the Samaritan woman at the well as much as He loved Matthew the tax collector or Peter the fisherman. Culture does not determine

Although God's attention has always been on Israel, He has always been inclusive in His desire to save the nations. As the parable conveys, saving the lost requires dedication and drive to go where most people fear to go.

Christ chooses to love.

Just as in the New Testament, culture puts limits on who we can love. The telemarketers, politicians, and marginalized are out of bounds of society's love. Even worse than society's protocol of who we should evangelize is that of the church. Regrettably, the church often limits the love of a transcendent God. If Christ overlooked cultural differences and popularity shouldn't we? Christ has so graciously extended His arms on the cross to show His love for us. Romans 5:8 says, "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (ESV). Our sin did not deter Jesus from pursuing us but rather presented Him with the need. If that is not radical evangelism, I do not know what is.

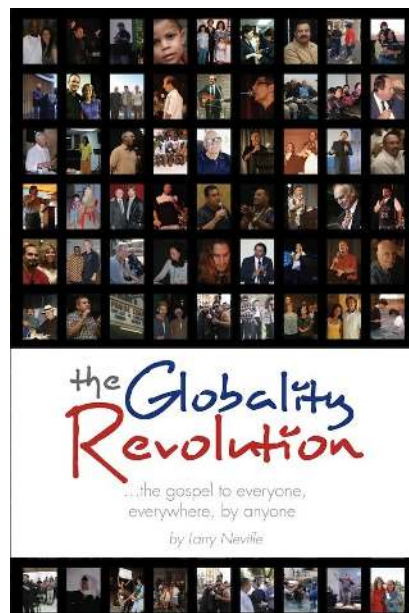
City Builders or Earth Fillers

Our Christian mission establishes the kingdom of God on earth so others might see His glory, not our own. Like a city, we are building a refuge for the lost. In Genesis 11, the people built a tower to heaven to establish a reputation for themselves. God confused the common language of the people because their mission glorified themselves. They desired recognition. Too many people are like Lot, who spent his life investing in a city of immorality (Genesis 19). In the end, an angel pulled Lot and his family out of the evil city, but Lot had already invested his time and interest into the city of Sodom. Sodom needed someone to influence them for the good and not someone who blend in to their sinful society.

Similarly, the need now is for people to step up and counteract the free flowing cultural current, especially in culture's younger generations. Issues of morality repeatedly confront teenagers, young adults, and even children. Young people face the decision of whether to blend in with secular society or build on the foundation Christ has set. Countercultural faith is rarely popular. Plenty of stories tell of people who made the unpopular decision to follow Christ.

Evangelism expands the church built on the foundation of Christ.

Contentment with culture does not create converts; evangelism does. Surely, we need to be culturally aware of the world around us, but ultimately our allegiance belongs to Christ. Perhaps methods of evangelism have changed over the years. Some means that used to be effective have become stale. This does not mean that evangelism is obsolete. Our knowledge of culture should help us to know how to reach it. When someone recognizes their need for Christ at an outreach, the size and popularity of your church does not matter. Celebrate that someone has received the forgiveness of a Savior. You are building God's kingdom and not yours.



Globality: The Gospel to Everyone, Everywhere by Anyone.
Amazon Kindle

The Fourth Driver: Discipleship

“Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ They immediately left their nets and followed Him” (Matthew 4:19-20 NKJ).

Besides the call to love, the call to follow is one of the strongest commands Jesus gives in the New Testament. Mark tells us, “And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach” (Mark 3:14 ESV). *Follow* is a tremendous concept. The word used for *followers* and *follow* in the Greek is *mimetes* which means to imitate. Taking orders does not come naturally to most people. We prefer imitation. People imitate their favorite celebrity’s hairstyle and buy clothing similar to what they wear because they want to be *like* them. They want to *imitate* people that they look up to. Jesus requires a similar kind of imitation. In order for a Christian to bear the name of Christ, they must show that they follow him both on the outside and the inside. Jesus captures this in His command to follow Him.

To truly imitate Christ as Matthew 4 commands, we need to connect with those around us. Being a *fisher of men* removes us from our previous vocation and gives us a new purpose of harvesting the souls of the lost. We do not give up our current jobs, but rather we view our Christian mission as our primary occupation. We are followers and fishers first. We follow the leading of Jesus through imitation and proactively emulate His example of outwardly engaging the world around us. This is called discipleship.

God works through discipleship in the heart of men and women, causing deep-founded transformation. The church can fail in discipleship, but the Lord uses it to establish a firm spiritual foundation in believers and to build the church. The mission of discipleship is far more than a system and more profound than any kind of book or manual can convey. Discipleship multiplies ministries and helps people establish the core values of their faith. A strong sense of one's missional calling flows naturally out of a true understanding of discipleship. Moving into a place where you grow, develop, and fulfill your purpose in Christ while ignoring discipleship is difficult.

What does it mean to be a disciple?

Following Christ interactively implies discipleship and imitation. Discipleship requires serious devotion to Jesus Christ. Christ occupies the entirety of our lives when we persistently surrender ourselves to Him. Matthew 16:24 shows this: "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me'" (KJV). Personal mission intertwines with God's mission. Disciples must fully sacrifice to the will of God to effectively follow Him. The Holy Spirit empowers us to reflect Christ through gentle conviction and instruction. We need to understand what discipleship entails as Christ and the Holy Spirit work in our lives. Using them as a model, Christians can encourage and strengthen other believers.

Blessing comes in true commitment to Christ. If we are honest with ourselves, we are happiest when we entirely dedicate ourselves to God with obedience and love. Following Christ does not necessarily yield joy from physical comfort, although it can. Christ satisfies us when He occupies our primary focus because we see His work in our lives. When a rich young man asked how he might attain eternal life, "Jesus told him, 'If you want to be perfect, go and sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me'" (Matthew 19:21 NLT). Possessions would not ultimately make the young man feel fulfilled.

Jesus told His disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?” (Matthew 16:24-26 ESV). A lavish house filled with modern amenities might provide short term happiness but will not go with you when you die. True, lasting happiness comes through commitment to Christ.

Discipleship is surrender to the will of God.

As disciples, we must surrender every part of ourselves to God. Even good things must be sacrificed to Jesus’ control because they can avert our focus from ministry. We expect the will of God to bring blessing, prosperity and instant success. Sometimes it might, but at some point, God will direct us in a way that our flesh will not like. If you have not yet desired to resist God’s leading, just continue the discipleship journey and you will.

Jesus told Peter, “The truth is, when you were young, you were able to do as you liked and go wherever you wanted to. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will direct you and take you where you don’t want to go” (John 21:18 NLT). Jesus referred to the direction Peter’s life would take as he surrendered to God’s will. Peter’s future promised many hardships for the sake of the gospel.

Discipleship Sets the Example

Jesus Christ’s life serves as an example of how we ought to live. As He entered the world, He attracted many followers and disciples who followed His example. Jesus addressed the disciples at the Lord’s supper: “I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you” (John 13:15 NLT). Discipleship did not end with Christ’s death; as time elapsed, the testimony of Jesus’ life through scriptures and word of mouth spread throughout the world. We still need this fervent following of Christ today. We gain this through study and imitation of Christ and wisdom gleaned from seasoned believers.

Discipleship imparts spiritual wisdom to those needing guidance. It requires setting a standard and working with others to achieve it. Christ places leaders within the church to encourage people in their Christian growth. Offering godly accountability is not just for some; we all have a duty to disciple one another in love. Our actions should be the natural outflow of the Spirit at work in our hearts. 1 Timothy 4:12 commands, “Be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” (NKJV).

People learn integrity through observing someone’s actions. We teach what we are. Discipleship requires godliness that translates into everyday outward living. You cannot disciple others without being an example for them to follow. The church needs this today. Paul tells the church of the Thessalonians, “You received the message with joy from the Holy Spirit in spite of the severe suffering it brought you. In this way, you imitated both us and the Lord

As a result, you yourselves became an example to all the Christians in Greece. And now the word of the Lord is ringing out from you to people everywhere, even beyond Greece, for wherever we go we find people telling us about your faith in God. We don’t need to tell them about it” (1 Thessalonians 1:6-8 NLT). God works through discipleship to develop a camaraderie that encourages us to live as righteous examples. Discipleship does not tell people what to do but shows them how to seek the wisdom for themselves.

What is the process of discipleship?

Disciple making only comes from genuinely wanting to see another fulfill his or her destiny. It begins in the heart of the mentor and transpires in a proper growth environment. The church must cultivate an atmosphere for disciples to develop and grow through ministry opportunities. As a disciple grows through the guidance of a more mature believer, their effectiveness in the church and in ministry deepens. Developing believers who are passionate about seeing spiritual growth in their lives and the lives of others creates long-term vision for the kingdom of God. God uses us when we are willing to be molded through godly counsel.

Discipleship is a commitment to impartation

Personal interactions pass on spiritual wisdom. Paul refers to this in his letter to Roman Christians: “I yearn to come and be face-to-face with you and get to know you. For I long to impart to you the gift of the Spirit that will empower you to stand strong in your faith” (Romans 1:11 TPT). Paul recognized the value of letters but understood the need to be with the Roman church to pass on blessings.

This is the law of impartation: “So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us” (1 Thessalonians 2:8 NKJ). The way we live displays what we value to those whom we disciple. You impart whatever you are as a Christian to others. Whether our actions are shameful or reputable, people around us carefully observe our lives. This could be to our blame or God’s praise. If we live righteously, the Holy Spirit changes us to mirror Christ’s image

The work of the Holy Spirit cannot be seen, but you can examine its effects. We do not understand the process of impartation because it is the sovereign work of God. In this, our lives are profitable for God’s kingdom in both ministry and evangelism. If our Christian walk is stagnant, lacking new growth, we give no contribution those who need disciplined around us. Our stuffiness could hinder their growth and cause them to be stale as well.

Discipleship requires more than reading a book, attending church, or learning methodologies. The mysteries of God involve spiritual impartation. In the Old Testament, discipleship came through working under a superior and receiving blessing from his hand. In Genesis 48, Joseph brought two of his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, to their grandfather, Jacob, for a blessing. In his old age, Jacob’s eyesight had deteriorated. Tradition required Jacob to pass on the family blessing to the elder of the two boys. Despite Jacob’s blindness, the Spirit would discern between the boys and choose the one best qualified to carry the family heritage. The elder son would be the one to receive the right hand and the superior blessing. The Spirit of God indwelled the old man, giving him the power to confer grace and to transmit spiritual destiny. As he laid his hands on the boys, he crossed them putting his right hand on the youngest. When Joseph corrected him, Jacob replied, “I know it my son” (19). The blessing had transferred to the youngest son.

The secret of making disciples.

The marvelous, God-given power of a person to pass vision and purpose to another proves critical in discipleship. Our ability to mentor another person only comes through the discernment of the Holy Spirit. Following His death and resurrection, Jesus visited the disciples, vesting in them the Holy Spirit as a helper in His absence. The Holy Spirit gave them the unction to live effective lives, putting to practice the principles Christ had taught them. John 20:22 tells us, “And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (NKJ). The Spirit empowered them to teach, preach, and make disciples just as Christ had done. God chose to establish Jesus’ life only long enough to accomplish His plan for salvation. Through the work of the Spirit, the gospel lives not as a method, a system or an empty ritual but a transferring of spiritual grace. The fervor of discipleship is imparted from heart to heart. Life produces life. The key to discipleship is not found in books or manuals but in the give and take of people’s lives. Impartation calls for the personal touch of honesty and openness.

There is a personal dimension of discipleship.

Comparison sips the life from discipleship, rendering it useless and dead. God’s work in our lives brings change and repentance, and we trust that God also works in the lives of those we disciple. Discipleship is not a platform to preach our own agenda. We cannot convict people; only God can. Let’s be honest, would we really want the pressure? Yet we have such a tendency to compare ourselves with people. We compare our age, weight, size, income, homes, cars, technology, church attendance – and the list goes on – but we should never compare our relationship with Christ. Discipleship should encourage a person to discern the Holy Spirit’s voice, not convict them because of our jealousy or pride

When Jesus told Peter to follow him, “Peter turned around and saw the disciple Jesus loved following them—the one who had leaned over to Jesus during supper and asked, ‘Lord, who among us will betray you?’ Peter asked Jesus, ‘What about him, Lord?’ Jesus replied, ‘If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You follow me’” (John 21:20-22). In other words, it is none of your business what I do with him. I work with each individual personally. You put your attention into following me.

If more disciples would take this to heart, they would not compare themselves with other disciples and could devote more time to the Lord's business in their own lives.

Discipleship is a Sacred Heritage.

Wisdom passes through generations in discipleship, encouraging people to teach what they have learned to people who may not have learned it yet. Like a fountain flowing with life water, discipleship refreshes the soul and encourages spiritual growth. In a letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul wrote, "You have heard me teach many things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Teach these great truths to trustworthy people who are able to pass it on" (2 Timothy 2:2 NLT). Paul gave Timothy a great heritage, charging him to embrace it and pass it on to others. If more disciples would take the sacred heritage they received from God and continue to share the message as they received it, there would be generations of fruitfulness in the Kingdom. God entrusts us with a precious message of saving love that we cannot hoard to ourselves. So with discipleship we must reach to those who are struggling and counsel them to hear the discerning voice of the Holy Spirit for themselves

Similarly, we must be willing to let other believers disciple us. Elisha, Joshua, the twelve disciples of Christ, and Timothy are all examples of this; they were willing to follow, imitate, and receive impartation. If you really want to be discipled, you must have this desire.

The Fifth Driver: The Local Church

Jesus ordained the Church, declaring "I will build My church" (Matthew 16:18 NKJV). The New Testament mentions the church over a hundred times, mostly referring to the local assembly. The church is a divine creation, God's unique possession. Biblical texts refer to it as the church of God, the household of God, and the habitation of God.

The New Testament revolves around Jesus, salvation, and the establishing of His church. The Book of Acts is the continuation of the gospel in the world through the planting of local churches. God's purpose unfolds through the local church, which began as a local grassroots movement that spread rampantly throughout the world. To make anything real, make it local. The book of Acts tells of local churches and the spiritual explosion of similar local churches from town to town and nation to nation. All that God is doing in this dispensation rests on understanding that God's purpose on the earth centers on the local church. Thank God for every ministry that preaches the gospel and helps the needy by doing godly deeds. Their ministry is just as beneficial to the kingdom of God.

God calls His people out of the world and together into His church.

God invests incredible dignity upon the local church. Paul commands, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her," (Ephesians 5:25-26 ESV). The church is highly precious to Christ, so much so that He willingly died for it. With this truth, we should support it with vigor and dedication.

By involving ourselves within the local church, we connect with what God is currently doing in the world.

Jesus said, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” (Matthew 18:20 ESV) and “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 16:19 ESV). If we disconnect ourselves from the body of Christ, we run the risk of living a self-centered Christianity that lacks accountability and, therefore, lacks growth. Some Christians refuse to involve themselves with church because of a preconceived idea they have or because of past hurt they have experienced from a church

There is no doubt that hurt can happen even within Christ’s church. Christ is perfecting His church, but it is not spotless yet. We are still imperfect people trying to be like a perfect Savior. This will inevitably result in shortfalls. Thankfully, as 2 Corinthians 12:9 shows, His strength is glorified best through our impotence. For us to minimize the dignity of Christ’s church is unthinkable. We must always remember that Christ works on the imperfections within the church just as He convicts us about our personal faults.

The church brings to light the truth.

The local body of believers provides a willing atmosphere for Christ to build His kingdom. Without the supernatural power of God working through it, the church cannot stand in the midst of the heavy cultural current. God breathes life into the church organism. If we do not contend for God to move, we will lapse into the long line of dead denominations who have form without reality. God gives the church the mission to actively reach the lost. He commanded the disciples, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere. Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe” (Mark 16:15-18 NLT). If He is in our midst, something is happening. The local church is a hub from which ministries and missions can extend to reach the lost.

The Indigenous Local Church

The church brings to light the truth. When we give the local church the dignity belonging to it, we release thriving ministry within the congregation. Paul says to Timothy, “I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15 NKJ).

Paul obviously held the church in high esteem because it represented the truth of God in the world. The church still holds the answer to the truth the world is searching for. God's truth shows through the immutability of the church. God establishes churches, "So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Ephesians 3:10-11 ESV). The body of Christ shines truth into dark places.

Genesis 1:11 conveys, everything God created is indigenous, having life in itself.

Similarly, the local church is self-propagating; churches grow under the direction of the Holy Spirit and can breed new life through ministries or new church plants. Christ's church stands the tests of time, growing despite outside opposition, maturing, and releasing leaders to fulfill the ministries God calls them to. The local church is to be self-governing. This does not mean independent but able to govern and to solve its problems based on the discernment of the Holy Spirit. At Peter's confession of Christ as the Son of God, Jesus declares, "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18 NKJ). The work of God is sovereign and cannot be squelched. If God can create the world and cause it to grow, He can cultivate His church.

The local church should be self-supporting and generate from within itself the resources for the programs God places in it. When Jesus commissioned the twelve apostles, He told them, "Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food" (Matthew 10:9-10 NKJV).

God required that the apostles rely on Him for their personal needs and the needs of the ministry. Ministries must appropriate God as their supply source. All that Jesus has planned and was going to do in world evangelism depended upon the disciples learning the lesson He is giving here. The ministry was to support itself, sustain itself, propagate, and discipline itself. This is the beauty of the local church, which causes life, growth, and multiplication in any culture or economic environment. The church can go into any culture and survive by being self-supporting

In every economic situation, converts must be taught the importance of giving to the local ministry through tithes and offerings. These principles set a precedent of personal reliance on God for finances and fulfill God's principle that the church and its ministers should be supported by its congregation. When this truth is violated, the gospel is hindered. The devil fights giving, and especially in a poor country, feeds the lie that someone else who has more money will support the church. When a church depends on financial support from outside itself for an extended period of time, it cannot reach the level of reproduction that results in church multiplication and world evangelism.

Church members should be intent on fulfilling the financial needs of the ministry.

Just as we are commanded to value and uphold the ministry, so we are to support those who *serve in* ministry. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 says, "And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves" (NKJV). In 1 Timothy 5:17-18, Paul contends that leaders should be given an extra measure of honor for their dedication to God's service. A leader is not to be ashamed of being supported by the gospel he preaches.

Acquiring Financial Resources

In the Old Testament, Israel's king, David, would dedicate a portion of the spoils of war to God for use in the temple (see 1 Chronicles 26:26-27). The dedicated things came from Israel's victories and conquests in war. In this way, God maintained the work in the temple through His priests. Here is the principle for the building and maintaining of the work of God.

We dedicate a portion of our increase to the Lord. Evangelism builds the kingdom of God and renews its supply. Conquest in the spiritual realm supplies the house of God by bringing in new people who God can use to supply the needs of the church. Kingdom victories in evangelism sustain the work of God and cause new growth and resources in a once struggling ministry.

God intends that growth through evangelism would sustain the church.

God fills the needs of His church. He does not need beggars or scare tactics to support His work. Some churches and ministries will do almost anything to raise money for the work of God. Often these strategies have brought reproach against the church. All God needs is a group of people who have had the power of sin broken in their lives, people who have been transformed by the Holy Ghost, washed in the blood of Jesus, and delivered from the power of covetousness.

A sign that people have received the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not church attendance only but also their pledging of financial support. A clear indication that church members are hearing the message is that they support the gospel. Matthew 10:11-13 shows that the ministry is supported by its members: “Whenever you enter a city or village, search for a worthy man and stay in his home until you leave for the next town. When you are invited into someone’s home, give it your blessing. If it turns out to be a worthy home, let your blessing stand; if it is not, take back the blessing” (NLT). Jesus instructs them to establish a place to preach. If the house proves worthy, believers will support the message as they come to hear. If they support the preaching of the gospel, then they are worthy to hear the gospel. He warns them not to go from house to house.

You do not beg people to support the gospel – the gospel will support itself

If the gospel we preach does not produce self-supporting churches, then there is something wrong either with us, the gospel, or the people hearing it. The Lord makes it very clear that God does not waste workers on non-supporters. A group of people who do not support the gospel are not to have a long-term ministry. The Bible makes no exemptions concerning the economic situation of the people. Anyone and everyone who receive the gospel are to support it. If we do not support the gospel, then we really are not believers in the true sense of the word.

Jesus instructed the disciples to bless those who freely gave of themselves to support the ministry and those who minister (Matthew 10:13). Paul writes to the Philippian church, telling that they have a special blessing because they gave to send him to preach the gospel: “He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold *water* in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward” (Matthew 10:41-42 NKJV). The Lord promises to bless those who support the gospel. This is a reality. God recognizes people who give selflessly to support the gospel physically and monetarily.

Reproducing the Local Church

Church planting is an often-grueling task that requires work, financial sacrifice, and enormous amounts of prayer. Difficult does not begin to describe the process of removing a portion of your church body and relocating it and watching it grow. Pioneering a church is the most difficult part of world evangelism; it comes at great cost and requires the most commitment. Few people have the desire to uproot and dedicate themselves to starting a new church. Despite the immense sacrifice of time and money that church planting requires, its rewards are well worth the initial investment.

Newly pioneered churches should work toward being financially self-supporting in their ministry. I believe in supporting churches, and our fellowship supports workers and pioneer churches throughout the world. Still, we expect ministries to work toward supporting themselves so they will be able to survive in their specific economic environment. Pioneering missionaries should take their church or ministry off outside support to see if it will function with the local income. Only then, when churches can financially uphold themselves, can we reproduce the church multiplication process of world evangelism. We must endure the hardships of church planting to see God’s full blessing. Sometimes it might seem like our ministry has failed, but God never fails. Through His supremacy, churches are planted and sustained. If a church appears to be failing, perhaps God planted it for a period of time only to be uprooted and grafted into another plant. We must never question the ways through which God chooses to work. The physical world does not always adequately convey the things God is doing in the spiritual realm.

The Sixth Driver: Fellowship

Philippians 2:1-5 presents a beautiful portrayal of what fellowship is: “Being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind” (ESV).

Fellowship is an inward connection with other believers who share the same love for God that you have. This connection translates to an outward bond. As Christians, our core values and calling to serve God immediately unites us in fellowship with other believers who are also actively serving God. Paul offers two ways for believers to engage in Christian fellowship: in humility uphold others more highly than you do yourself and seek to fulfill others' needs before your own (Philippians 2:3-4). Interestingly, Paul follows these commands for selfless fellowship with a short discourse describing how Christ chose to empty Himself, becoming like humanity (Philippians 2:5-11). With Jesus as the true model of humility, we should strive to connect with believers in fellowship, upholding them as more important than ourselves. Our approach to fellowship should be based on the selfless example of Christ who came to earth to connect with us.

Fellowship should be universally extended throughout the body of Christ and not confined by church name or denomination.

Certainly, fellowship is cultivated within specific church groups but fellowship should be centralized within Bible-believers as a whole. We gain dignity by belonging to great causes and institutions that enable us to reach beyond ourselves. Fellowship and partnering makes a meaningful impact on this world. The kingdom of God has no room for independence. We must unite with other networks and fellowships to flow in the mainstream of what God is doing now and in the future. There can be no doubt that it is God's will for ministries to work together, partner, associate, and connect in relationship. God groups his people together in families. Acts 15 shows that the apostle Paul planted autonomous churches but connected them together through his letters, apostolic messengers, and personal visits.

God initiated fellowship in the Garden of Eden before sin tore its bonds in two. Christ brought a way for fellowship with God to be possible again through the cross. The cross re-instituted fellowship for man with God, and Christ established the church for fellowship among believers. In 1 Corinthians 1:10, Paul encourages the Corinthian church to be like-minded, engaging with one another in sincere fellowship. He says, "I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment" (ESV). Church members do not seek their own but encourage others in their talents and abilities. I can't explain it but I can tell when I am with a person who genuinely wants to be active in fellowship. People try so hard to build something for themselves, but self ambition ruins the closeness of fellowship. Just as Eve plucked the fruit in Genesis 3 because of personal desire, so our own desires can ruin our fellowship with God and the church body. For fellowship to grow, we must unify ourselves in placing our love for Christ above all other things.

Fellowship must have meaning to you or it will only be a religious word.

Being with God's church sharpens our ability to live purposefully with a life that effectively seeks God's direction. When we surround ourselves with other believers, people who are also yearning for God's leading, we are encouraged in accountability to follow the path of righteousness. Fellowship with believers is valuable and desirable because it holds us to our calling in Jesus Christ. Through fellowship, we can love and serve God in our love for His church.

Fellowship requires us to join together to help the weak, the pioneer, or the struggling pastor and church by combining our efforts and resources to serve in selfless love. In the kingdom of God, we share our liabilities and our assets. Ministry success does not give reason to alienate those whom God has placed in our lives to serve and uplift. God's blessing gives us reason and motivation to impact those whom life's concerns weary. We easily overlook those who need support when we are in a time of blessing, forgetting that we might have once been in the same position as they are in currently. God gives blessing as a resource to use, consume, and redistribute. Our blessing can increase as we appropriate what God pours into our lives and use it to bless others' lives. The dissemination of the gospel happens in sincere community and not in individualism

When we release selfishness, hurt, accusation, and blame against other believers, then we are released to receive God's blessings and direction more freely. Paul instructs the Philippians, "Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves" (Philippians 2:2-3 ESV).

The gospel flourishes in an environment of unity in the church. Because of this, we must want and be willing to uphold other leaders in their preaching of God's word.



The Seventh Driver: The Call to All the World

“For ‘Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved’ But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent?” (Romans 10:13-15 NLT).

I have been enthusiastic about seeing the lost around the world saved through missions ever since my wife, Janet, and I made our first mission trip to India in 1973. From the time we went to India onward, our lives were forever changed. In 1982, we moved to Manila, Philippines to join a Sammy and Nomi Mores in pioneering a church in Mandaluyong, Metro Manila. We moved to Singapore seven years later. Since that first moment God gave Janet and I a passion for evangelism, we have been involved in church planting in many nations and have seen churches reproduce rapidly. Churches and fellowships are reproducing themselves and multiplying in cities, villages and remote places I may never get to visit. Through the patient passing of time, fervent prayer, and the power of God, we have even been able to carefully share the gospel in Middle Eastern nations. Now, teams are continually traveling throughout the world preaching the gospel and assisting in new church plants. The gospel has never turned stale; its message has remained current and needed at this very moment in every place in the world.

As churches connect with Christ, they discover their need to actively engage in missions. In fact, with one of his last breaths on earth, Christ commanded His disciples to *go* and preach the gospel in Matthew 28's Great Commission. Missions refers to the sending of believers to reach people with the good news of salvation. Our entire inheritance as people of God and the Christian church can only be understood in the context of world evangelism. The church exists by missions just as fire exists by burning. Where there is no flame, there is no fire; likewise, where there is no missions and no sending, there is no church. Every church in the world is the result of missions where someone left their home and family to preach somewhere and bring people to the knowledge of Christ.

Missions creates an ongoing task that begins with evangelism of the unsaved and continues with discipleship of new converts. Paul exhibits this same idea in Acts 15:36: “And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are’” (ESV). Paul and Barnabas had begun by preaching the gospel to unreached people, but they recognized that these people would need to build on the foundation set by their initial evangelism. The new converts benefitted from Paul coming alongside them and teaching them the profound realities of what following God meant in their New Testament context. Evangelism taught them their need for God, but discipleship showed them how to follow Christ in an intimate, personal way. Paul knew that these converts required someone who was more mature in his faith to teach them and correct them.

Sending and being sent is central to the idea of missions.

The commission to *go* has never changed. Missions has always been and will always be our command and responsibility. If you are a believer, then you are called to actively engage in sending, being sent, or both. Whether local or abroad, missions is an integral component of living out the reality of the gospel. The gospel is a message of hope for people who are destined for death because of sin’s marring stain. Without missions, the gospel is rendered useless for countless people who have not heard and do not know its life-giving properties through Jesus Christ. We have all come to Christ through hearing about salvation and believing that its benefits are applicable to us. Our beliefs should solidify our involvement in missions.

Missions is a call for urgent preparation and action.

Passivity threatens local and global missions. We have bought the lie that someone will do what we feel we cannot do. Our nonchalance has taken the edge off our effectiveness in ministry and in missions. The local church and missions work in unity, but we tend to elevate one at the expense of the other.



Today, real estate is a major issue for the church

Churches can easily fall susceptible to thinking that beautifying the facade of a church will bring unbelievers into the church and accomplish evangelism. While building a visibly pleasing church with flourishing programs is a good thing, the problem is that every generation builds the facilities needed to house their church. Yet when that generation is gone, souls are lost while the building stands as a monument to their forsaken commission. Passivity satisfies only the pride and desires of the current congregation. Beautiful buildings and well-meant programs accomplish nothing if they are not meeting the needs of believers and ministering to nonbelievers.

We are told our facilities are of the utmost importance if we are going to reach our generation. The real commodity in the church is not the physical building but the lives touched by the church and its people. God has not called us into real estate development, social programs, or education but to preach the gospel and to win souls. This is a bidding that cannot wait.

Perhaps our indifference stems from a feeling of insignificance.

We question whether our work is truly producing fruit. Thankfully, God causes our work to thrive when we are faithful to the tasks He has called us to.

Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the door of the chapel at Wittenberg Cathedral in Germany, changing the world forever. John and Charles Wesley were saved on May 24, 1738 when they walked into a Moravian Bible study while someone was giving a personal testimony. Two young boys, Billy Graham and Cliff Burrows, stopped by a tent meeting in North Carolina and were going to leave when an usher encouraged them to stay. As a result, both got saved that very night. Our faithfulness in missions, even in seemingly insignificant tasks, can produce a future blessing that we might not be able to conceive. Our smallness is strengthened through God's infinite power.

Just as God gives Christians the directive to go and preach, so He also intends for the body of Christ to monetarily support the work of the missionary.

Although we often emphasize those who pioneer and leave everything to fulfill God’s call in their life, the missionary’s work is made possible by the prayers and regular support of the church. Partners and senders are integral to missions. With just a causal look in the Bible, we can find that the support role holds a very prominent place in Scripture. In Titus 3:13, the apostle Paul urges Titus to support Zenas and Apollos in their missionary venture. He continues in 3:14, referencing the need for believers to bring aid to missionaries in need: “And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful” (ESV). Similarly, John commends Gaius, one of the church members, for his faithful entertaining of missionaries whom he did not even know (3 John 1:5). John urges Gaius to continue in his hospitality, saying, “For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth” (3 John 1:7-8 ESV).

In the kingdom of God, the attitude we have toward the workers we send out is critical. They need to feel and know our support both tangibly in financial giving and intangibly through prayer and encouragement. John recognizes the effect that the attitude of the church can have on missionaries. Just as John praises Gaius in his servanthood toward the traveling teachers, he chastises Diotrephes, who refuses hospitality to those who travel and teach (3 John 9-10). We must be in a state of awareness, readiness, and sensitivity to the needs of pioneers. The redemption of the world hinges equally on the senders and the sent. The responsibility does not rest solely upon the shoulders of those who leave their families and homes but equally on every believer, both those who go and those who send.



The role of the supporter is just as important as the one who goes. Uprooting one's family to live in an entirely new environment is a risk, but that risk is easier when a dedicated body of believers offers care and support. I used to say that I would be willing to go if I could depend upon those who held the ropes. All too often, senders do not realize how important they are. Senders and supporters willingly give and open their home to missionaries and help them in their journey abroad. Jesus told the twelve disciples, "Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward" (Matthew 10:40-42 ESV). Both the sent and the senders are vital to healthy mission work. God blesses the missionary for his faithful service in carrying out the gospel, and He blesses the supporter for his unselfish giving to the missionary in need.



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7 Drivers to move us forward in a time of Disruption.

We use the term "7 Drivers" because churches and ministries should be organized with organic structure. As the world naturally changes, technology advances, and people mature, our movement must adapt to modern times. As long as the church keeps far from compromising the laws and heart of the Bible, it can use the technology of the world to reach the world. Change happens naturally. If your ministry refuses to bend its structure to fit our fast-paced world, it will find itself pushed to the side. God is doing new things within the church.

God uses seasons and changes to bring depth to our calling in Him. If we stay connected to our core values and other believers, God will readily use us to accomplish His plan of reaching the world's lost souls. Our 7 Drivers are in submission to the leading and prompting of the Holy Spirit. Connection with a solid foundation, that is Christ Jesus, ensures that our faith will be effective, and our mission will remain true. As He brings times of change, we must embrace it with the knowledge that He makes all things new.