



Making and growing disciples of Jesus who make and grow disciples of Jesus

On a MISSION footing



We are on a journey of transformational change as we shift our emphasis from 'ministry' to 'mission'.



The noun 'footing' has two understandings. It is both *the basis on which something is established or operates* as well as being *the secure grip found with your feet* if you have slipped or stumbled. Both these meanings hit a nerve with the Church at the moment as we review our purpose and consider how we might go forward into the future.

All those statistics, graphs, anecdotes and evidences simply reinforce the fact that we are trying to *find our footing* and need to discover the way forward.

This has caused us to revisit our purpose and consider *the basis on which we are established and operate* ... which has brought us back to the Kingdom mandate of Jesus to go and make disciples (Matt. 28:18-20)

The opportunity and the threat here lies with 'the Church'. That's us! The people of God in their various places of worship trying to keep the faith alive as much as we can.

But if we approach the future with the small aim of just *reviving our current churches* – trying to get a few more people like us to join us – we will only see some incremental growth.

However, If we approach the future with the bigger aim of *renewing our culture* – creating new Kingdom communities of worship, fellowship and love – we will more likely see real transformational change and significant growth.

If we step out in obedient faith to make disciples – with a mix of excitement and fear – we are assured that Jesus always goes with us and is in us by his Spirit.

We need both the mission and ministry of the church to be in step together but we need to make sure that we put our best foot forward right now ... and that's our *mission foot*.



To most of us disciples this is not what we are used to or, if we are honest, what we want to do. But this is our real Kingdom purpose – *the basis on which we were established and operate.* Our ministry of worship, prayer, pastoral care, nurture and teaching follows on from our mission.

“ Of all the things we have chosen to remember over 2,000 years – all those little doctrinal quirks, the inexplicable religious rituals, and those pesky marginal traditions that we perpetuate in the church – we have somehow managed to all but forget the essential gospel mandate to make disciples of the nations ”

Alan Hirsch

“ Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go ”

God to Joshua

“ Vision without strategy is just an illusion ”

Peter Vardy

“ Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth ”

Mike Tyson

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The steps of
CHANGE

There are 7 steps that we need to get in the right order as we go forward into the future as disciples of Jesus and the body of Christ. *See overleaf...*





THE SEVEN STEPS TO CHANGE



Bits of Galatians 5 from 'The Message'

**"Christ has set us free
to live a free life.
So take your stand!"**

When you attempt to live by your own religious plans and projects, you are cut off from Christ, you fall out of grace. Meanwhile we expectantly wait for a satisfying relationship with the Spirit. For in Christ, neither our most conscientious religion nor disregard of religion amounts to anything. What matters is something far more interior: faith expressed in love.

So ... use your freedom to serve one another in love; that's how freedom grows.

For everything we know about God's Word is summed up in a single sentence: Love others as you love yourself. That's an act of true freedom

My counsel is this: Live freely, animated and motivated by God's Spirit. Then you won't feed the compulsions of selfishness. For there is a root of sinful self-interest in us that is at odds with a free spirit,

Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives."

1. The Heart and the Mind and the Body

The first step is to recognise who we are – our *identity* both individually and together. Or maybe better 'whose we are,' confident in the victory of Jesus and his mission through his disciples in the power of the Spirit. We need to take heart, renew our minds and live as the body of Christ, his church or 'ekklesia' ('the called out ones').

2. The Commandment and the Commission

Next, we need to re-commit ourselves to the *Great Commandment* and the *Great Commission*. This is our worship – to love the Lord our God with all our being and to serve him as we go out into the world assured of his promise to be with us always.

3. The Context and the Culture

The church has largely become a ghetto in the midst of a vastly different world to the one it grew up in. We are not trying to revive church by getting more people into the ghetto but renew the culture of Wigan as part of the Kingdom of God. We do this in our context of home, work, school, community, network, etc. and we pray "Your kingdom come on earth as in heaven" through me and us as church ... every day.

4. The Vision and the Values

The vision is not just a 'good idea.' This is the focused vision of the Kingdom coming where we are. The values we hold come from our Spirit-fruitfulness and our desire to serve and bless others. Leaders are responsible for bringing, sharing and shaping the vision for the local context and galvanising the whole team (all the disciples in that place) so that together in the power of the Spirit they can make and grow disciples.

5. The Strategy and the Structure

Vision without strategy is just a dream. There must be a strategic plan to accomplish the vision. This is as simple as possible and helps people focus on the next important goal and play their part in reaching it. *Plans set the path and encourage the pace.* They keep the vision in sight and are easily adjusted as the journey progresses. Once the strategy is set the necessary structures can follow. In not a few cases, existing structures need to be taken down in order for more flexible ones to be put in place.

6. The Finance and Resources

Disciples who have (i) repositioned their minds, hearts and bodies; (ii) re-committed themselves to the Great Commandment and Commission; (iii) renewed their understanding of their context and culture; (iv) re-set their Kingdom vision for making and growing disciples together, and revised their values to serve others; (v) made plans together to fulfill the gospel mandate where they are, and restructured accordingly ... will be ready and willing to (vi) invest their time, talents and treasure.

7. The Blowing of the Spirit

The wonderful thing about being who we are, where we are, with a vision and a plan, is that we begin from victory! The challenge is recognising that this is all held within our nature of being "in Christ". This means embracing the suffering and death stuff as well as the peace and life stuff. This journey has crosses all along the way as well as outbreaks of resurrection. However, we are the people who rely on the Holy Spirit and keep our eyes and ears open for what to do and say, and then respond obediently as we continue to change and adapt accordingly. After all, to change is to live.

