



Apprentice

Come Wait Follow Go

An overview

Missiological background:

Fundamental cultural shift has taken place and is still evolving. This cultural shift affects how the mission landscape is regarded by Christian communities and how they seek to engage with the task of mission. This change is seen in a number of issues of a global, church and philosophical nature.

i. Global

Fundamental global issues are facing humanity in the next 20 years; such as environmental change; globalisation (the free movement of capital, labour and mass communications); mass migration and immigration; the rise of religious radicalism and domestic nationalism; increasing economic inequality; global economic frailty and uncertainty; an aging population in Western societies; the fluid and fragmented nature of the labour market.

ii. Church

Declining numbers attending Sunday worship and declining influence of the church upon public life; changing patterns of attendance; an aging church population - a generation out of step with the wider population; a funding time bomb with the diminishing support of a golden 'Baby Boomer generation; changing nature of the volunteer culture; church moving uneasily from a pastoral to missional focus; increasing numbers of de-churched seeking to live out their faith in ways apart from institutional religion; some growth of fresh expressions, new missional movements and pioneer leadership.

iii. Philosophical

Death of Christendom (Church no longer chaplain to a culture that shares its values and beliefs); Western culture dominated by consumerism and individualism; growing culture gap between teaching of Church and accepted norms of wider society (seen in attitudes towards sexuality and leadership); Post-modern relativist world view - truth and authority legitimised by orthopraxis (what we do), rather than orthodoxy (what we believe); increasingly self-confident and occasionally antagonistic secularist worldview; loss of religious vocabulary and Biblical literacy.



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Theological background:

Recognising the need to help people to navigate a course of authentic Christian discipleship amidst the changing Missiological landscape. This involves enabling followers of Christ to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit into a new creation, helping people to discover what God is seeking to bring to birth among his people and in the world, that speaks us the Servanthood of Christ and new creation of God's Kingdom.

The motif of pilgrimage and journey is a helpful metaphor for the discovery of such a new understanding located in the life of Jesus and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in renewing the shape and focus of God's people as they seek to respond to the challenge of mission.

From this understanding, a number of key themes emerge:

1. The recognition that discipleship is a lifelong pilgrimage, received as a gift of God in creation and lived out in the light of that understanding.
2. The importance of receiving the gift of thankfulness and living out the life of Jesus into every day, both individually and corporately.
3. Enabling people to engage with key moments in their life and how being a follower of Jesus shapes their thinking and actions at such moments (e.g. moments of decision, new jobs, progressing from one phase of life to another).
4. Allowing the promise of a renewed kingdom, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to flow into the world. Seeing change through the lens of hope, possibility, grace and love.
5. Helping people to orientate their own spiritual pilgrimage around the pilgrimage of Jesus which was characterised by obedience to His Father's will and service towards the needs of others.

Beneficiaries:

Those who are increasingly attracted towards a movement expression of Christian community. This will comprise at least 3 groups:

1. It is estimated (Aisthorpe.2013) that there are 178 million 'churchless Christians' worldwide, that is Christians who are not engaged with a local congregation. Such Christians can be described as those who have '**travelled out**' from existing inherited, settled and gathered expressions of Christian community. Such a group is often

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described as the 'de-churched'. Many of this group still seek a sense of belonging and meet regularly with other Christians. Some will locate around fresh expressions of church, or around informal, often virtual networks. Many will identify with missional movements, such as new monastic communities or with Christian mission agencies or social enterprises in providing networks of support and nurture as well as forums for the exercise of Christian ministry.

2. Those who are still engaged with inherited, settled and gathered expressions of Christian community, yet who **'seek to travel out'** in order to enrich or develop their own missional calling and to explore new forms of community life, spiritual nurture and support. This group will include a number of pioneer ministers as well as others engaged in church planting or through developing an increasingly missional, rather than pastoral approach to local Christian ministry. Others who seek to travel out, might find that their missional journey is shaped by connections with new missional movements and extra- parochial networks. There is an important constituency for those who remain connected with inherited patterns of church life, yet who seek the freedom to ask fundamental questions and explore new paradigms - those with the charism of *'not fitting in'* with regard to existing ecclesiastical structures or approaches to ministry - those who embody holy dissent or 'dreamers who do' (Arbuckle).
3. Those who are **spiritual seekers**, yet un-churched in terms of background. These might be people who are exploring a range of lifestyles and spiritual disciplines, yet who might share the values and aspirations of the Kingdom, without understanding or accepting full Trinitarian, Christian orthodoxy. They are essentially 'men and women of peace' who find common ground with many Christians, yet retain an unease and unfamiliarity with institutional and organised forms of Christian community.

Characteristics of the discipleship resource:

- *A lifelong walk* - a journey of discovery - process is as important as destination. Seen as a life-long process. Walking with Jesus everyday - focus is upon a 7 day a week discipleship, rather than upon a Sunday focus (*'Fill us up and send us out'*). Rhythm and seasons important markers on the journey.
- *Gift of thankfulness* - receiving gift of thankfulness - valuing what is - experiencing God in the present moment. Practicing thankfulness affects how we value gift of Creation



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(Environment) - the blessing of life (how we see beginning and ending of life + issues of healing & suffering) - awareness of our status as God's children (rather than striving for sense of entitlement or what we deserve). Practically celebrating thankfulness around events in life - grace at meals, harvest, new life, remembering examples from the past.

- *Defining moments* - engaging with key moments in life - enabling people to celebrate and reflect upon key life events in light of follower Christ. E.g. moments of decision and transition - new jobs, new relationships, parenthood, grief, progressing from one stage of life to another (seasons).
- *The 'now' being transformed by the 'not yet'* - living with the promise of the 'not yet' - the transforming breaking in of the Kingdom into the present. The vision of a renewed kingdom breaking into our world - 'on earth as it is in heaven'. A sense of possibility and change - offering a vision of hope, possibility, grace and love to transform the present.
- *Walking in the steps of Jesus* - enabling people to orientate their life journey around the life journey of Jesus. Looking to the example of Jesus to inspire and lead us - in particular His obedience to His Father's will and His life offered in the service of others.

Learning outcomes:

The Daily Rhythm will seek to

- i. Focus the reader more fully on the life of Jesus through examining the gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles in order to understand the call to follow Jesus in ever deeper ways into the life and power of the Spirit.
- ii. Provide a particular passage for each week of the year, comprising general insights for throughout the week along with a simple question each day to encourage daily reflection and engagement with Jesus.
- iii. Set this daily reflection within a pattern of prayer for those connecting with a small group in order to promote mutual encouragement around a shared meal and perhaps the breaking of bread and sharing of wine.
- iv. Encourage journal keeping as a way of nurturing deeper understanding.



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- v. Encourage other spiritual disciplines that follow Jesus into the life of his world and share the possibility of the new creation.
- vi. Demonstrate the command to love Jesus with our heart, mind and strength and our neighbour as ourselves, leading into action points which seek to inform minds, shape character and transform lives and communities.