



## MISSIONAL FRONTIERS IN FAITH FORMATION

Rev. Dr. Michael Beck

### MODULE 1

#### *A New Missional Frontier*

#### ***Lesson Goals and Objectives***

Participants will be able to:

- Describe the difference between contextual (missional) ministry and traditional (attractional) ministry.
- Name several trends impacting the mission and ministry of their church.
- Identify “third places” within their own communities where a contextual ministry could be planted.
- Discuss the elements essential to a church.

*Judges 2:10 NRSV*

Moreover, that whole generation was gathered to their ancestors, and another generation grew up after them, who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel.

#### ***Pause for reflection with your Team (4:02):***

- Might we not find ourselves in a situation where another generation has grown up that does not know the Lord?
- What similarities do you note?
- Might these similarities provide any clues for us, or provide any suggestions about a way forward?

*“The first task of a leader is to paint an accurate picture of our reality.”* Realities we face in our new frontier:

- Decline in affiliation, membership aversion
- Rise of spirituality
- Generations in church (slide can be found at 9:30); Lovett Weems identifies it as a “death tsunami.”
- Rise of the Nones & Dones (11:50 & 12:30)
- Pandemic challenges

***Pause for reflection with your Team (13:10):***

Given all these challenges:

- What does connection look like today?
- What does Discipleship look like?
- What does a both/and church look like?

***Our motivation:***

- The Eucharistic nature of the Body of Christ is to be broken and given away to a hungry world.
- The church is about self-donation, not self-preservation.
- Beloved people of sacred worth and great value may never know that they are loved by God in our current modes of being church.

**“Failing forward”** — testing new missional communities to reach those who are not-yet-Christians. Not all will work, but each is an innovative ministry to reach others with the life-giving Good News of Jesus Christ.

***Key point for understanding:***

**Neighborhood Communities** have largely been replaced by **Networked Communities**. The world of Mr. Rogers, where we are directly connected to those around us—Neighborhood Communities—has been significantly changed by Network Communities—ones created through technology and daily practices, such as going to a gym, a weekly bowling league or quilting club.

**Contextual forms of Church (21:10); watch the video together:**

Tattoo Parlor Church — as you watch, consider these questions:

1. What is church?
2. What do you see and hear?
3. Would Matt be welcomed in your congregation?
4. Where are the places in your community where people are never going to walk in your church on a Sunday morning?
5. What changed Ms. Sandra’s perception?

***Pause for reflection with your Team following the story of Ms. Sandra (30:10):***

***Key definition for understanding:***

**Fresh Expression** — a form of church for our changing culture, established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church. They typically have four values:

1. Missional
2. Contextual — what does church look like for you?
3. Formational
4. Ecclesial — it IS church

## Neighborhoods and Networks

1. First space — home
2. Second space — school or work
3. Third space — places where people gather —  
bowling alley, tattoo parlor, running track, dog park

### ***Pause for reflection with your Team (45:30):***

Using the “What is church worksheet” (p. 4), reflect on this question:

***What are the essentials required to be considered “church”?***

### **Four key relationships identified by the Rev. Dr. Michael Beck**

- Up, out, in, of dimensions of church
- One, holy, Catholic, apostolic

## WHAT IS CHURCH EXERCISE



Discuss with your table the essentials of church. Decide as a group which things you will cross off as non-essential and which things you will circle as essential. It may help to consider the question using this thought process: *If we didn't have \_\_\_\_\_, could we still have church?* Feel free to write in the blanks anything missing that you consider essential.

Sanctuary	Sunday school	Youth Ministry
Jesus	Coffee	God
Worship service	Holy Spirit	Vacation Bible school
Children's Ministry	Choir	Bible
Music	Potluck dinners	Baptism
Prayer	Preacher	Mission
Women's Ministry	Communion	Hospitality
Bible study	Evangelism	Fellowship
Softball team	Outreach	Committees
Organ	Money	Worship band
Book of Common Worship	Book of Discipline	Offering
Hymnal	Nursery	Mission trips

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