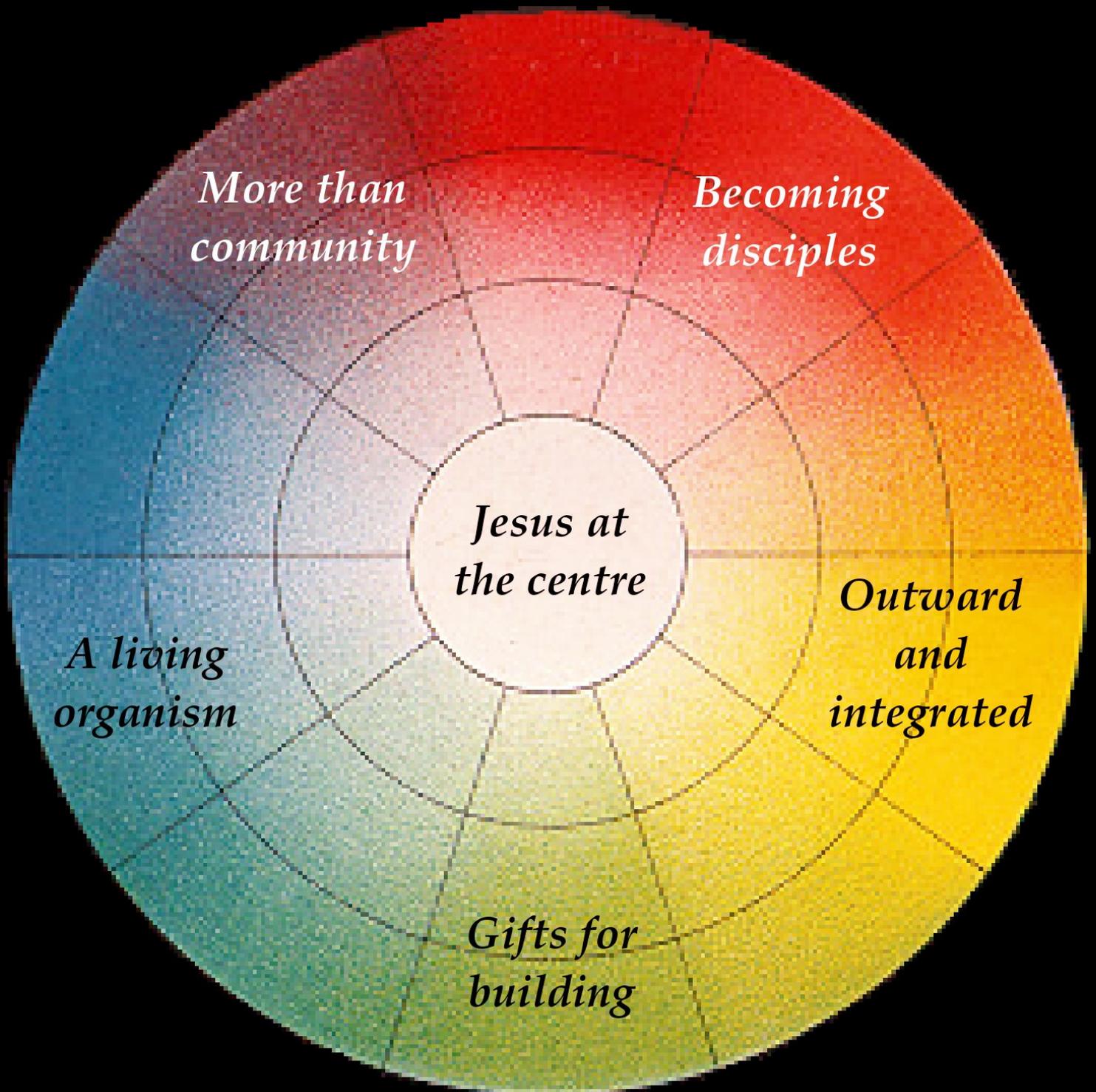


Jesus, Disciple, Mission, Church

Stepping into the future with Jesus

Chris J Jefferies



Comment on *Jesus, Disciple, Mission, Church*

What you have in your hands is the labour of love of a man committed to getting God's people in touch with their inherent potentials as the missional people of God. This very accessible summary and study guide will help individuals and especially communities apply the ideas contained in my book *The Forgotten Ways*. I am grateful to Chris for making it happen.

– **Alan Hirsch**, Author of *The Forgotten Ways*, *Untamed*, *The Faith of Leap* and others.

Alan Hirsch's *The Forgotten Ways* is a foundational classic that describes the six elements of missional DNA. *JDMC* is an excellent and comprehensive primer/guide that sets out Alan's teaching in a simple and accessible way. It is designed for groups to use and provides many useful questions for discussion.

– **Felicity Dale**, [Simply Church](#) blog, author of *The Black Swan Effect*, *Small is Big* and others.

With heartfelt thanks

To my wife, Donna, for her support and encouragement, the guys at Caffè Nero who showed me the value of being incarnational, to Alan Hirsch for providing a framework and inspiration in *The Forgotten Ways*, to Neil Cole, Paul Young, Tony and Felicity Dale, Steve Addison and a host of others for the helpful things they have said and written, to Peter and Marsha Farmer for pressing ahead missionally in Britain and beyond, and to a host of friends who have encouraged me in ways they may not realise – Jim, Sean, Steph, Terry, Roger, Paul, Mo, Sue, Kevin, Frances, my sister Rachael, Peter and Jody, Ben and many more (I can't even *begin* to list you all here).

Jesus, Disciple, Mission, Church (JDMC)

Stepping into the future with Jesus

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The front cover

The cover of JDMC shows a colour wheel with a bright white centre. The phrases on the wheel describe six essential factors for growth. Jesus must be at the centre of everything – we need to become (and make) disciples – we must go out and become rooted in our local environment – we need to recognise those who are gifted in enabling the church to become mature – we need to grow and flourish and multiply like a living thing – and we need to work through challenges together.

And just as all the rainbow colours are required to make pure, white light, so are these six components essential if Jesus is to be fully expressed in his church.

(The cover is based on an image from Wikimedia – <http://tinyurl.com/o97t849>.)

Version 1.0c

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Contents

Introduction.....	7
Where might you use this guide?.....	7
What it contains.....	7
Practicalities.....	8
Some final suggestions.....	8
Part One – An overview.....	9
The key factors.....	9
1 - Jesus at the centre.....	9
2 - Becoming disciples.....	10
3 - Outward and integrated.....	10
4 - Gifts for building.....	10
5 - A living organism.....	10
6 - More than community.....	11
Six parts of a connected whole.....	11
Part Two – Jesus at the Centre.....	13
Where are you right now?.....	13
The One.....	13
Jesus at the centre.....	13
Jesus alone.....	14
Put the gospels first.....	15
Taking it further.....	15
Part Three – Becoming disciples.....	17
A less effective way.....	17
Really mean business.....	17
Be committed.....	18
We are all priests.....	19
Keeping up the momentum.....	19
Part Four – Outward and integrated.....	21
Getting out there.....	21
Deeply integrated.....	22
Probe and challenge.....	23
Keep on going.....	24
Part Five – Gifts for building.....	25
Pioneering mission.....	26
Activating the forgotten ways.....	26
Identifying purpose.....	27
Growing the gifts.....	27
Sparking connections.....	28
Facilitating growth and change.....	28
Part Six – A living organism.....	29
Keep moving on.....	29
Structure for life.....	29
Connect and communicate.....	30
Sneeze the gospel.....	31
Facilitating growth and change.....	31
Part Seven – More than community.....	33
Vision that will change us.....	33
Church at the heart of life.....	33

Get involved.....	34
Facilitating growth and change.....	34
Last words.....	35
Not the end, just the beginning.....	35
An intricate fabric.....	35
Just do it!.....	35
A blessing.....	35

Introduction

This seven-part guide will help you explore some key ideas from *The Forgotten Ways*, a book by Alan Hirsch (tinyurl.com/yhyuyr1). Of course, one way to grapple with the material is simply to read Alan's book, and I highly recommend doing that. And if your church or group wants to discuss and learn together there's *The Forgotten Ways Handbook*. This is also highly recommended, but it's long and detailed. Another way to start is to read *The Shaping of Things to Come* because this book provides a lot of useful background.

But if you need a short, introductory guide you have come to the right place. The guide is suitable for individual use but is intended for groups of six to ten people working together. Each part packs enough material to explain the main points and get you thinking and exploring. If you find the subject interesting you'll want to go further so I'll point you to the main sources as we go along.

I became aware of *The Forgotten Ways* when Alan spoke at a conference I attended. I read some of his books, began working through the *Handbook* on my own, and then tried it with others. I wrote JDMC because I sensed the need for something altogether shorter and simpler, and I've begun using this material very effectively with groups of people I know.

Where might you use this guide?

It works well for groups of interested friends, it could be used by a Christian Union at a workplace or college, or it might suit a home group or small group forming part of a local church. Also, it might serve to inject fresh thinking into any church or denomination, perhaps being worked through by a group of elders or church leaders. But please remember that JDMC only skims the surface. If you like what you find here, please consider going deeper and further using the sources mentioned above and throughout the guide.

What it contains

The guide consists of the introduction you're reading right now, a first section to outline the thinking behind *The Forgotten Ways*, and six further parts (one for each forgotten way). The sessions all contain simple, introductory material with some questions to get you thinking for yourself. Although the six forgotten ways can be seen as distinct, they also have a way of weaving themselves together in practice. You may notice this as you work through the guide; take it as evidence that the six ways are inextricably linked and interdependent.

The idea is to learn by doing. All habits (good and bad alike) result from repeated behaviour, and the sessions aim to get you behaving in ways that will create good habits as disciples of Jesus. Over time, I hope and expect that you will behave yourself into habits and thinking that will take you further in the journey with Jesus than you may have thought possible or necessary.

Don't skip the questions, they're an essential part of the discovery process. Take enough time to process the material and come up with your own ideas and conclusions. It's not possible to offer exhaustive Bible references in a short guide. The Bible passages I've included are merely starting points for exploration. As you read your Bible (and especially the gospels) you are likely to find that other relevant verses and paragraphs leap off the page.

The sessions include links to related online material including text, audio and video.

You can find clickable links for these resources and downloadable versions of the discussion guides themselves at jdmc.scilla.org.uk. The guide is free to use. Download it, print it, modify it, or give it away; all I ask is that if you distribute it you provide attribution by including the link to jdmc.scilla.org.uk and apply the same copyright conditions that I do.

Practicalities

Each part of the guide recommends an online video (look under 'More information' at the end of each section). You might start each session by watching the video together.

Everyone should read the material carefully at least once before meeting. Underline anything that seems important or stands out in some way. Jot ideas in the margins. Mark anything you don't understand so you can raise it in the discussion.

It's more important to cover everything well than it is to get to the end, but it's also important not to get stuck. If you don't have time to discuss a session in one sitting, continue with it next time you meet. But if you really can't agree on something – note down the different points of view and move on.

If your numbers are larger than ten or so, I suggest working in multiple groups (two groups of six will be better than a group of twelve). Ideally, you want everyone to engage and contribute their own thoughts and ideas; if a group is too large there will always be some who are reluctant to speak up.

The suggested behaviours and habits are just that – suggestions. In your discussions see if you can come up with other ideas of your own. Be creative. Don't try to do everything but be *open* to everything and evaluate it critically; aim to do a few things well as a starting point so agree on some choices and work on them together. During the discussion make notes on anything you want to return to later and any decisions the group makes. Someone should take responsibility for writing up the agreed points and circulating them.

If you feel one of the sessions highlights a particular weakness for your group, consider returning to it for a second time after finishing the other sessions. Or you could tackle the weak area in more depth from *The Forgotten Ways Handbook*.

Some final suggestions

Work through the sessions again when you need reminding of the content, different things may come into focus for you next time. This is something you could do regularly, perhaps annually. Better still, read *The Forgotten Ways* and consider using *The Forgotten Ways Handbook* to discover a great deal more.

Encourage other groups to work through JDMC. Offer to guide them through it if that seems helpful, but encourage them to make their own choices about what is most relevant and useful in their own situation. If you are helping another group try to listen much more than you speak.

If you *do* decide to act as a guide for others it would be very useful to read *The Forgotten Ways* first and work through *The Forgotten Ways Handbook*. This will provide more detail and supporting information to help you answer questions and give useful advice.

Chris Jefferies – August 2014

Part One – An overview

Here's a question to get you thinking. 'Why doesn't church in the West grow explosively like the church described in the book of Acts?'

Discuss – List some of the ways church today and church at the beginning are different. (You might need to dip into Acts before meeting.)

Jesus told his disciples, 'Go and make disciples of all nations, and teach them everything that I have taught you'. How many of us actually go? How many make disciples? What was this *early, outgoing, discipling* church really like?

The gospels are full of hints and clues in the life of Jesus, and Acts describes the early years of the church in exciting detail. Jesus' followers were reviled and persecuted but determined to press on; they had one another and the presence of the Holy Spirit to sustain them in their constant outward movement.

The church grew from 120 people to 20 million in the first 300 years. Doesn't that fill you with a sense of challenge? Will you rise to it?

Discuss – Can you think of other examples of church movements that expanded explosively from tiny beginnings? How did they do it?

The key factors

Alan identifies six factors that he calls 'forgotten ways'. These factors were all active in the early church and in other examples of explosive growth; think of them as the DNA of the church. Alan suggests that if you follow Jesus, you already have this DNA, but perhaps some of it is inactive.

In the Western church, what has been lying dormant for so long needs to be brought back into activity. The seven sessions in this guide are intended to help you start the process and begin a more exciting journey.

This first section might leave you with more questions than answers. That is the intention, to get you wondering and pondering. The remaining six parts of the guide provide more focus and detail.

1 - Jesus at the centre

As his followers, Jesus should be central in all we do. Few would argue with that! The alternative is to do things in our own strength and wisdom and we know this will never be enough.

The early believers kept Jesus central in their lives and went out and changed their world. Although many of us today claim (and even sing) that Jesus is at the centre, what do we really mean by that? Do our actions truly bear out our words? Have other things got in our way? To some extent this is a way that we have forgotten.

Discuss – Is Jesus at the centre in your lives? Are there parts of life where he takes second place? Think about money, friends, hobbies, family life, work.

2 - Becoming disciples

This second forgotten way is about revealing Jesus to the people around us by becoming more and more like him. It demands a lifetime of challenge and we must grapple with it every single day.

Followers of Jesus are always growing in the fruit of the Spirit and encouraging one another. We learn to become more and more like him in what we say and do. The word 'Christian' began as a scornful nickname used by the Romans and Greeks and just means 'Little Christ'.

Discuss – Are you following Jesus' example? Take a look at Ephesians 5:1-2, or even the entire chapter. What's the principle here? Does being a disciple mean being perfect or does it mean growing to be more like Jesus?

3 - Outward and integrated

People who follow Jesus will be driven to go out into the world and will also feel the need to be deeply present in the surrounding culture and society.

Think about seeds, they need to be spread out far and wide but they should also be pressed in and covered over if they are to grow. Jesus went wide *and* deep, setting us an example. He was sent by his Father and lived among us in our world *as one of us*.

Discuss – What did 'going' involve for Jesus? Where did he come from? What did he have to leave behind? Think about the ways he embedded himself in our broken world and list as many as you can.

4 - Gifts for building

The fourth forgotten way involves the gifts of service identified by Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16. The gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd and teacher work together. Do we recognise these gifts in our brothers and sisters? The apostolic gift lays foundations and releases and stirs up the other gifts.

This form of guiding church life is so completely forgotten that it may seem strange to most of us. Our spiritual ears and eyes must be wide open even to see it, let alone walk in it.

Discuss – Think about the different ways we run church, Read Acts 14:14, in what sense were Paul and Barnabas apostles? (Hint: you'll need to read a big chunk of Acts to find the answer.)

5 - A living organism

This session looks at some important differences between organisations and organisms, particularly as they involve movements, networks and growth. As the body of Christ we are an embodiment of Jesus' life and resurrection.

Is the church alive or is it an institution? This is another long forgotten road we need to travel together, a forgotten way.

Discuss – Talk about the differences between organisms (animals, plants, people) and organisations (businesses, governments, schools). Who creates plants? Who creates schools? Who creates church?

6 - More than community

Strong and vibrant communities develop where there is a shared ordeal. We need to be on a risky journey together; we need to be drawn out of our comfort zones. It's not necessary to be persecuted, but it is necessary to be stretched in significant ways in our lives together.

This is the sixth forgotten way, something we are inclined to stop doing when we are comfortable and unchallenged.

Discuss – Is it natural for people to go beyond a place of comfort and safety? So why do we go on roller coasters? Where would you expect the strongest bonds to form, in an army detachment under fire or at a tea party? Why?

Six parts of a connected whole

The six forgotten ways are utterly dependent on one another. Think about a tree.

Trees have four principle parts – roots, trunks, branches and leaves. But if any part is missing the rest of the tree will die. Without roots the tree has no supply of water. Without the trunk the root would not receive food from the leaves and the leaves would lack water and wither. Without branches the leaves would have no support and the roots and trunk would be starved. Without leaves there would be no food supply and the tree would starve.

When all six elements of the forgotten ways are active, explosive growth is possible. And this is the key take-home message. Improvement in any one way is useful, but only when all six are active will the full benefit become clear.

Think of Jesus in the centre surrounded by and intimately involved in each of the other concepts – making disciples, going out and going deep, gifts for building, a living organism and more than community. Imagine all six elements at work together. Nothing will be impossible.

That is the dream; it's an awesome revelation. Let's watch Jesus turn that dream into reality in our lives together.

Discuss – What is the most important thing you have discovered during this part of the guide? (Different things may stand out for different people.)

Six strands supporting one another

For more information...

- Watch a video on this topic from *The Verge Network* - tinyurl.com/ndxb9oc
- Read the first part of *The Forgotten Ways* (up to the beginning of chapter 3)
- Study *The Forgotten Ways Handbook* (up to the end of chapter 1)
- Read *The Shaping of Things to Come*

Part Two – Jesus at the Centre

It's extremely important that Jesus is at the heart of our lives, both individually and in church life too. If we don't get this foundation right we cannot be built into what he wants us to be. What would happen if you built a house of heavy stones but didn't have proper foundations?

Where are you right now?

The fact is, this forgotten way is fundamental; everything else depends on it and results from it. We need Jesus to be in the right place because he is the only foundation we can trust (Matthew 16:15-20, 1 Corinthians 3:9-11). Has this way been truly forgotten? Not completely, perhaps, but we have sometimes been half-hearted in following it.

Discuss – Do you follow Jesus in everything? List some parts of your life where you do follow him. List some parts where you don't. Is he the foundation of your daily living, truly?

The One

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 makes it very clear; Yahweh is One and we are to love him with everything we have and are. What a dramatic change from earlier times when offerings and worship had to be made to many gods, perhaps repeatedly during the day. For us, today, 'Jesus is Lord' in exactly the same way (1 Corinthians 8:6). No other loyalties are acceptable in our lives, just Jesus.

There are at least three helpful habits we can develop; these are keeping Jesus at the centre, following Jesus alone, and putting the gospels way, way ahead of anything else.

Discuss – Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and think about the difference between one and many where gods are concerned. In John 10:30 what does Jesus mean when he says, 'I and the Father are one'? And in John 17:20-23, what does he mean when he prays for all his followers – including you and me?

Jesus at the centre

We need a fresh understanding of who Jesus really is, every explosive church growth movement throughout history has had this focus. Many of these movements were persecuted and this seems to have given them a fresh and urgent focus. They let go of everything that would hold them back and clung to the core of their faith.

We need to know how Jesus lived and worked because he intends to live and work in these same ways through us. We can so easily block him, that's part of having the privilege and responsibility of free will. And we are often overwhelmed by the complications and demands of modern life; our focus on the essential is lost and we are distracted by so many side issues.

To get away from everything that hinders us we need to focus on Jesus much more. The Bible calls him King, Shepherd, the One and Only, the Son, Master, Teacher, Lord, the Almighty with us (Immanuel), Prince of Peace, the Word and more. Jesus himself said, 'If you have seen me you have seen the Father'. By reading books about him, watching films

about his life, and going through the gospels repeatedly we will begin to notice for ourselves what he is like, what he says, what he does and who he is.

Carefully think about where you are spiritually. How do your lives (individually and together) compare with that of Jesus? What changes would he want to see? When you meet, remember that you are meeting *in Jesus' name*.

Make Jesus your primary model for mission. Study the ways he interacted with others, the things he said and the things he did. Prayerfully consider what you can learn from him.

Follow his example in leadership by recognising that he was a servant who washed his disciple's feet. He didn't have or desire any institutional or positional authority, but he had immense moral and spiritual authority. Character trumps position. Check this out in the gospels, see how Jesus led and made disciples, work to become more like him in this.

If Jesus is *not* the all-consuming centre of my life, I need to be asking the question who (or what) is?

Read 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 and consider what these verses mean. What do they tell you about Jesus? Jesus is described here as a channel for creation and for life. Our awareness of the Almighty's presence in our lives in and through Jesus should stir us up. It is *all* about him!

Jesus says he only does what he sees the Father do (John 5:19) and only says what he hears the Father say (John 12:49). He came to reveal the Father (John 14:9). It's time to start following him in this. Do only what you see Jesus do; say only what you hear him say; live to reveal Jesus. You will be surprised at the impact this will have. Gradually, even the way you think will change.

*Discuss – Why did Jesus wash his disciples feet? (see John 13:1-17)
Washing feet was a sign of welcoming guests into the home and honouring them. Whose home is Jesus, as a servant, welcoming them to? For more on the meaning of washing feet see Genesis 18:1-5 and Luke 7:36-50. And notice that washing feet is an action. Jesus is defined by what he does.*

Jesus alone

We need to avoid the common idea that we have two lives. There's the life we live in church and the life we live at work and in our free time. One life for Sunday mornings and perhaps a mid-week evening meeting, and another life for the rest of the week. One life with Christians, another life for worldly people. One life following Jesus, another life following our own desires and needs.

Recognise that it's necessary to see things very differently. *All* of life comes under Jesus' direction.

How might you restructure your life around Jesus? Are there things in life that are more important to you than Jesus? Career? Financial security? A nice home? The latest in home entertainment?

Make those 'ordinary' things holy! Every part of the Tabernacle was marked 'Holy to the Lord', not just the impressive parts, but every little thing. If we are truly a temple built of living stones, we are all marked 'Holy to the Lord', set apart for his exclusive use. How can you make cleaning, shopping, work and study holy? Sometimes we think of holiness in terms of what we avoid doing. Instead, begin to think more positively in terms of what you do.

Even the things that give us the greatest pleasure can be enjoyed in his presence, with his blessing and in gratitude. Sometimes we regard these things as worldly, and of course they *can* be if we misuse them. But they can (and should) also be brought into the place of holiness, part of the kingdom. Think of nothing as apart from him.

Worship is much more than singing songs and praising the Lord. Worship is living lives that honour Jesus, it's gratefully offering our world back to him. As you read the Bible pay attention to what constitutes worship and allow that learning to reshape how you define and practice worship.

Discuss – Do you reserve certain activities for use only in church? What are they? They might include prayer, worship and communion; is it possible to take these activities out into society? If not, why not? If so how?

In particular consider the everyday. How do you love the Lord, the creation, and other people (how do you treat them), consider your obedience, are you willing to spend time in Jesus' company?

Not only should Jesus be at the very centre of our lives, he should also not have to share that place with anyone or anything else.

Put the gospels first

Measure everything you do against what Jesus taught. And to get to grips with that teaching, read and think about the parables and topics like prayer, money and the kingdom; go through the Sermon on the Mount thoroughly. Do your best to absorb these truths into your daily life and expect to be deeply affected by them.

Reading the gospels on a steady cycle is one idea, aim to read some verses every day. If possible read the same passages as other people you know so you can talk about what you read and share insights. Get as many people as possible to join in. Study one of the gospels in depth from time to time. Studying a gospel can be done together or it might be made the topic for a teaching series.

When you read other parts of the New Testament, read them with the life, words, actions and nature of Jesus as the framework. Let Jesus be the source of light that makes the entire New Testament clear to you. And when you read the Old Testament books, look for Jesus there as well. Interpret everything with Jesus' teachings and actions in mind.

Discuss – Talk together about practical ways you might spend more time in the gospels. They focus on Jesus and they'll help you do the same.

Taking it further

Spread the benefits. If you found this session useful, encourage others to try it.

Where will you take this next? Make some notes about things you have decided to do and goals you want to achieve. Make a list of questions you want answered. Check out the extra information below. Come back and revisit this section from time to time.

Discuss – What is the most important thing you have learned during this part of the guide? Different things may stand out for different people. Which of the ideas here and those of your own could you begin to put into practice? (Don't bite off more than you can chew!)

No life without a beating heart

For more information...

- Watch a video on this topic from *The Verge Network* - tinyurl.com/p8bul7m
- Read chapter 3 of *The Forgotten Ways*
- Study chapter 2 of *The Forgotten Ways Handbook*
- Read *ReJesus*
- Visit *Cruising the Gospel* online - tinyurl.com/ode1dwv

Part Three – Becoming disciples

Becoming disciples is important because it's the main way believers grow to be more like Jesus. It's not a process with a beginning and an end; it's ongoing throughout our lives. And we're not automatically disciples simply because we have believed. Not all of the crowds who listened to Jesus or were healed by him were disciples. Only those who believed, followed and were greatly changed could claim to be disciples.

The English word 'disciple' is rather old-fashioned these days, but it has more or less the same meaning as 'apprentice'. In particular it's all about learning to do the things that the expert is already doing, and Jesus is the expert here. Apprentices don't just learn from books; this is a hands-on experience. At first, things will often go wrong, but apprentices get better and better by repeatedly doing something under supervision.

Because this change is hard and takes time, Jesus put most of his effort into three years of living closely with a small band of men and women who were prepared to do much more than simply be amazed. They were utterly transformed in those three years. The fact that Jesus worked this way reveals how important making disciples was and is. He put everything he had into those few, and when he returned to the Father they were the ones he continued to work with to reach the nations and build his church.

Jesus needs men and women who will become conformed to his image. They are his disciples.

The challenges for us include rejecting false gods such as consumerism, becoming more and more like Jesus, and understanding that we most effectively change by doing, not merely by thinking.

Discuss – 'We most effectively change by doing, not merely by thinking.' Is this true in your experience? List some examples. Think about the skills involved in sport, work, music, art. Are there any areas of life in which regular practice is unhelpful?

A less effective way

If we are going to become disciples, who will disciple us? Sometimes it's been thought that we need to follow others who have set us a good example. But if we follow another person there is always a risk of following some bad habits in amongst the good. This must be so; we know that nobody is perfect.

To do better than this we must follow a leader and guide who *is* perfect (Matthew 4:18-22, 5:43-48, John 10:30) , and that's a tall order indeed for any human being – except one.

Discuss – Who could you turn to as the One example to follow? Yes, the answer is obvious, of course. But what does this mean in practice? Talk together about anything you might try to help you become better disciples of Jesus.

Really mean business

We can begin by setting ourselves the highest standard for discipleship – the standard Jesus himself set us. This includes loving the Father with all our heart, mind and strength; denying

ourselves; lifting our own heavy cross; and following Jesus and loving those around us in active and meaningful ways (Luke 10:25-28, Matthew 16:24-25, James 2:14-17).

It will help us if we talk about these commitments daily, read what the Bible has to say about them, and pray and work together to sharpen our focus. Read the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17), especially the gospels, with a view to what we must *do* (not just what we must think). Regular patterns of prayer, together and alone, are essential (Philippians 4:6). Don't forget worship (Hebrews 12:28, Romans 12:1) another key part of becoming a disciple. And worship includes serving one another and the wider community, offering everything back to the Father.

So we need to become kinder, more generous and more patient. We must think about justice, and giving and using our spiritual gifts. And we will need to meet for praise and to encourage one another. We are responsible for the way we use our time, our skills and our money. These resources are not just for our own pleasure; the way we live speaks volumes about what we value – and the world is watching and listening.

We need to care about our neighbours and about the environment. How can we release more time for friends and family? Are there ways we can represent the Almighty's deep concern for justice? How can we better care for the environment? Try to become an ace recycler, or help keep the locality clean and tidy. Save fuel by turning down the heater or the air conditioner; drive less and walk short distances instead.

Jesus' disciples lived and travelled together, ate and talked and listened and learned together. Community is an essential part of being a disciple, for us as for them. He calls us to love one another as he loves us (Ephesians 4:32, Galatians 5:22-23).

Discuss – Pick one or two of the ideas in this section (or ideas of your own) and consider together how you could use them regularly to focus more on living as disciples of Jesus.

Be committed

It's useful to agree some standards to help us in our lives together as disciples; this guide doesn't give you any rules to follow so you will need to work out your own. Every group is different, but getting into some sort of discipleship rhythm is useful. Our aim is already clear (1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1) but the details need working out.

Try hard to discover what really matters most to you. You'll need to talk about it, and pray together, and you'll need patience because it may come gradually. You're looking for the group's sense of purpose, something that really grips you, a shared passion. Once you understand why your group exists you can begin to work out some of the details together. You'll be searching for objectives that are both exciting and challenging. As soon as you recognise these group purposes start working towards them.

Choose one or two activities for each of them. Some examples might help. Suppose you really care about the state of your local area, you might organise or join a weekly walk to clear litter or adopt a piece of waste ground and turn it into a beautiful flower bed. Or perhaps you're passionate about homeless people in your town. If so, find practical ways to regularly bring them food or give them shelter. Maybe the group feels driven to dig deep into the Bible: in that case work through a study course together, find and watch a relevant DVD or online video together each week, or share something significant that you've learned or found challenging. One or two could do this every time you meet, different people each time so that everyone is active in sharing.

If enough people in a group are actively making disciples it will become the norm. Talk about what you are doing, demonstrate it, give plenty of examples, tell stories of successful outcomes, and encourage others to share too. Try to get more groups of people engaged, tell them about your activities, invite them to come and see for themselves, suggest they try working through this guide with their own group, help them get started.

Discuss – Spend a little time right now talking about the group's passions and purpose. Consider options for practical ideas like the examples above, and decide how you could work on these together. If it's difficult to make progress give yourselves more time and come back to it in a few weeks or months.

We are all priests

No, I'm not suggesting you all sign up for holy orders – but we *are* a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a chosen race (1 Peter 2:9). In Israel the royal and priestly functions were separate. But in Christ they are combined, he is King of Kings (Revelation 19:16) and he is also our Great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14). Every single one of us is a servant of Christ and should be fully active.

Find out what everyone's leadership gifts are. We all have them, there are no exceptions. We all have the role and duty and joy of encouraging and equipping others for service. We must build one another up in love. It's part of discipleship, part of becoming like the Master.

Discuss – I can guarantee that everyone in your group has taken the lead in some way, great or small. Can you identify some of these leading abilities? It might be initiating something, reminding the group to listen to what the Spirit is saying, spreading a good idea to another group, caring for someone or explaining something.

Get stuck right in with the business of making disciples and growing in discipleship. Don't wait. Be active right from the start. Then reflect together, pray together and celebrate what Jesus is doing amongst you and around you. What went well? What might have been done better? What can you learn?

Keep going around this loop – action, reflection – action, reflection – do and grow. This can be very helpful, giving people a chance to experiment and learn about their strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Coaching can steer you through the process. It's much like sports coaching. Coaches should aim to empower, equip and energise Christ-like growth. You might need help to find or train suitable coaches, but it will be worthwhile.

Discuss – Do you see the value of reflecting on your successes and failures? Have you started doing this yet?

Keeping up the momentum

Don't lose what you have discovered in this part of the guide. Spend time after the discussion praying about how you should respond and listening to the Holy Spirit. Write down what you hear from him and record any significant thoughts, ideas or plans you have. And spread the benefits; if you found this session useful, encourage others to try it too.

As with every section of this guide, there's a real need to put what you are learning into practice. It needs to move from being head knowledge to being something you do. In fact, it

will work much better the other way round; begin with some doing and the head knowledge will gradually crystallise.

So don't spend too much time theorising and planning. Make some simple choices and get started. There are some ideas in the notes above, and there are many more in the sources listed under 'More information' below. But often, the most relevant ideas may be those you think up for yourselves.

Discuss – Is anything holding you back? If so identify it and deal with it. If not, go and make a start on the activities you decided on!

Following the Master in every way

For more information...

- Watch a video on this topic from *The Verge Network* - tinyurl.com/nnotj6w
- Read chapter 4 of *The Forgotten Ways*
- Study chapter 3 of *The Forgotten Ways Handbook*
- Read *Untamed*
- Consider Life Transformation Groups - tinyurl.com/lxnmjd8

Part Four – Outward and integrated

On the one hand this is about being mission minded, a people who are always going out into the world. On the other hand it's about being embedded in the culture around us, a people who are deeply involved.

Mission is far more than just a church activity because it's based on Father's constant intention to mend and restore creation. We often try to attract or even cajole the world into coming to what we are doing, but Father sends us out instead. Drawing people in separates them from their culture and friends. But to catch lots of fish we must put out to sea where the fish live, not just sit on the pier with a rod and line trying to hook the fish and pull them onto dry land.

Discuss – How fully present will you be among the people you want to reach? Do you know who they are yet?

Be wary of reforming people, persuading them to wear different clothes, eat different food or change their customs, culture and language. This won't reveal Christ to them; if you claim to represent Jesus, they will assume that he is like you. Jesus came to live among the ordinary people of Judaea and Galilee and he expects us to live among the people around us and identify with them; this demands that we go deep, something Paul understood and practised (1 Corinthians 9:19–23). Jesus shows us how to do it, he ate with Pharisees and tax collectors. He was fully present. He came as a servant and he shared the good news. It's completely astounding that the Almighty Creator of the universe lived as a man among the village folk of Galilee for thirty years – and nobody noticed! That shows us how deeply he involved himself in the local culture, he became invisible.

Jesus is our example for going out and going deep. These two activities work together so that the gospel (good news) and the church (the gospel people) become firmly embedded in the local community. Rapid expansion is not going to happen any other way. We need to understand that knowing Jesus more deeply will lead us into both going out (Luke 10:1-4) and going deep (Luke 10:5-7). That will affect what church looks like in the place where we live. If we let him, Jesus will take us first into mission and then into new church life shaped as he wants it to be. And this will be different depending on whether we live in France or Fiji, inner city or village, or among the poor or rich.

Discuss – Will you identify with people as you find them, or will you bring your own culture with you as if that, too, is part of the good news? Jesus came in weakness, he came to give up his life. Talk about what that might mean for you as you follow him.

Getting out there

Getting close to the people we want to connect with is something we can plan for. Living in the locality is a good start. Find out where people gather and go there regularly (Acts 16:13-16, Acts 17:17), if possible go in pairs or small groups. Cafes, sports clubs, pubs, the market place and local parks are all good places to choose. Use these places for your planning meetings and discussions. Walk your dog regularly and get to know the people you meet on the way, take books and study material to the library or a local cafe and read there. Join

local clubs and societies that interest you. The more often you are in the same place at the same time the more likely you are to meet the same people and get to know them.

You will need to make space for this if your life is busy. Good relationships grow informally over time so be available for that to happen. Stay longer to talk; be willing to go somewhere else when a friend needs help with something. Make time at weekends when most people relax; simplify and streamline your life to make this possible. Reduce the time you spend planning and meeting as a group or church so that you can be more available in the local community.

Be creative and try as many new ideas as you can. A good way to start random conversations with people is to offer them something they don't expect. Take a container of cupcakes to give away, or hot soup in the winter. Ask people to choose their favourite photo from a folder and then give it to them to take home. You'll be surprised how open people can be when you do things like this.

Ask yourselves questions such as – Where do people gather? Where do they find meaning and identity? Where is the Lord already working? How can I join in? What does good news look like to these people? Think about the groups of people you are being called to reach. Make friends with local influencers and leaders, people who are spiritually open and have good reputations.

Discuss – Talk about some ways you might go out taking love and good news with you. What groups of people do you think you might reach? Think of things that will work among those people. What would be good news for them? Write down these ideas so you can refer back to them later. Take a moment to pray about it before moving on with the next section.

Deeply integrated

Become significant in the lives of other people by making the time and commitment for it to happen. Your local culture is an asset, so use it to the full; be involved in significant events like weddings, funerals, birthdays and parties. Develop conversational skills, interact like Jesus did, follow up with people, and build a network of friendships. But don't spread yourself too thinly; devote most of your time to relatively few people so you can get to know them well. Take part in local projects and groups, community gardens, fund raising for a school, helping at a care home, joining a walking group or anything like that.

Discuss – See how many ideas you can list that involve local activities. Choose one or two of them and consider how you could make a start (as individuals and together as a group).

It's essential to share the story of the good news with people. This means noticing opportunities as they arise in conversation, loving people deeply, finding out how the Lord has already touched them, and focussing on Jesus. Remember that Father is already at work in people's lives; try to find out how, listen well, and ask probing questions (Jesus did).

Storytelling is a great tool. Tell some of the stories that Jesus told (the parables) and use your own words to share the things he did and the conversations he had. But don't forget to tell the stories of Jesus' work in your own life and those of others you know. People engage with stories and often identify with them and become emotionally involved. As an example, Luke 7:36-50 is a great story to tell to anyone who wants to come closer to Jesus. Build your own collection of favourite stories, learn them well and tell them in your own words

when people need to hear them.

Discuss – Talk about some stories you might use. Pick something from the gospels or something from your own lives. Has someone been touched by Jesus and changed in some way?

Not only must we speak the good news, we must live it out too. People will notice straight away if what we say and what we do don't match up. As in everything, just look to Jesus for some examples. He loved life and he loved people (John 11:1-3), he ate and drank with them, partied with them (John 2:1-11), and demonstrated the love, welcome and joy that is in the Father's heart. He said, 'I only do what I see the Father do'.

Here's the theory – by watching Jesus at work we see what the Father is like. And by watching *us* at work people will see what Jesus is like. Now go and turn that theory into practice. Demonstrate Jesus' love and grace to the people around you. To do it you will need to live a life that's deeply integrated in the local culture.

Holy does not mean distant or stuffy. Jesus is holy and we must follow him into the energy and joy of living just as he did. So be light and salt; make people's lives brighter and better flavoured. Be kind, be thoughtful, love much, maybe there are ways you can turn water into wine (at least figuratively). Eat with people and do it regularly. Sharing reveals Father's welcoming nature. Invite the poor and disadvantaged, become known for the best parties in your area.

Discuss – Think about the many ways you could show people that you love them. What about the difficult people who sometimes seem hard to love? How will you behave towards people like that? List some ways to bless and encourage the people you know.

Expect a new faith community to gradually develop as you continue to go deep. Let it grow in its own way, don't try to mould it into what you have done before, let the community own it. And don't try to draw people out of their natural culture. Don't just identify with local people but allow yourself to become one of them. Try to understand which aspects of the community support the gospel and what gets in the way. Focus on ways of rescuing the culture and guiding it towards Father's purpose for it.

Mission can and should continue from this new community. Send small groups out again to carry the gospel into further new contexts.

Probe and challenge

Jesus often challenged commonly held views in Jewish culture. The Samaritans are a good example; they were strongly disliked by Jews and seen as unholy and to be avoided. Jesus came into Jewish culture and lived amongst the people who held these views, but he challenged them.

One way he did this was to tell the story of the good Samaritan. Another way was by having a shocking conversation with a Samaritan woman at the well outside her village. The disciples were surprised but afraid to ask him about it (John 4:27).

On another occasion, Jesus healed a group of lepers; one of them was a Samaritan. Read what happened next in Luke 17:11-19.

We, too, should sometimes challenge the accepted norms of the local culture. Where there are thought patterns or customs that are strongly against the underlying principles Jesus taught, we can and should find ways to call people to change. But be very careful,

where there is *no* conflict with the way of Jesus we are not justified in calling for change. Victorian missionaries sometimes made this mistake by assuming they should bring their culture as part of the good news.

Discuss – Think about missionaries in Africa in the nineteenth century. Which of the following things needed to change and which did not? – Clothing, education, head hunting, nose piercing, body paint, farming, medicine, cursing enemies? How can you avoid making similar mistakes?

Keep on going

It would be a pity to work through this part of the guide and then move on as if nothing had changed. See the material as an opportunity to live life differently in the future. Keep changing, keep moving forward, return to this part of the guide again to check on progress. What has changed in your lives since the last time, what still needs to change?

It's always possible to go out and deep more than before; so don't stand still, keep learning and experimenting with new ways of reaching out. Go deeper and deeper into the community and culture you are trying to reach.

Remember Jesus' great command to 'Go and make disciples of every nation'.

Further and deeper, again and again

For more information...

- Watch a video on this topic from *The Verge Network* - tinyurl.com/711f36b
- Read chapter 5 of *The Forgotten Ways*
- Study chapter 4 of *The Forgotten Ways Handbook*
- Read *Right Here Right Now*

Part Five – Gifts for building

Everything that happens in life depends on its surroundings, and that can have a big impact. Any gardener will tell you that some plants need plenty of sun and a freely draining soil, others need moist and shady conditions, and yet others only grow in acid soils. And of course almost nothing grows in a desert.

Jesus said, 'I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it' (Matthew 16:18). So what sort of environment has he provided in which this building (or growing) will take place? History shows that whenever there has been major growth in mission there has always been apostolic leadership at work.

Discuss – What do you think an apostle is? What does an apostle do? Don't worry if you are vague about the work of apostles; church in the West has had little to say about them for a very long time.

People with an apostolic gift draw the church back to its essential task, guiding it into reaching and changing the world. This work of mission has been forgotten again and again throughout church history. Not only that, apostles stir us up into developing our own gifts and callings.

These people care for the gospel and remind us of its eternal purpose. They pioneer new forms of mission and church, they take care that all six forgotten ways are present and active. They keep things on track, and they offer a nurturing home where other essential gifts can work to good effect. In the list below, each gift produces a suitable environment for the next one.

Work of an apostle > Work of a prophet > Work of an evangelist > Work of a shepherd > Work of a teacher – (APEST).

These are all gifts of service; the purpose of the gifts is for the building up of the church so that we can all become mature (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the long history of the Western church, the apostolic and some other service gifts have been overlooked and only those of pastor (shepherd) and teacher have been widely used. The results have been ineffective and short on impact. There is no space in JDMC to detail the other gifts, but check the additional information at the end of this part for more about apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers.

We'll look at the five main activities of apostles (pioneering mission, activating the forgotten ways, identifying purpose, growing the gifts, and making connections). See if you can spot people like this in your own group; they're almost certainly there. Help them to become active, value them, encourage them. And why not try for yourself? Anyone can do apostolic things at some level, but people with an apostolic gift will revel in them and excel.

Great places to look for inspiring examples are Acts and the New Testament letters. Paul is a wonderful example of the gift of apostle. Read *Journeys to Significance* for more about Paul. And don't forget that Jesus reveals in himself all of the gifts from apostle right through to teacher, so look for powerful examples in the gospels too.

Discuss – Can you find at least one or two examples of each of the five apostolic activities in the New Testament? If you're stuck, come back to the question after completing the rest of this part of JDMC.

Pioneering mission

Releasing new communities is a healthy thing to do, so always have new projects on the go. Dream, pray, form teams, and make a start. Apostolic stimulation and guidance are needed for this to happen, and it can't be rushed. Close supervision and micromanagement are very unhelpful.

Try lots of new ideas even if they seem risky: see failure as a chance to learn. It's useful to think about Christianity as always pioneering things; there are plenty of biblical examples of this; find them and study them. Make and cheer on some heroes (people who will go out and try new things).

Discuss - Are you at a stage where you can begin to spawn off new communities? Even if you are a very new group yourselves, you can dream about it, pray about it and talk about it. If you've been together for more than a year, ask yourselves, 'What is holding us back?'

Implant the idea of mission in the heart of the community. Tell stories about the early church and the church in China. Suggest everyone reads books like *The Starfish and the Spider*. Get everyone to consider how to make church simple and reproducible.

Map out the process needed and get people to work through it. Often, the map will emerge later and can be written down when it's clear.

Activating the forgotten ways

This is all about a culture and a way of life. Encourage people to work through JDMC and read *The Forgotten Ways* for themselves; help them understand the ideas it contains. It may not be clear to people at first, especially as parts of it have been forgotten for a very long time and are not part of normal church life in the West. Make sure the thinking is clear concerning the entire system, not just the six parts individually. Being active in mission helps a group live as Jesus has called them to do. People with an apostolic gift will help a group grow in these ideas by explaining their value and guiding their development.

As a group, think about Father's work in redeeming his creation. Read and explore the Bible on this, go to conferences together, listen to recorded teaching, share books and articles about going out and going deep.

Retelling stories of success is one of the most inspiring things you can do. It will help you see how you've been used in the past, remind you of your calling and make the future clearer. Write down your most meaningful and exciting stories, ask people for memories, keep photos and make slide shows, interview people and collect the stories in a book.

Discuss – Even if you are a new group, it's likely you have at least a few stories to tell. Re-share them and write them down now, before they are forgotten. They'll be useful later!

As you go out to reach the world together, put time aside to think and pray about what you are doing. Ask one another questions about how things are going. A weekend retreat now and then will help with this sort of planning and remembering. Don't slip back from mission and become inward-focused; it happens all too easily.

Reawaken one another to the gospel, are you drifting away from your first calling as mission-minded people? Be wary of busyness and make mission an essential part of the rhythms of life. Mission-focussed prayer helps the six elements work together as they should, so keep mission at the heart of your prayer together. This will help everyone remember that Father stirs up mission and is involved in it. Jesus said we should pray for more workers in the harvest. Consider prayer walking areas where you're connecting with people.

Identifying purpose

There will be a reason that your group exists, it is likely to be something to do with a shared passion which has been implanted in you by the Lord for a specific purpose. Find out what you are passionate about. Is it a particular function (such as helping the poor, feeding the hungry, or reaching the lonely)? Is it to reach out to a specific area or people group? Whatever it may be, talk about it, pray about it, and ask one another significant questions. Apostolic leadership will help this process.

It takes patience and commitment to discover purpose. Pray regularly, reflect and work together, ask outsiders who are familiar with what you do. Here are some useful questions... Why did the Lord create the group? What was the original dream? How has the group been used? What does the group do best?

Discuss – What is your purpose? If you don't yet know, agree to spend some time investigating.

Growing the gifts

Read and watch material that helps you develop a better understanding of the five service gifts (they're often called ministry gifts). Talk together about your gifts and give one another feedback; most people will be strong in one or more gifts. Make sure you understand that these gifts are not limited to experts or famous leaders, but they are distributed throughout the body. If any of the gifts are significantly absent in your group ask Jesus to bring the right people to join you. There's no room in this guide to examine all the service gifts in depth, but it's important to understand them all as soon as possible. Make time for this.

Use the *do it and consider it* approach mentioned earlier. Provide books, DVDs and articles and encourage people to go to conferences and workshops. Find suitable networks. Explore 'For more information' at the end of this part of JDMC and use the material.

Be careful not to control anyone, there's no need for it and it undermines the life that Father has poured into the group as a whole. Instead, just inspire people and let them do what they do best. People don't have power because it's been granted by a leader but because it's been granted by the Lord. Look for passion, ask questions, and encourage experimentation. Free up time for all this, don't over-programme, and aim to get the group dreaming.

Discuss – Delegate five people from your group (or five small teams of people) to find out whatever they can about the five service gifts. One person or team to investigate one gift. Agree a time to report back, perhaps a week or two.

Sparking connections

Apostolic people are typically catalysts, they link others together for positive action. Encourage them! They are starters, full of ideas, and they are people who inspire others. Catalysts get people talking and connect people with similar passions. They intuitively keep track of people and relationships. Sometimes they even network networks. If that sounds strange, just think of the internet. It's called the internet because it networks networks. Companies, government departments, universities and other organisations network their own computers internally. And the internet is a network that connects together all these smaller networks. Apostles may work at that sort of scale – Paul did.

People with an apostolic gift are widely connected and love to put the people they know in touch with one another. Sometimes the results are startling and unpredictable (in a good way). Movements really need people who can do this, it makes it far easier for good ideas to be shared widely and rapidly. A well-connected movement is an agile movement. Not everyone who sparks connections is apostolic, but all apostles are good at this.

Discuss – Do you know anyone with this ability to connect people and build networks? Could you do this too? Like all the gifts of service, this is part of the church DNA that is in all of us.

Facilitating growth and change

Bounce ideas off one another and keep thinking about the gifts of service. Try to work out where each of you is strongest.

Think about the others in the group and encourage any strengths. Tell one another, 'I noticed you come alongside Steve when he was struggling. It seems to me you have some of the instincts of a shepherd. Well done!', or, 'I'm glad you reminded us to pray earlier, we needed to hear that.' And above all, look for and encourage everyone who shows signs of actively pressing forward with new things, laying foundations, making a fresh start, stirring people up, drawing out dormant gifts.

Gifts of service to equip and build

For more information...

- Watch a video on this topic from *The Verge Network* – tinyurl.com/oxpdsoa
- Read chapter 6 of *The Forgotten Ways*
- Study chapter 5 of *The Forgotten Ways Handbook*
- Read *The Permanent Revolution*
- Watch Neil Cole taking about leadership – tinyurl.com/oxvohfr
- Read *Journeys of Significance* by Neil Cole
- Read *Release the APE* – tinyurl.com/pfqt9xc
- Visit the Newforms Resources website – tinyurl.com/mu2op5u

Part Six – A living organism

The New Testament likens the church and the kingdom of heaven to various other things. These include the human body (1 Corinthians 12:27), farmers' fields (1 Corinthians 3:9), the effect of yeast (Matthew 13:33), seeds (1 Corinthians 3:6) and trees (Luke 13:18-19). These are great illustrations because church actually does behave quite like a living thing. Church is alive! It is Christ's body.

Think about it. The church grows, reproduces and responds to the world around it. It develops and matures; it spreads like seeds or a virus. The good news about Jesus spreads from one receptive person to the next as we talk about it and especially as we live it out. Some of the most astonishing Jesus movements have had loose network structures and have spread widely and rapidly. Think in terms of a forest or a city of people; each tree or citizen is like a local church while a movement is a network like a forest or city.

It's very important to encourage real life in church; we need to get the structure right for that and we will have to help the lifelike processes of growing and reproducing come to the fore. To do this, we must avoid too much organisation and control, things we tend to like because they make us feel useful and safe. But we shouldn't be in control – *Jesus* should!

Discuss – Talk about the structure and management of what you do. Are there things you need to change? Are there things you should stop doing? How can you free people up and encourage more natural processes to take over?

Keep moving on

Think and talk about church as a movement. Aim to plant movements, not churches. Pay attention to stories of great movements past and present, read books about them, get excited about the possibilities.

Begin consciously *behaving* as a movement. Be fluid and adaptable, ready to take risks, build in lifelike structures, aim to multiply, dream and experiment, look into ways of changing from what you are to what you need to become. Remember that movements are networks; find many ways of connecting people as widely as you can.

Discuss – What might prevent you from moving forward? Talk about the way you think, your expectations and your goals. Are these as flexible as they need to be? When change becomes necessary, what forces might stand in the way? What is the difference between a movement and a church?

Structure for life

Change or remove anything and everything that stifles real life; good structures are very simple and easy to copy. Think about gardening rather than engineering because gardening involves living things. What is the easiest way to make a city? What is the easiest way to make a forest?

Remember that living things grow by themselves according to the life code (DNA) that is within them. An oak tree cannot produce grains of wheat and an acorn can never grow into a cabbage. In the same way, it's impossible for the church to produce seeds of injustice

and someone who follows Jesus can never create a gathering of murderers. Each grows according to its type. Jesus said we'd be known by the fruit we produce, either good or bad. Aim to produce plentiful, good fruit! (Matthew 7:15-20).

In other words, you don't need to *make* the church grow. All you can do is help the process start and provide the right conditions. Take good seed, bury it to the right depth in well tilled and manured ground, make sure it has enough water, keep away weeds and pests and your job is done. There *will* be a good harvest, but it might take a little time and patience.

Make sure leaders expect to give power away, not hold onto it as the world tends to do. Leaders should always see themselves as servants (Matthew 20:25-28). Encourage every single part of your group to think for itself, and give everyone the opportunity to use their gifts and interests freely and fully. What did Paul write about the body of Christ? (Ephesians 4:11-13) Encourage passion and ownership by telling great stories; invite people to act with boldness and 'have a go'; involve *everyone* in planning. Celebrate every success; rethink and retry after every failure. Learn from every mistake and look for the positive aspects; never give up.

Share information as widely and openly as possible. Get apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers to explain what they do to everyone. Share any problems and talk about them; if possible become part of a wider network; welcome change whenever it's needed. Don't try to turn chaos into order but instead see if you can find meaning in the chaos. You may need to change your point of view or encourage others to say what *they* think.

It's best to structure things around the passion, energy and life that you see in people. Everyone is a potential power house in their own, unique way so encourage them to be more active, not less. Don't build 'windbreaks' that slow the wind down, instead build 'windmills' that harness its energy. Remove obstructions to active life and, when that is not possible, find alternative pathways to get past them. Build mission and church around people's interests, and choose meeting times to avoid clashing with social gatherings in the wider community. Let go when something is no longer useful, support new ideas and fresh energy whenever they appear in the group.

Shared beliefs and purposes are great at holding networks together. So form common values, beliefs and practices and help newcomers to understand them. Find simple, clear, memorable ways to talk about them. Share the stories of the group's origins often and in as many ways as possible. Encourage one another and tell people why you value them.

Discuss – Spend some time right now to dig out the stories of how your group got started. Write these stories down; perhaps someone will volunteer to collect them in a notebook or folder or post them to a blog. Also, talk about the ideas in this section. How many of them are you already doing? List examples. Where do you need to do better?

Connect and communicate

Missional churches typically connect beyond their own horizons. Use what others have done rather than developing it again from scratch, collaborate especially in areas like training. Host workshops, make books, DVDs and digital material available, organise a retreat with other groups, share meals, bread and wine together.

Don't keep anything to yourself. Let others learn from your mistakes and celebrate your

successes. Share church newsletters and calendars. Set aside time in meetings for people to share, use email and the web to send out articles. Promote good books, provide lists of email addresses, set up a social network group.

Dream and plan with other groups. Leaders don't need to do all the planning but should aim to awaken others to dream and think and plan. Ask questions like, "What is the Lord preparing for us?", "Where is he already at work in the community?", "What does good news look like for the people around us?"

Make alliances, you will need good character, relationships, respect and appreciation for this. Do whatever you can to help others succeed in mission. Identify the essential issues and seek to understand more than to be understood.

Discuss – What have you already done as a group that you could share more widely? Even very early in the process there will be good things to offer others. Make a list of these things. Can you think of other people or groups that might benefit from hearing some of your stories? How will you contact them? Don't just talk about this, but begin doing it.

Sneeze the gospel

The gospel will spread quite easily and very widely if the conditions are right, just as it did in the early church. Part of our task as Jesus' followers is to match the message to the society and culture we are part of. Read Acts and list the ways the early church did it.

Simple messages that are deep and meaningful work best; "Jesus is Lord" is a really great example because it captures a central and essential truth in just three words. It's necessary that the message and the gathered people who carry it can be very easily and quickly transferred. Distil the essence of the gospel and make church as simple and reproducible as possible. At the very least that demands avoiding complications in both the message and the messengers.

Experiment without waiting for perfection, but learn from your mistakes. Look for new ideas, new people and shared learning. Value and highly celebrate anyone who pioneers new frontiers in doing and thinking. Let new believers develop their own forms of church as you pass on the basics about gospel and community. Use the passions, gifts and lifestyles you find already present.

The gospel should be really simple to catch and very infectious. But progress may seem slow so you will need to be quite persistent and very, very patient. Pray often and with great hope and expectation; think carefully and sympathetically about the host community but keep church as simple as you can, small and really easy to copy.

Discuss – You are already far enough along to begin spreading the good news far and wide. I'm telling you – you are! Talk about how this process is going. Think together about better ways to work in the future. Can you simplify things? Pray for specific people you know who need to hear and see the truth. How will you demonstrate Jesus to them?

Facilitating growth and change

Think deeply and talk together about what you are doing; pray about how you should reach those around you. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you and guide you. Consider re-reading this part of JDMC later and revising your approach as necessary.

Do your best to be practical but try to understand the underlying reasons for what you are doing as well. Bounce ideas off one another and keep thinking about how living things grow and reproduce. Try to work out where you are weak and where you are strong. The objective is to keep moving forwards and trying new things. Think in terms of new ways and old ways, going forward but also reflecting on where you have come from, focussing on Jesus but not for one moment forgetting the people living all around you. Remember the seeds but don't forget the tree, remember the tree but don't forget the forest!

Full of life, growing and thriving

For more information...

- Watch a video on this topic from *The Verge Network* – tinyurl.com/p8v1fk4
- Read chapter 7 of *The Forgotten Ways*
- Study chapter 6 of *The Forgotten Ways Handbook*
- Read *On The Verge*
- Read the story of *Elzeard Bouffier* – tinyurl.com/ld133yc

Part Seven – More than community

We need much more than just community, we need shared commitment, real brothers and sisters who will suffer for one another. Think in terms of the films Band of Brothers, Lord of the Rings, The Matrix, or good old Star Wars. Life together in danger or on an adventure is a powerful thing. This is something that marks the early church and the Chinese church as distinctly different from traditional Western church.

The Bible certainly supports this idea, just consider David and his men, or for that matter Jesus and his disciples. Life together in danger, turmoil and uncertainty creates very strong commitment and a shared purpose.

Living as part of a missional community exposes us to the right kind of experiences. We have to take risks, we may be rejected sometimes, we have to get outside our comfort zone and we encourage one another along the way.

Can you think of more examples of shared commitment similar to David and his men or Jesus and the disciples? Acts is a good place to look.

Vision that will change us

Dream together; a shared vision is a great way to draw people beyond friendship into becoming true comrades. People need a sense of ownership, it's not enough to tell people what to do, so work together on the vision, talk about it, and start to develop it.

Understand comradeship – Find biblical examples and study them, watch films together and discuss what it means to share in dangerous adventure as a team. Work together on a short-term mission of some kind and discuss the shared experience. To develop this kind of powerful community you will need to do far more than meet in a room and talk. Vision and action need to go hand in hand.

Spend a few minutes right now to think this through and come up with one or two ideas for shared action. Look again at Part Four and Part Six of this guide for some ideas, or look at the many ideas in the resources at the end of this part.

Church at the heart of life

Church should be for people, not people for church; we need to integrate church in the context of life. Everything church does needs to be in the context of the local community. Avoid special and artificial environments. How can you rearrange church in your local culture? Consider what you do and how you are organised, do these things fit well with the community and make church accessible to them?

Going out and deep - Are you located close to the community? Often? Are you open to spontaneous interaction? Think up some new ways to achieve these goals. Check out Part Four again for more ideas but add others of your own.

How can you best get involved in your local community? Brainstorm for a list of ideas that fit your own environment. Do you know your society and culture well enough to make appropriate choices? If not, talk about how you might change this. Pick one or two ideas from your list and begin work.

Get involved

Get deeply involved in efforts already being made by the community. Good things to do include caring for the environment, fundraising, volunteering, pursuing justice, travelling to a third-world country to serve people in need, helping with a food bank or the elderly.

Find ways to reach your community with other believers. You could join a local sports club or book club or go to the same pub on Sunday afternoons or do something with friends from work or with neighbours. Do it with other Christians and do it regularly.

Be adventurous and take some risks. Risky, adventurous experiments are good for us. Be original. Think of new ways to communicate the gospel and be church in modern society. It's not easy! Use New Testament stories for encouragement. Make plenty of space for change and experiment. How can you connect with an unreached group in the community? Try out new ways of doing church and mission. Gather for discussions on philosophy or other topics, preferably in a pub or coffee shop.

Church doesn't need to be the exclusive source of the projects believers engage in. What do you think about this statement? Try to list some things the community is already doing that you could become involved with.

Facilitating growth and change

Spend some time with one another to pray together about how you should respond; ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes and hearts and listen to him as he guides you. Don't feel you must all get together to do this; two here, three there can listen and hear whenever they are in the same place for five minutes or more.

Bounce ideas off one another and keep thinking about new ways of being active as a community. Tell one another about the buzz you get from working together. Encourage more people to get involved.

There are some helpful tools out there to get you started with deliberate and focussed listening, both to the Holy Spirit and to one another. Try them out, and if they help, use them, if not try something different. But don't be inactive. How will you grow and go forward if you don't know how to listen?

If you have not been used to listening to the Spirit, try Virkler together. If you find it hard to express your hearts to one another try SASHET. Both are described in 'Church of Two' below.

Growing together through thick and thin

For more information...

- Watch a video on this topic from *The Verge Network* - tinyurl.com/436bgxv
- Read chapter 8 of *The Forgotten Ways*
- Study chapter 7 of *The Forgotten Ways Handbook*
- Read *The Faith of Leap*
- *Church of Two (CO2)* – tinyurl.com/1kun6as

Last words

Not the end, just the beginning

Please don't think that because you have reached the end of the guide, you have also reached the end of the journey. I hope you'll explore the more detailed books on 'The Forgotten Ways' as well.

The seven parts of this JDMC guide are just that – a guide. You will only grow and progress if you do the work yourselves daily, weekly, and on into the extraordinary future that Father already has planned for you. He will show you and lead you but you must take the steps one by one. As you live and work and discover new things together you can expect to grow significantly and have an impact on those around you.

An intricate fabric

Remember that the six forgotten ways are woven together to form a rich and intricate fabric. Although I've presented them here individually and in a linear form, they are not like that in reality. Each depends on the others, all are needed in our lives together. They don't begin with knowing Jesus and end with doing stretching things together, they are more like a grand party where the participants, the music, the lighting, the flowers, the food, and the decorations create an unparalleled overall experience. Take one of them away and the party will be much the poorer.

Just do it!

So make a start in your own lives and your own situation. Listen to what the Spirit says and do what he tells you. Keep Jesus at the centre. Make disciples and grow as disciples yourselves. Make sure to go out but also embed yourselves deep in the local culture. Explore your giftings and encourage one another in using them. Don't over-organise but be ever more fully alive as parts of one living body. And face some stretching challenges together.

A blessing

I bless you in the name of Jesus, that you may you find yourselves at the heart of revolutionary and explosive growth. It might seem to begin ever so slowly, but stick with it and see what it will become!

*Glory to the Most High in heaven above, and
peace on earth for everyone on whom his favour
rests (Luke 2:14)*