

## Enabling one-in-ten people in Wigan to be on a discipleship journey with Jesus by 2022

This is our amazing vision and huge task. Our confidence is in the Lord of the harvest who urges us both to open our eyes and look at the fields that are ripe (John 4:35) and, in seeing it, to pray for more workers to go out and bring that harvest in (Matthew 9:38).

## Growing and Making Disciples of Jesus

The discipleship mandate remains the same as that given to the first disciples by Jesus: We go in his authority to make disciples wherever we are. For us, this is Wigan, and we are refocusing our vision and recommitting ourselves to this purpose above all others.

Our vision equates to roughly 20,000 people being somewhere on this discipleship journey and stepping on in faith. We are now exploring the specific ways in which, by the grace of God and our faithful obedience, this will be applied and accomplished.

A transformational vision requires a transformational strategy. The key ingredients for our Hub network strategy are 'leadership' and 'relationship'. We will establish this in 2017 so that all existing Worship Communities are in Hubs and each Hub has a Guiding Team developing the growth plans on the ground where they are.

## Four Growth Areas in 2017

### 1. Prayer

Our House of Prayer covers all of Church Wigan with co-ordinators in each Worship Community. We have 24 people in the first Order of Prayer. In 2017 we will expand the overall House of Prayer through developing more 'rooms' for intercession and ministry.

### 2. Leadership

Healthy leadership enables growth. Hub Leaders are being helped to create Hub Guiding Teams and develop the plans for growth on the ground. We will equip and resource leaders for the refreshing of existing Worship Communities and the planting of many more. We will establish the overall Church Leadership Team, recruit more leaders, and create the overall legal structure required for enabling Church Wigan to accomplish the vision.

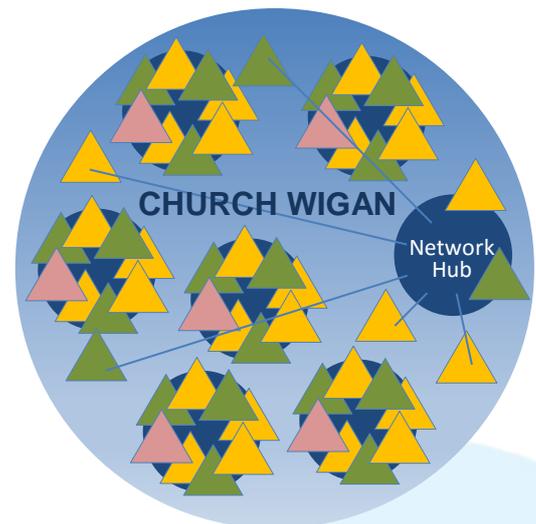
### 3. Planting

We need to plant many, many new Worship Communities to better fit the local cultures of Wigan. We will encourage new vision and courage for those who see the opportunities to seed and plant new mission opportunities. We will grow new local missional leadership teams and further develop 'Cultivate' to equip, resource, release and support leaders.

### 4. Discipleship

We deepen discipleship by encouraging people to take steps forward in their personal faith and witness in their communities and networks. We will further develop the 'Deeper Discipleship' resource and nurture the Core Group accountability programme. We will hold two events this year beginning in the summer with 'TryPraying' followed by 'Alpha'.

- Lots of Disciples
- Many Worship Communities
- Several Hubs
- One Church Wigan



He moved on and dug another well and no one quarrelled over it.

He named it Rehoboth, saying, 'Now the Lord has given us room to flourish.'

*Genesis 26:22*

'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house.'

And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the Lord.

*Haggai 2:9*

# The Three Phases of Discipleship.

I have developed this scale along similar lines to the Engels scale but more according to my own experience of observing many different people in a variety of settings move along the 'discipleship road' as they follow Jesus from their first tentative steps to their huge strides of new found faith and service.

## Phase One: **EXPLORE** (*Belonging*)

### Stage 1: Just Looking

At this very embryonic stage these people are simply in and around the people of faith or just showing an interest or small connection with a disciple of Jesus or the culture of a local Worship Community. A church school community will, by its very nature, enable many people to be at least 'just looking'.

### Stage 2: Tasting

Some of these people will naturally move on to attending one or two events that are easy for them to explore things a bit further. This could even be as simple as having a coffee and a chat with a friend or acquaintance who is a Christian and just asking about their faith and how it works. Natural, non-religious, social events help those wanting to taste a bit more.

### Stage 3: Joining in

Good mission initiatives or vibrant Worship Communities help people to 'belong' and actually join in before they are required to 'believe' or even 'behave' in a prescribed way. Initiatives such as Food Banks, Pop-Up Cafes, Pantomimes, etc. enable explorers to play an important part and to join in with the people of faith to experience more of this culture.

## Phase Two: **ENGAGE** (*Believing*)

### Stage 4: Enquiring

The Worship Community, through those who are believer-followers, encourage those who belong to engage in the 'Why' of the faith. Belonging is good but there is a purpose for people to engage in God's love and respond to his salvation invitation. Enquiring continues from the explorer but is also enabled by the disciples who help the 'belongers' to consider 'believing'.

### Stage 5: Seeking

There is a point at which you can recognise the earnest seeker. The questions move more from the 'why' to the 'how' and are helped by such courses as 'Start', 'Christianity Explored', 'Alpha', etc. The believer-followers in the Worship Community are also very important here as they demonstrate and articulate their personal faith to help others who are seeking.

### Stage 6: Encounter

The cross point is the moment of decision to believe and be birthed from above as a new creation in Christ. It is the critical, exciting and life-giving stage that brings the real meaning of life to someone in a very personal way. Becoming a Christian is the most important thing someone can do on earth. This stage is marked by Baptism or Confirmation or Renewal of Vows.

## Phase Three: **ENLIST** (*Behaving*)

### Stage 7: Learning

The discipleship road does not end at the belief point. Baptism or Confirmation is not an achievement certificate or a passing-out parade! The work of the disciple now shifts from the more inward focus to the outward looking attitude. This is a time of learning and needs good nurture, teaching and encouragement from other believers in the Worship Community.

### Stage 8: Sharing

You cannot stop disciples making disciples! The experience of faith, the new-found joy and peace – even in the midst of ongoing earthly troubles – is evident. Testimony and witness are important to help others to 'belong' and come to 'believe' themselves. Opportunities for sharing faith with others is vital for the individual believer and the wider Worship Community.

### Stage 9: Serving

The normal Christian life is one of service. To worship is to serve. This focuses on where the disciple lives, works, rests, plays and generally does life with others. Serving is an attitude not a job. The Holy Spirit works in and through every believer empowering them to graciously serve others. Leaders are naturally raised up from these servant-followers.