

100% at 100%:

A pathway towards congregational vitality

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Bessie Hamilton, and TJ Mount

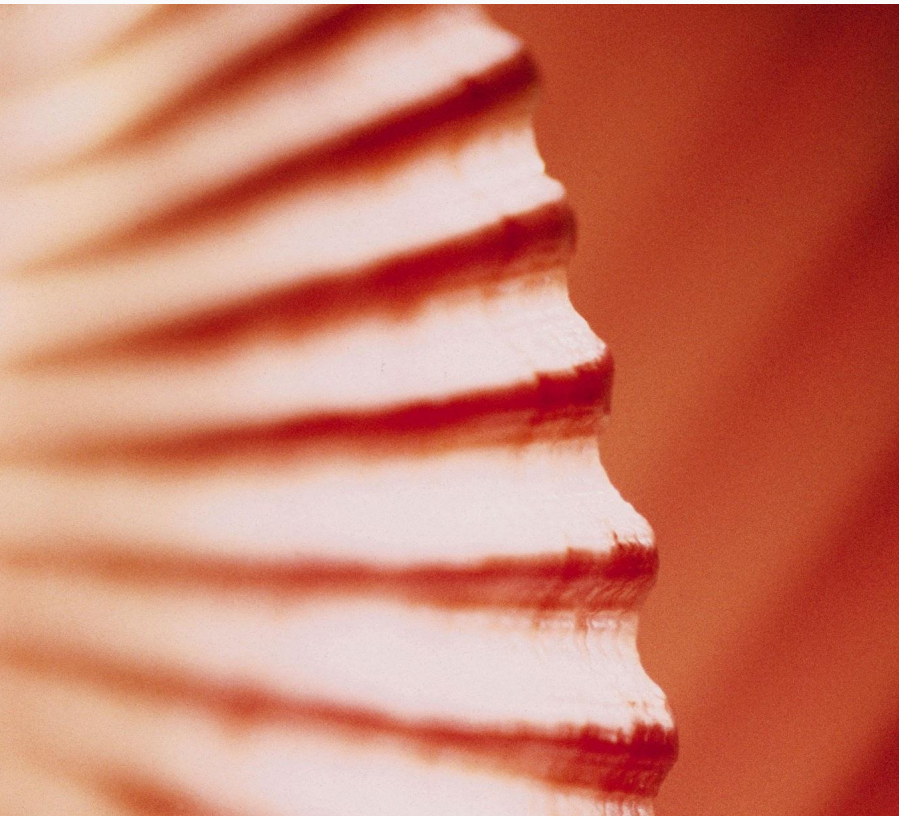


**Baltimore-Washington &
Peninsula-Delaware Area**
The United Methodist Church



Agenda

October 2025



01 Introduction to Vitality

02 See All the People

03 Deepen Discipleship

04 Live and Love Like Jesus

05 Multiply Impact

06 Invitation & Q&A

Lifecycle of a Congregation

Just like living organisms, churches go through stages from birth to decline, each with its own set of values and priorities.

“

The thief enters only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came so that they could have life—indeed, so that they could live life to the fullest.

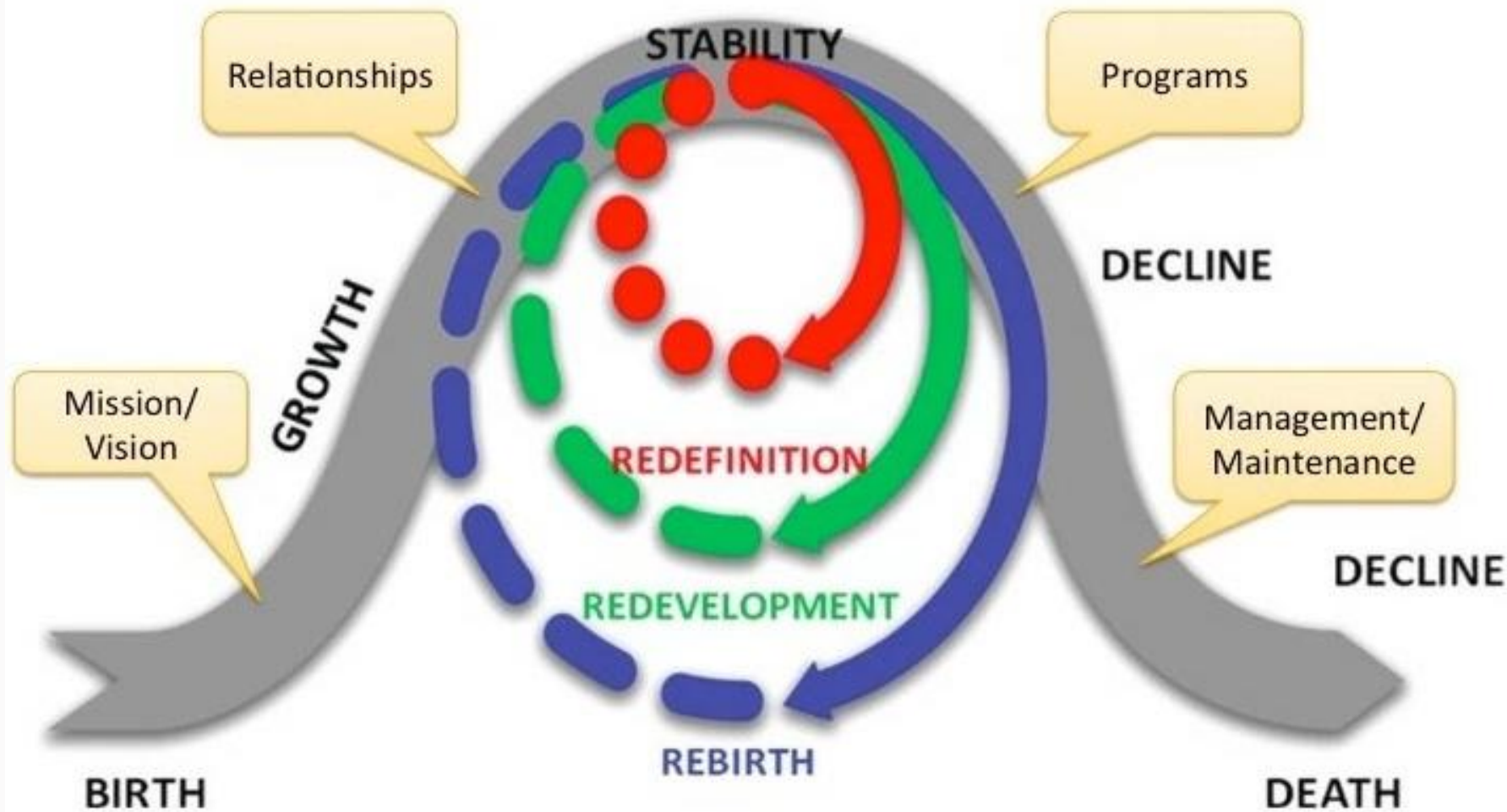
John 10:10

Congregations Evolve through 5 Stages

1. Birth
2. Growth
3. Stability
4. Decline
5. Death

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Meet the Vitality Specialists

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Lauren Jones

See All The People



Joe Archie

Deepen Discipleship



Bessie Hamilton

Live and Love Like Jesus



TJ Mount

Multiply Impact

- What does it mean to see - and truly see, respect, and affirm - *all* the people in your community?



The Psychology of Belonging

Author and Licensed Professional Counselor, Shala Nicely, says that “to be seen” is a basic human need. She surmises that its basis is evolutionary. When humans were nomadic, to not be seen or accounted for, could mean death.

In the 2025 article, “The Psychology of Belonging: Why We Need to Feel Seen,” by Muhammad Tuhin, it says that neuroscientist Matthew Lieberman agrees. In early human tribes, isolation meant danger. If you were cast out, you didn’t just lose friends—you lost protection, food, and life itself. Brain imaging shows that the pain of social rejection activates the same neural pathways as physical pain. “To the brain, being excluded *hurts*—as tangibly as a broken bone.”

See All the People cont.

Angy Farhat proposes in the 2025 article, “**Being Seen: The Key to Emotional Connection and Mental Wellness,**” that being seen is the **key to emotional connectedness.**

When someone listens to us with intent, understands our feelings, and validates our experience, it becomes one of the most powerful contributors to mental health and well-being.



- **Build Self-Worth:** When we feel seen, we feel valued. That validation is crucial to our sense of self-esteem and confidence.
- **Promote Emotional Balance:** Having someone understand your emotions can help you process them more effectively, reducing overwhelm and emotional turbulence.
- **Reduce Loneliness:** Genuine connection alleviates feelings of isolation, helping us feel less alone in the world.
- **Enhance Resilience:** Feeling supported and understood can make us stronger when facing life's challenges. It gives us the strength to navigate difficult times with a sense of solidarity.

See All The People cont.

- John 4:35: Do you not say, “Four months more, then comes the harvest? But I tell you, **look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting.**”
- Jesus sees the Samaritan woman at the well
- The Gospel is for everyone; avoid tunnel vision
- Ministry begins by seeing people as God sees them
- Who is in your neighborhood?
- Names, stories, and experiences matter

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*Jesus invites us
to “Look & See”*



See All The People cont.: Prayer walk

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- Walk your community with prayerful intention
- Observe what you see and hear
- Ask God: Where are You drawing my attention?
- Let God show you where the harvest (mission field) is



See All The People cont.: A vital church

- A vital church knows and values people inside and outside its walls
- Jesus saw the Samaritan woman as beloved, not an enemy
- Seeing all people requires a mindset, skill set, and heart set
- Reject “Us vs. Them” thinking



See All The People cont.: Respecting all the people

- Every person has inherent worth and value
- Not defined by race, gender, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or status
- Do the internal work to confront bias and prejudice
- See others as beloved children of God

How to do this practically: One way to practice seeing all the people is by utilizing MissionInsite. We can use factual data to see who is in our communities. If you need assistance, we can help you determine what the reports mean.



Deepen Discipleship

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- Ten tips based on Steven W. Manskar's Disciples Making Disciples model.
- Focus: intentional, accountable small-group discipleship.
- Goal: move beyond membership to spiritual growth and transformation.
- Additional resources
 - "Everyday Disciples: Covenant Discipleship with Youth" by Chris Witterdink
 - "Growing Everyday Disciples: Covenant Discipleship with Children" by Melanie C. Gordon, Susan Groseclose, and Gayle Quay



Deepen Discipleship cont: Steps 1 & 2

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Step 1

Clarify vision and build buy-in: leadership must prioritize discipleship and communicate it clearly.

Resistance to this step: fear of extra work; mindset of “we already have this”

Mitigation: share stories, show benefits

Step 2

Teach the theology behind it: Teach Wesleyan roots (General Rule of Discipleship, class meetings, baptismal covenant).

Resistance to this step: people may find this too Wesleyan or too rigid

Mitigation: emphasize flexibility, grace

Deepen Discipleship cont: Steps 3 & 4

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Step 3

Launch or reorganize small groups:
Define group size and structure, use covenant templates and recruit initial members. Start with volunteers and pilot groups to manage commitment.

Resistance to this step: finding leaders, group commitment, and scheduling conflicts

Mitigation: be realistic with expectations

Step 4

Identify, train, commission Class leaders:
Choose spiritually mature lay leaders with relational skills. Train in group leadership and pastoral care. Commission leaders publicly to affirm their role.

Resistance to this step: people may be reluctant due to time or nerves

Mitigation: model it, provide support, start small, share leadership

Deepen Discipleship cont: Steps 5 & 6

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Step 5

Write and adopt covenants: Groups craft covenants outlining commitments and goals.

Resistance to this step: covenants may be too vague or too demanding

Mitigation: allow groups to customize, emphasize grace, review and revise as needed

Step 6

Meeting structure and rhythm: Include worship, sharing, teaching, and service in meetings. Set consistent meeting times. Builds discipline, depth, identity

Resistance to this step: drop off in participation, burnout

Mitigation: alternative types of meetings, allow flexibility, offer pastoral support

Deepen Discipleship cont: Steps 7 & 8

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Step 7

Integrate into wider congregation: weave discipleship groups into worship, mission, and service. Utilize baptisms or confirmation classes. Enhances the whole church

Resistance to this step: silo mentality; staff overload

Mitigation: coordinate, clear communication, and identify leadership

Step 8

Multiply and scale: Form new groups and raise new leaders. Create specialized groups for different demographics. Maintain quality through training and peer support.

Resistance to this step: quality can slip, risk of burnout

Mitigation: ongoing leader training; peer support; supervision; evaluate and refine

Deepen Discipleship cont: Steps 9 & 10

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Step 9

Monitor health and adapt: Use feedback tools to assess spiritual growth and group health.

Resistance to this step: complacency, resistance to feedback

Mitigation: create a culture of transparency, offer leader groups to provide support

Step 10

Share testimonies and recognize leaders in worship.

Use resources such as newsletters and services to highlight impact.

Build momentum through storytelling

Live and Love Like Jesus

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- The Call to Live and Love Like Jesus
- Biblical foundations
 - **The Incarnation:** Love Made Flesh (John 1:14)
 - **The Great Commandment:** Love of God and Neighbor (Matthew 22:37–39)
 - **The Great Commission:** Discipleship as Mission (Matthew 28:19–20)
 - **The New Commandment:** Radical Community (John 13:34–35)

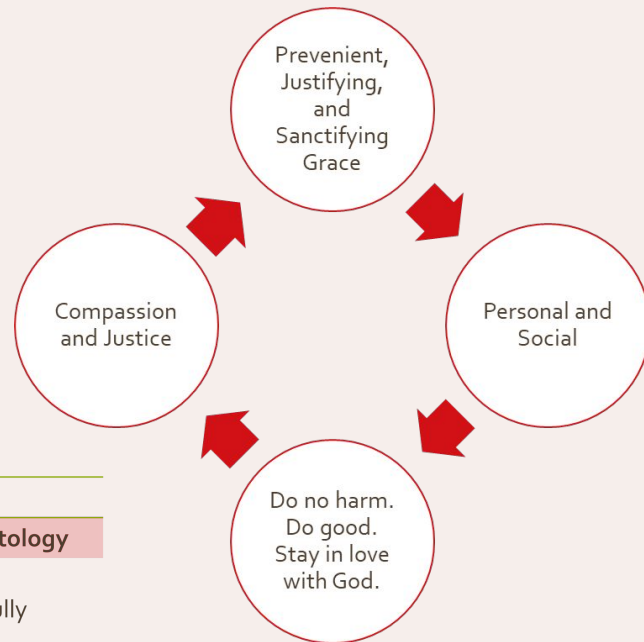


Live and Love Like Jesus cont.

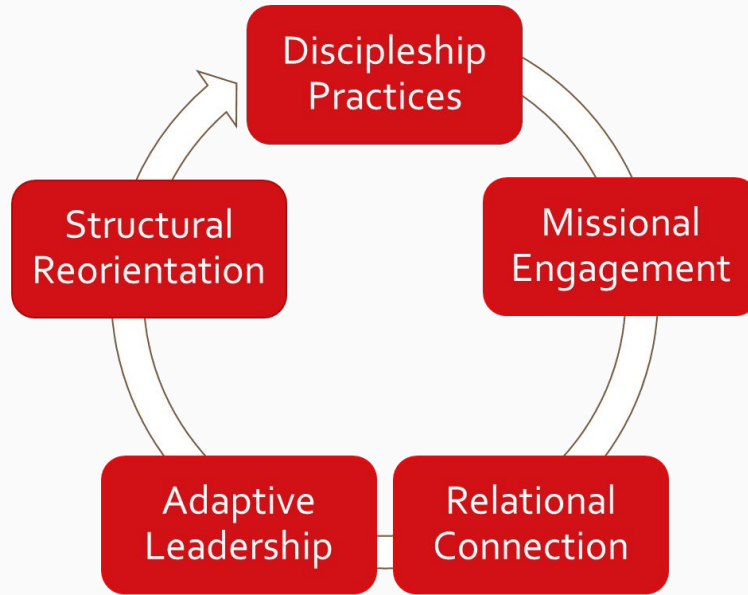
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- Wesleyan Theological Roots
 - Grace as the Foundation
 - Holiness of Heart and Life
 - The Methodist Rule of Life
 - The Preferential Option for the Poor
- Theological Themes
 - Christology
 - Ecclesiology
 - Missiology
 - Eschatology

| Christology | Ecclesiology | Missiology | Eschatology |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Jesus-fully divine & human | The Church is the body of Christ | The Church is God's mission | Living faithfully |
| God's holiness | Embody His compassion and justice | Participates in reconciliation | Love deeply |
| Human Solidarity | Agents of reconciliation | Embrace renewal | Anticipate eternity |

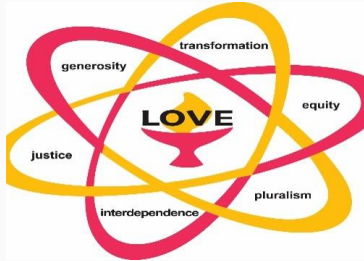


Practical Dimension: How we live and love like Jesus



Live and love like Jesus cont.: Implication for our vitality and mission

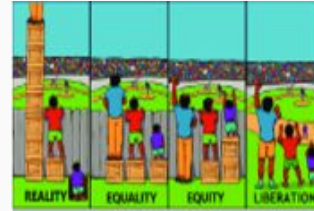
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Shared values embodied



Mission Identity



Equity and Justice



Collaborative Mission

Live and love like Jesus cont.: Ministry opportunities



Creation Care



Gender Equity/ COSROW



Gun Violence



Immigration Rights



Legislative Advocacy



Peace with Justice



Restorative Justice



Racial Justice/CCORR



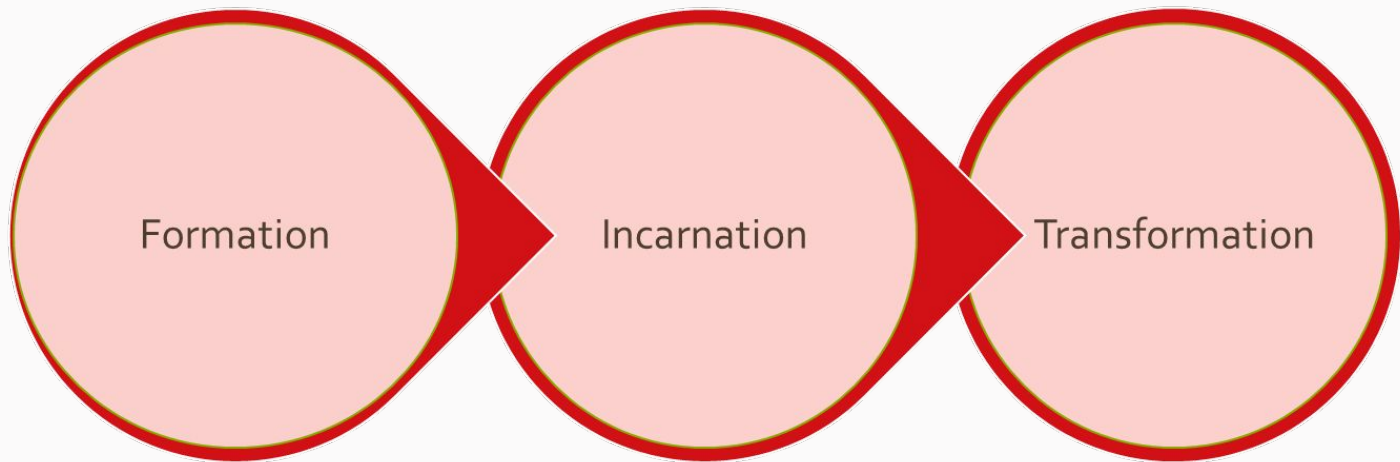
Wealth Equity



Wellness & Missions

Live and Love Like Jesus cont.: Toward a framework for practice

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Multiply Impact

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Joining God's vision to restore creation and living into our mission as disciples who bear fruit that multiplies in the world.

- The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20)
 - "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you."
- Bearing Much Fruit (John 15:5)
 - "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing."
- These foundational passages remind us that multiplying impact flows from our connection to Christ and our commitment to His mission of making disciples who transform the world.



Multiply Impact cont.

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The Fourth Pillar

Multiplying Impact represents the fourth essential pillar of church vitality, moving us beyond incremental growth toward exponential kingdom expansion.

Beyond Addition

This pillar shifts our focus from one-by-one addition to multiplication—disciples making disciples, ministries multiplying ministries, transformed lives transforming lives.

God's Restoration Vision

We align with God's vision for both individual restoration (renewed in Christ's image) and communal restoration (all nations united in God's love).

Multiply Impact cont.

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Alignment

➔ Strategies, structures, and people moving toward the same mission. This creates clarity, engagement, and organizational agility that multiplies kingdom impact.

- ◆ Clear shared vision
- ◆ Coordinated efforts
- ◆ Unified leadership
- ◆ Sustained growth

Misalignment

➔ Confusion, conflict, inefficiency, and reduced impact. When ministries work in isolation or compete for resources, even busy churches bear little fruit.

- ◆ Competing priorities
- ◆ Wasted resources'
- ◆ Leadership tension
- ◆ Stagnant impact

A church aligned around God's mission will grow in vitality, while one misaligned may appear busy but struggles to bear lasting fruit in the community.

Multiply Impact cont.: Leading vs. Lagging Indicators

Leading Indicators

- ➔ Predictive, proactive measures that help us course-correct before problems arise. These forward-looking metrics guide our strategic decisions.
 - ◆ New leaders trained monthly
 - ◆ Conversations with neighbors
 - ◆ Small group participation
 - ◆ Volunteer engagement rates

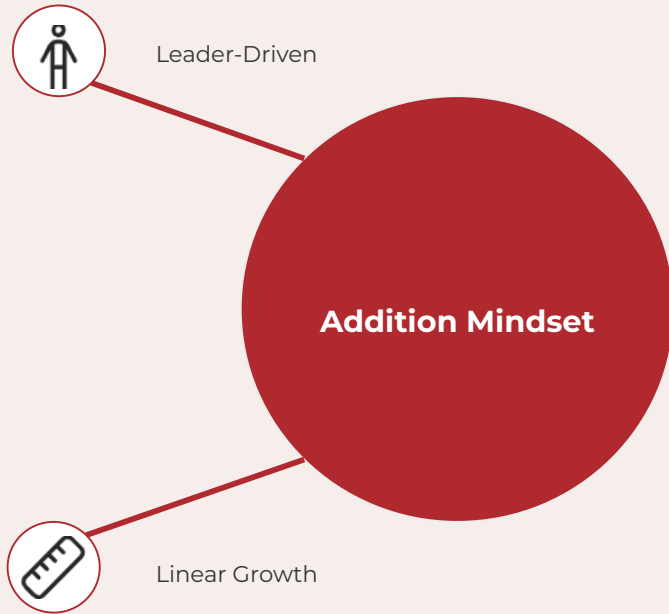
Lagging Indicators

- ➔ Outcomes already realized that confirm our results. While important for evaluation, they tell us what has already happened.
 - ◆ Worship attendance numbers
 - ◆ Annual giving totals
 - ◆ Membership statistics
 - ◆ Program completion rates

Multiplying Impact requires balancing both types of indicators. Leading indicators help us navigate toward multiplication, while lagging indicators confirm we're bearing fruit.

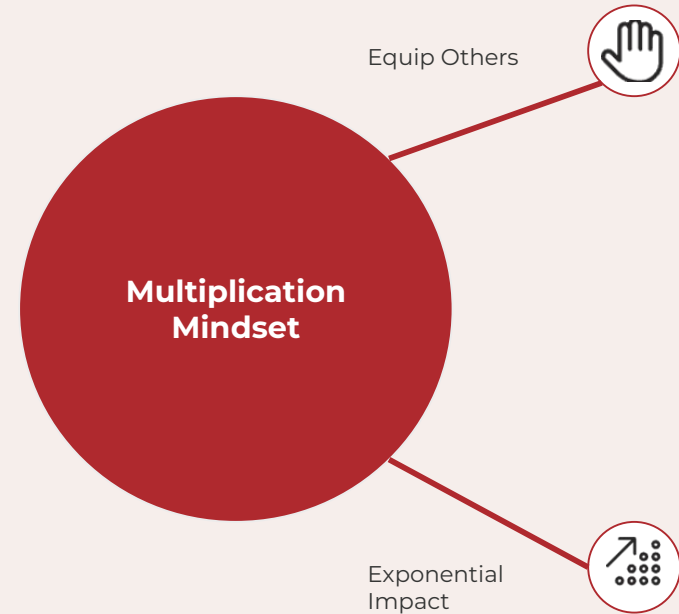
Addition vs. Multiplication

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Growth through individual programs and personal effort. This approach focuses on incremental increases—adding one person, one ministry, one event at a time.

Characteristics: Linear growth, leader-dependent, resource-intensive, limited scalability



Growth that reproduces itself through disciples making disciples and ministries multiplying beyond a single congregation into the community.

Biblical Inspiration: Like yeast transforming dough or seeds producing abundant harvests, multiplication reflects the exponential nature of God's kingdom.

Multiply Impact cont.: Living Multiplying Impact

Embrace Means of Grace

Works of Piety and Works of Mercy—both personal and communal—are where God meets us and empowers multiplication. Be intentional about how, when, where, why, and with whom we engage these practices.

Align with Mission

The UMC mission calls us to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." Our BWC vision declares "more transformed lives transform lives." This is multiplication in action.

Overflow into Community

Multiplying Impact happens when our discipleship practices create transformation that overflows beyond church walls, touching neighbors, families, and communities with Christ's love.

Your call to action: Where in your ministry are you seeing addition, and where might God be calling you to multiplication? You are not just called to grow, but to multiply impact so others may encounter Christ. The Spirit's fruit in you becomes fruit through you.

Now What?

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Scan the QR Code below to enroll
for a Vitality Conversation



Specific questions? Each Specialist
has their own speciality area:

- ➔ See All The People: Lauren Jones,
ljones@bwcumc.org
- ➔ Deepen Discipleship: Joe Archie,
jarchie@pdcbbwc.org
- ➔ Live and Love Like Jesus: Bessie Hamilton,
bhamilton@bwcumc.org
- ➔ Multiply Impact: TJ Mount,
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Questions

