The Church for Vocational Discipleship

Primary Learning Objectives

The primary learning objectives of this second session are five-fold.

1. Equip congregational leaders to identify those elements of their church culture that can hinder the flock’s understanding and practice of vocational stewardship and discipleship.

2. Help congregational leaders to see that simply “teaching the right theology” is insufficient: they must address cultural patterns, practices, language etc. in the church that unwittingly undercuts that theology.

3. Showcase a variety of stories of churches from different types/contexts that have successfully identified and overcome those cultural obstacles.

4. Discuss and describe mentoring as an avenue of spiritual formation for emerging leaders in the church, through which they learn to multiply the church’s DNA of whole-life discipleship.

5. Equip congregational leaders for thinking of the local church as an economic actor in its community, taking a 360 degree inventory of its economic and philanthropic “footprint” in the community.
“In nothing has the church so lost Her hold on reality as in Her failure to understand and respect the secular vocation. She has allowed work and religion to become separate departments, and is astonished to find that, as a result, the secular work of the world is turned to purely selfish and destructive ends, and that the greater part of the world’s intelligent workers have become irreligious, or at least, uninterested in religion. But is it astonishing? How can anyone remain interested in a religion which seems to have no concern with nine-tenths of life? The church’s approach to an intelligent carpenter is usually confined to exhorting him not to be drunk and disorderly in his leisure hours, and to come to church on Sundays. What the church should be telling him is this: that the very first demand that his religion makes on him is to make good tables.”

– Dorothy Sayers

Review Learning Community Session #1
The Big Idea, ‘The Grand Narrative’

[Note to Faculty Member: In this retreat, Learning Community members will hear two stories of “vocation infusion”: how congregational leaders identified and overcame barriers to integrating FWE into the DNA of their churches. Each story will represent a different church’s experience, so that Learning Community members can see how the infusion process unfolds in churches of different sizes/ages/denominations/geographies and ethnicities.]

Stage 1 Findings - Churches Report

CORE LECTURE #1
The Church for Vocational Discipleship

[Below follows an outline from Rev. Tom Nelson’s lecture on the FWE integration process at Christ Community Church, a large, multi-site campus with mostly white-collar, suburban, white congregants. Some Learning Communities may invite Tom to lecture, or use a video of this lecture. Others will be looking to the National Faculty member to make a presentation of this ilk, but speaking about his/her own church or a church that he/she knows very well.]
I. Introduction

A. Reid’s Story [video - https://www.madetoflourish.org/resources/good-work-matters-the-oxygen-mask-story/] - How Work Matters - why did he, as a pastor, affirm B/E Aerospace’s work?

B. What does it look like when a local church culture is this robust in connecting Sunday to Monday? What are the factors that have gone into making Christ Community Church what it is today?

II. Pastoral Malpractice

A. Failing to equip his congregation for ‘all of life’

B. The majority/minority disparity → the Sunday to Monday gap

III. What contributed to the Sunday to Monday gap?

A. An impoverished theological vision led to an impoverished pastoral paradigm that led to impoverished pastoral practices. An impoverished congregation!

B. An overreaching pietism—Gospel speaks into every nook and cranny

C. An insufficient biblical theology—missing the bookends of Scripture

D. A Lack of canonical/narrative coherence

E. Dualistic thinking & overemphasis on discontinuity & underemphasis on continuity

F. Church-centric vs. vocational empowering
IV. The change of organizational culture at our churches – Three essential threads in pastoral faithfulness.

A. Teaching a Robust Theology that informs people’s work.

B. Cultivating a Liturgical Regularity that affirms people’s work.

C. Embracing pastoral practices that invests & applauds people’s work.

“FWE integration is not about adding another thing, it is about a coherent theological vision that leads to a pastoral paradigm shift and the daily cultivation of a flourishing local church culture. We reframe church mission - a primary work of the church is the church at work.”

– Tom Nelson

V. Practical Outworkings¹

A. Robust Theology - Marinating church culture in the Ought-Is-Can-Will Narrative

1. Begin with core leadership

B. Liturgical Regularity

1. Vocational Testimonies

2. Visual Artifacts (i.e. Ought-Is-Can-Will banners in sanctuary)

3. Commissioning Services

¹ For more practical outworkings of this FWE Theology see ebook, Discipleship with Monday in Mind: How Churches Across the Country Are Helping Their People Connect Faith and Work, under Other Helpful Resources in Appendix A.