

Inspiration Multiplies! – *Part Two*

Light + Life Group Conversation and Study Guide

Based on [Let the Band Play: Multiplying Disciples and Churches](#) by Larry Walkemeyer
in Light + Life Magazine, April 2021

This study is the second of two parts. Be sure to download [part one](#) as well.



Open your group gathering with prayer. You may also consider a short recap of part one of this study, highlighting any significant moments of revelation you received.

Five Essential Understandings

As I reflected on the Parisian band playing in the neighborhood, it seemed a metaphor for five essential understandings for Christ-compelled multiplication.

First, there was a passion and belief in the power of the music. These musicians believed music could change the world.

You cannot multiply what you are not passionate about! Ask any multilevel salesperson.

Steve Addison, who wrote the authoritative book on gospel movements, [“Movements That Change the World.”](#) identified “passionate, hot faith” as the number one characteristic of movements. Gospel multipliers believe in the necessity, authority and power of the gospel.

There is a rapidly growing cultural resistance to the word “evangelical.” That makes sense given some of the headline failures of those claiming that title. While

we might be reluctant to use the word “evangelical,” we must all the more boldly proclaim its meaning and priority — the good news of salvation through Christ alone!

Have we become hesitant or demur about the gospel’s power? Does Paul’s defining statement beat passionately in our heart on our ordinary days? “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes...” (Romans 1:16).

Brian Warth, the Free Methodist lead pastor of [Chapel of Change](#), is known for his fervor in sharing Christ with people from gang members to business owners to public officials. Part of his passion flows from having been miraculously released from prison while serving a life sentence during which he met Christ.

But isn't this each of our stories? We are imprisoned in our sin and hopelessness until Jesus sets us free. This changes everything for us, now and forever. This

is the music we are passionate about playing for the world.

Honestly consider Larry's question: *"Have we become hesitant or demur about the gospel's power?"*

Are you more excited or hesitant to "play your music" on the streets? Why?

Second, the Parisian musicians played from concert halls to streets. They loved when people came to the hall to hear them play, but they were adamant that the music didn't need a concert hall. The people needed the music so they went to where the people were.

Jesus could have set up a "concert hall" in Jerusalem and preached to overflowing crowds on a daily basis. Instead, "Jesus went through all the towns and villages proclaiming the good news of the kingdom..." (Matthew 9:35).

At the start of COVID-19, I read a headline in a major Christian publication, "The Church Has Left the Building." I wondered to myself, "Has she just left the building or has she been sent to the harvest field? Will she retreat to her comfort zones to wait out the

pandemic and try to return to normal? Or will the church surrender and say, 'Here I am, send me' and advance the gospel beyond the walls."

The early Pentecost Bands of Free Methodism went to the streets like Wesley went to the fields. They understood that Sunday-centric, building-centric evangelism was not what would multiply the gospel across the nation.

"Gospel" music must be played wherever we live, work, study, hang out, or play ... wherever we are in-person or online, one on one or in large auditoriums. Jesus loved individuals on the beach and in crowds of thousands. We need multiplying microchurches and multiplying megachurches to get the music to the streets.

Does your church see your "concert hall" as a non-negotiable to effectively ministering in your community? Why?

How might your church begin to see the streets as equally non-negotiable? How would that change your ministry?

Third, the Parisian group kept the music conductorless and simple. No conductor was controlling their cues, and each of the four players led at different times. They played without sound systems, stage lights, smoke machines or acoustically treated walls.

As I listened, I could not help but think of the classic 2006 business leadership book, [“The Starfish and the Spider.”](#) Jesus unleashed what was predominantly a “Starfish” organization. Starfish are an example of a “decentralized” system. If you cut an arm off of the starfish, you haven’t killed the starfish but have given birth to a new one. The life and power of multiplication is not in “one head” but in every part of the organization, in every band member. It’s life is organic, not centralized.

The people in pastor-centric churches expect the music to flow from the pastor instead of learning to play their own instruments. The more emphasis we place on conductors, the less music will reach the streets.

The Apostle Paul, though able to debate the deepest theologian, kept the message simple and transferable — “My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration

of the Spirit’s power” (1 Corinthians 2:4). He simply shared and practiced the power of the cross.

The more simple the song, the more the song will be sung. For example, how many millions of people were singing “Amazing Grace” while watching the presidential inauguration? You can play that song on the guitar with just three easy chords, G, C and D.

The Pentecost Bands were simple. They advanced often without a pastor in their midst. Did they make mistakes? Yes. Did they get a little wild? Sometimes. Did they advance the gospel powerfully? Absolutely.

Calvin Tatupu — a church planter from our church, [Light & Life](#) — would have fit well in one of those Pentecost Bands. Calvin never graduated from high school, but I meet people often who received Christ because of his life and testimony. He knew the simple power of the gospel and he shared it daily. He’s now gone home to his eternal reward.

Simplify to multiply. The more complex and controlling an organism, organization or church is, the less replicable it becomes. Institutions complicate, movements simplify.

“Specialized labor” is a manufacturing term that breaks down tasks having different people or groups focus on one aspect of the product and process. In the church however, all “instrumentalists” can “play” out on the streets. How does the clergy/laity divide in the church hold back our ability to inspire people with the gospel?

Read 1 Peter 2:9. Are you a priest or a parishioner? Are you part of a declaring body or a listening audience? Does your church take 1 Peter 2:9 at its word? Why or why not?

Fourth, there was a persuasion that ordinary people should play, not just listen to the music. These musicians believed everyone had music in them. Someone just needed to ignite the song and teach them a few notes.

Free Methodist pastors undoubtedly hold to the orthodoxy of the “priesthood of all believers” (1 Peter 2:9), but, in our orthopraxy, we fail to inspire, equip and expect it. Instead we issue call after call for the “volunteership of all believers” — just volunteer to make our latest church program work ... please, please, please.

The church in America is training people to be listeners instead of music-makers! We train believers to pass out bulletins while Jesus trained them to cast out demons. Then we wonder why believers are bored. The Pentecost Bands of early Free Methodism believed the Holy Spirit could powerfully use any woman or man who was willing and Spirit-filled.

Acts 2:3 should excite every Christ-follower: “They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.” All 120 believers

in the Upper Room received “a flame,” a fire on their head. Not just the 12 apostles, not just the men, or the talented or educated or most holy but each of them. All of them began to proclaim the glory and love of God in a diversity of unlearned languages. The Spirit empowered and led them to do something beyond their own ability.

Terry Beasley was recently ordained as a Free Methodist elder. Terry was one of the best volunteers in our church for 15 years. Then he decided to go with one of our church plants where his new pastor made him an associate minister. Suddenly instead of ushering people to their seats, Terry was ushering them into the presence of God. He was leading people to Christ, discipling them, and building into other church planters. When I saw this the Spirit rebuked me and said, “Larry, you failed to see the fire on his head. You saw a volunteer instead of a priest.”

To multiply disciples, leaders and churches we must see the potential of every Spirit-filled believer, then give them opportunities to release the fire on their head.

Larry references 1 Peter 2:9 as well in this fourth point. What do you think of his statement that we mostly operate by the “volunteership of all believers” versus the “priesthood of all believers”?

Are you praying for a modern-day “Pentecost” to fall upon your church? If yes, describe why/how that is working. If not, why – and what would it take to get started?

Fifth, the Parisian musicians had a priority on multiplying the bands. These professional musicians’ primary goal was not to gather the largest crowd to hear them play, although that was a worthy goal along the way. Instead, they were focused on a different mission — filling the city with music. This meant raising up musicians. This meant “disciple-making.” But they focused on even a step further; they wanted to teach amateur musicians how to teach beginning musicians.

From Addition to Multiplication

The first call of Jesus was “follow Me, and I will make you fishers of people” (Matthew 4:19 NASB). His last commission was “go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19). When Jesus said this, He expected them to do with others what He had done in discipling them. His expectation was that the sign of true disciples is to help someone else become a disciple.

Or as Dawson Trotman, the founder of [Navigators](#), used to say, “You haven’t made a disciple until your

disciple makes a disciple.” This is the one key disciple-making shift that transforms disciple-making from addition to multiplication, from incremental growth to radical movement.

The first summary description of the New Testament church movement is in Acts 9:31 — “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied” (ESV). How did the church grow so rapidly in the midst of cultural, racial, economic and political persecution? Answer: Multiplicative disciple-making and church planting.

COVID has opened a space for the American church to reengineer itself toward multiplication. The future of

the Free Methodist church as an effective messenger of the gospel depends on aggressively leaning into Christ-compelled multiplication.

I sincerely believe every healthy Free Methodist church of any size can start another church by the year 2025. This will require fasting and prayer, a revived passion for the gospel, a re-envisioning of what church looks like, a simplifying of church models, a deliverance from unhealthy pastoral dependency and a fresh fire on ordinary believers.

It will demand the risk and creativity of our original Pentecost Bands. Are we willing? Now is the time to add our voices to B.T. Roberts’ and declare, “Let the bands play!”

Larry brings up the reality that “COVID has opened a space for the American church to reengineer itself toward multiplication.” Has your church embraced the opportunity that COVID has created, or has it put it car in neutral, waiting to restart?

Risk. That’s a word that often elicits fear from the unknown. How can your church embrace risk for the sake of the gospel?

Pray

Close your time in prayer, surrendering yourself anew — as well as your church — to the powerful, risk-taking posture of the first Christians. Ask God to bless your efforts with fruitfulness for the kingdom of God! Ask for the Lord to help your church form “street quartets.”

Larry Walkemeyer, D.Min., is the lead pastor of Light & Life Christian Fellowship in Long Beach, California; the director of equipping and spiritual engagement for Exponential; and a member of Azusa Pacific University’s Board of Trustees. He is the author of “Multiply Ministries,” “Together With God,” “Led,” “Play Thuno,” “A Good Walk Home” and the co-author of “Together With Family,”