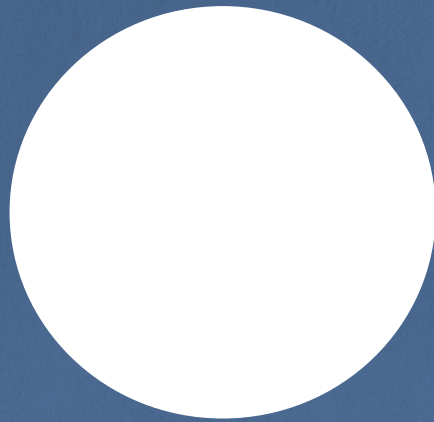


discipleship

ideas

SOLUTIONS FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL & SMALL GROUP LEADERS





YOU CAN STOP JUST LIVING YOUR LIFE AND START LIVING LIFE

A SPIRIT-EMPOWERED LIFE

Discover the World-Changing Journey God Has Designed for You

\$14.99

You don't have to search for power in books, programs, or popular experts. If you'll invest just 10 minutes a day for 40 days to read the short chapters in *A Spirit-Empowered Life*, you'll learn what it means to experience true power.

■ PART ONE: THE HUNGER

Everything starts with hunger. Without it, we struggle to find the abundant life God promises.

■ PART TWO: THE ENCOUNTER

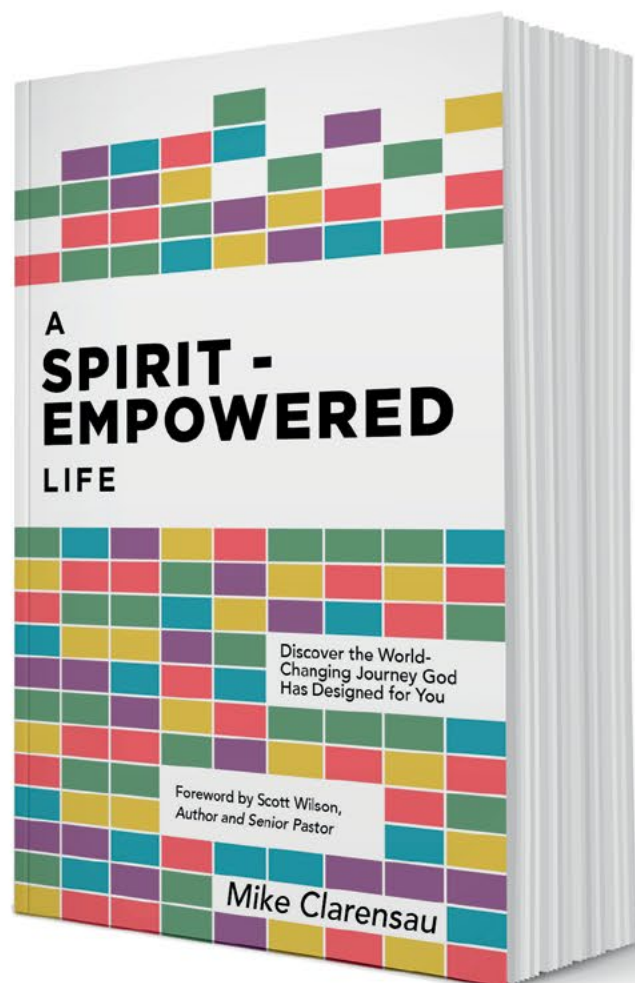
Your encounter with God has no expiration date. Open the door to Him and find a life beyond believing.

■ PART THREE: THE DEMONSTRATION

Our mission is to connect, grow, serve, go, and worship. This is the critical ingredient to our strength as Spirit-empowered believers.

■ PART FOUR: THE HORIZON

Continue expecting to encounter a purpose greater than ourselves.



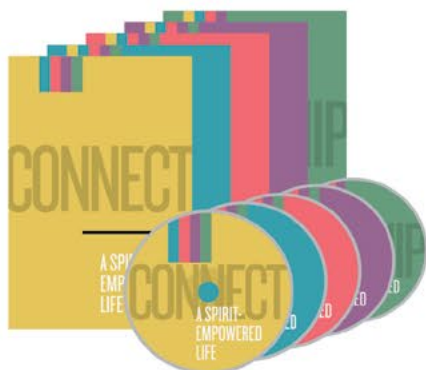
Find out more and order today at
myhealthychurch.com/spiritempowered



SPIRIT-EMPOWERED.

A SPIRIT-EMPOWERED LIFE: SMALL GROUP KITS

CONNECT | GROW | SERVE | GO | WORSHIP



A SPIRIT-EMPOWERED LIFE
SMALL GROUP KIT
\$27.99 per kit



A SPIRIT-EMPOWERED LIFE
SMALL GROUP KIT - Spanish
\$27.99 per kit



A SPIRIT-EMPOWERED LIFE
SMALL GROUP KIT - Youth
\$27.99 per kit

Each A Spirit-Empowered Life Small Group Kit for Connect, Grow, Serve, Go, and Worship leads participants to a deeper understanding of how Holy Spirit empowerment makes an extraordinary difference in our lives. The DVD offers engaging teaching segments and testimonies featuring personal stories. The coordinating Study Guide provides easy-to-follow Bible studies and daily devotions. Each of these 15 kits contains 4 lessons.



6

contents

PAGE 6

There's Gotta Be More...



8

PAGE 8

Radiant Life themes

PAGE 9

Vida Nueva themes



14

PAGE 12

A Spirit-Empowered Church: The Missing Process



MY HEALTHY CHURCH®
Equipping Spirit-Empowered People

For more information about all the resources featured in *Discipleship Ideas*, visit **MyHealthyChurch.com** or call **1-855-642-2011**.

ORDERING INFORMATION

Discipleship Ideas comes to you every quarter, filled with great resources[†] for building disciples of all ages. For additional copies of *Discipleship Ideas*, call 1.855.642.2011.

U.S. & INTERNATIONAL

PHONE: 1.855.642.2011
7:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. (Central Time) Monday-Friday
FAX: 1.877.840.5100 (24 hours a day*)
INTL. PHONE: 417.866.8014 (at customer expense)
INTL. FAX: 417.862.0414 (at customer expense)
MAIL: My Healthy Church
1445 N. Boonville Ave, Springfield, MO 65802-1894
WEB: www.MyHealthyChurch.com

CANADA

PHONE: 905.542.7400 x4248
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) Monday-Friday
Please have your Wordcom account number ready.
FAX: 905.542.1624 (24 hours a day*)
MAIL: Wordcom Christian Resources
2450 Milltower Court, Mississauga ON L5N 5Z6
WEB: www.wordcom.ca · wordcom@paoc.org

[†]Some products may reflect doctrinal statements and practices not completely in harmony with the stated position of the Assemblies of God. *Due to the large volume of orders, we are unable to notify you of orders received. If you need order confirmation, please place your order by phone. Prices are subject to change without notice. All prices listed in U.S. dollars.

All orders subject to credit approval. *Discipleship Ideas* is published quarterly. Subscriptions: \$4.95 per year; 5 or more to the same address, \$3.95 each.

© 2015 by My Healthy Church, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, Missouri 65802. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America.



HEALTHY KIDS REJOICE

JUST ADD YOUR KIDS FOR AN AUDIENCE-WOWING HANDBELL CHOIR!

Combine these brightly colored handbells with the Handbell Music Sets, including easy-to-use numbered music cards and CD accompaniment, and anyone can direct.



USE PROMO CODE **SAVE20** FOR 20% OFF. EXPIRES 11/30/2015.



MY HEALTHY CHURCH[®]
Equipping Spirit-Empowered People

FOR THIS AND OTHER GREAT RESOURCES VISIT
MyHealthyChurch.com/Handbells
OR CALL 855.642.2011

A photograph showing a person's hands holding a brown leather Bible. The person is wearing a dark jacket and light-colored pants. They are standing on a dirt path that leads into a grassy field with trees in the background. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

BY MIKE CLARENSAU

There's Gotta Be More...

HUNGER STAYS
AWAKE TO THE
DISSATISFACTION
OF THIS

"normal" existence and pushes
toward something deeper.

I want more! I'm not greedy, and I don't think I tip the self-centered scale any further than other folks, but I want more—a lot more.

Okay, perhaps I should back up a bit, because the desire for more can be both good and bad. More time to be helpful and more stuff to share with others seem like appropriate desires, but more bacon at breakfast or a lot more of the green stuff to spend on myself probably won't be good for my overall health. The idea of more needs a bit of definition before you would be willing to offer a hearty "me too."

If I launched into all the "mores" I wish I could obtain, I'm sure the list would span more than a few pages—yours would, too. Any time good things come our way, we naturally hope for more, don't we? More pay, more good neighbors, more opportunities, more time with family, and certainly more va-

cation time all sound like winners to me. But the "more" that propels me to write these words is a deep desire for something else . . . more . . . *life!*

Now before you think I'm dreaming of an extended stay on this most attractive of all planets, let me clarify a bit. Quantity of life, while not a bad thing to want more of, isn't what I'm after. Instead, my idea of "more life" has something to do with quality. I want to unearth the path to life on the highest plane, to live the life I was made for, to find a fulfillment and purpose that lifts me above normal or average and into something that matters, well . . . even more.

Jesus said we could have that kind of life. He claimed to have come that we "may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). Hundreds of the Bible's pages tell stories of that kind of life—a life that somehow seems to elude us in spite of our

tweetable wisdoms, ever-evolving cultures, and increasingly superior technologies.

Eugene Peterson, in his excellent little book, *Run with the Horses*, describes the realities of modern life with tragic accuracy:

The puzzle is why so many people live so badly. Not so wickedly, but so inane. Not so cruelly, but so stupidly. There is little to admire and less to imitate in the people who are prominent in our culture. We have celebrities but not saints. Famous entertainers amuse a nation of bored insomniacs. Infamous criminals act out the aggressions of timid conformists. Petulant and spoiled athletes play games vicariously for lazy and apathetic spectators. People, aimless and bored, amuse themselves with trivia and trash. Neither the adventure of goodness nor the pursuit of righteousness gets headlines.

What an indictment of our modern times! And Peterson wrote those words before reality TV and other less-than-compelling fare took over the airwaves. In fact, thirty years have elapsed since he penned those words, and we'd be hard-pressed to prove we've made any progress in a better direction.

Shouldn't there be more?

After stunning me with his compelling first paragraph, Peterson went on to introduce me to an Old Testament verse that's been my favorite ever since. Though hidden amidst the complicated stories of even more complicated prophetic books, this little verse triggers a much-needed hope and thirst for more than what I see around me.

"If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?" (Jer. 12:5).

I was enjoying a couple of breakfast burritos at my neighborhood McDonald's when the idea of running with horses leapt from the page, causing me to drop the hash browns I was preparing to bite. Run with horses? *Is that really what God wanted Jeremiah to do?*

Like you, I was pretty sure the idea was figurative. After all, horses are big, and fast, and those long strides would leave even the fastest human in the dust. I'm a city kid who got bucked off a Shetland pony at age five so I'm hardly a horse whisperer, but I've seen enough Kentucky Derby races on TV to know they'd be finishing the race before I made it to the first turn.

The reason my breakfast side dish suddenly plummeted back to the tray isn't that I've always dreamed of sprinting across open fields, amazing the drivers in passing cars. But in that instant, I knew God was offering Jeremiah something I wanted as well. The infinite Creator was telling His diminutive friend, *There's more!* Somehow there was life above and beyond the grind that was wearing out that frustrated prophet. Somehow he could find a race on a different level than the rats around him were running. And it seems from God's invitation that Jeremiah was meant for that greater race.

I swallowed the rest of my breakfast that morning and decided that I would find that life. If there was any chance that God's invitation to Jeremiah remained open to the rest of us, then I wanted to

run with horses . . . and I still do. Do you?

The remaining pages of this book offer a road map for finding and ultimately living that kind of life. But before there's any chance you can find the right highway, you have to resolve what may be the most critical issue of the journey: *You have to want it.*

You see, most of us came to God out of an awareness of our need. Whether in crisis circumstances or amidst the calm reality of our daily existence, we recognized that we needed more than just us. The limits of our resources awakened us to our needs and someone pointed us to the hope they had found in connecting with God. Guilt, sickness, stress, brokenness, anxiety, and even death can be great teachers. They underscore the God-sized hole inside each of us—the one He put there for His future lodging—that we may have tried filling in numerous unsatisfactory ways. Though our stories differ and our routes to the needed revelation may be filled with varying levels of failure and subsequent devastation, still it was need that brought us to our knees.

I hadn't been to school yet when I figured out I needed God. But I'd been to Sunday school . . . a lot. Between Sunday mornings, Sunday evenings, and Wednesday's midweek services, I'd logged well over 600 hours in church by my third birthday. That's a lot of time being told by kindhearted people that Jesus loved me and that I needed Him in my life. When I was old enough to agree with them, probably somewhere around the 800-hour mark, I jumped into this journey with both feet. I needed God and He wanted me, so the first steps of connection were launched.



Check out our Winter 2015-16 unit themes. *Radiant Life* curriculum provides a proven way to systematically disciple and educate believers of all ages.



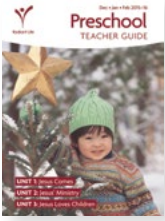
NURSERY
ONE-YEAR CYCLE

- Baby Jesus
- Jesus and the Sick Boy
- Jesus Loves Children



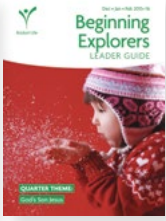
TODDLERS & TWOS
TWO-YEAR CYCLE

- Thank You, God...
- Jesus Is Born
 - Jesus Helps Peter
 - Jesus Tells about a Shepherd
 - Jesus Loves Zacchaeus



PRESCHOOL & BEGINNING EXPLORERS
TWO-YEAR CYCLE

- Jesus Comes
- Jesus' Ministry
- Jesus Loves Children



KINDERGARTEN
TWO-YEAR CYCLE

- Christmas Is Good News
- God's Word
- God Loves Everyone



PRIMARY
THREE-YEAR CYCLE

- The First Christmas
- God's People Leave Egypt
- God's People in the Desert



MIDDLER
TWO-YEAR CYCLE

- God with Us
- God Helps Us
- God's House



PRETEEN
TWO-YEAR CYCLE

- Responses to Jesus
- Attitudes and Actions
- Prayer



YOUNG TEEN
THREE-YEAR CYCLE

- The Greatest Gift
- A Place for You
- God: A Forever Friend



HIGH SCHOOL
FOUR-YEAR CYCLE

- Leading the Way
- Jesus from the Start
- One Flesh: What God Says about Sexuality



YOUNG ADULT
Graduates & Professionals
SEVEN-YEAR CYCLE

- Messianic Prophecies
- Normal Christian Living: Ephesians



ADULT
SEVEN-YEAR CYCLE

- Messianic Prophecies
- Normal Christian Living: Ephesians



Revise los títulos de nuestras unidades de septiembre 2015 a febrero 2016. El currículo paralelo *Radiant Life/Vida Nueva* provee el mismo discipulado de excelente calidad para alumnos de habla hispana de toda edad. Para una descripción de cada unidad, visite www.MyHealthyChurch.com/VidaNueva si necesita ver la tabla de esquemas temáticos de *Vida Nueva*.



PRIMEROS PASOS

CICLO DE DOS AÑOS

SEPTIEMBRE 2015
A FEBRERO 2016

- El nacimiento de Jesús
- El ministerio de Jesús
- Jesús ama a los niños



TESOROS DEL REY

CICLO DE DOS AÑOS

SEPTIEMBRE 2015
A FEBRERO 2016

- La Navidad
- La Palabra de Dios
- Dios ama a todos



MIS AMIGOS

CICLO DE TRES AÑOS

SEPTIEMBRE 2015
A FEBRERO 2016

- La primera Navidad
- La salida de Egipto
- El pueblo de Dios en el desierto



EL COMPAÑERO

CICLO DE CUATRO AÑOS

SEPTIEMBRE 2015
A FEBRERO 2016

- Respuestas de Jesús
- Actitudes y acciones
- La oración



EL EXPLORADOR

CICLO DE CUATRO AÑOS

SEPTIEMBRE 2015
A FEBRERO 2016

- Liderazgo espiritual
- Inicio del ministerio de Jesús
- El sexo y lo que dice Dios



EL EMBAJADOR

CICLO DE CINCO AÑOS

SEPTIEMBRE 2015
A FEBRERO 2016

- El evangelio según Lucas
- Compañerismo cristiano
- El buen manejo del dinero



EL MAESTRO

CICLO DE SIETE AÑOS

SEPTIEMBRE 2015
A FEBRERO 2016

- Las profecías mesiánicas
- Efesios: la vida cristiana normal

There's Gotta Be More...

continued from page 7

Others take a different route to discover their need for God. I have friends who didn't log hundreds of church hours as a kid. Instead, theirs was a pretty bumpy ride through disappointments, insecurities, rebellions, and a few tragic decisions. For them, realizing need wasn't the hard part. It just took awhile before someone told them about God. When that finally happened, they were quick to respond—some only required one hour in church to find what they were looking for.

No matter what the road you traveled toward God looked like, it was your need that fueled the journey. But there's a greater step beyond that critical precipice. If you're going to find a life of more—the abundant one Jesus spoke of and the greater race God offered His prophet—you have to *really want it*.

Hunger is a critical element in the journey with God. Many people can recognize their need for God, and thankfully He has proven His willingness to fill our voids; however, it seems that the roster of those who want to know Him is a bit shorter. The apostle Paul was on that list. Though he had lived many amazing moments and achieved more for God than most of us dream of, he was still saying, "I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection" (Phil. 3:10). You'd think the old guy had already hit the highest places of his journey, but he wanted more!

Hunger talks.

No, I don't mean the hunger that causes your stomach to make embarrassing noises a few minutes before lunch hour. But hunger, real hunger for a deeper relationship with God, shouts more than a few powerful statements through your attitudes and actions.

Hunger says . . . *the life that seems normal doesn't appeal to me*. With hunger, there's a longing for something beyond what is easy to reach. Anyone can settle for what is common. Most people seem to live average, somewhat self-centered lives. They look for contentment and pleasure in places crowded by fellow-seekers and somehow miss the lack of satisfaction found there. Hunger stays awake to the dissatisfaction of this "normal" existence and pushes toward something deeper.

How many people need to crash and burn on the money and power trip before they wake up to the inadequacy of such a life? For generations, people have been finding that road to be empty and dissatisfying, often depriving its travelers of the most important relationships in their lives. Must people keep playing a game where the winners end up losing? Hunger says, "No thanks," and breaks from the mold in search of a better path.

Hunger says . . . *knowing God has become the passion of my life*. The discovery of God and the opportunity to connect with Him has to be the most compelling of human experiences. Can you imagine truly knowing God—I mean connecting to Him in a real relationship? Hunger imagines the possibilities and quickly abandons other paths to chase such potential.

If life is more than the result of cosmic accidents and random mutations, and if there's a purpose and a Purposer—a Designer who's massive enough to make all this and make me, too—then discovering Him and embracing a journey through the questions that follow makes far more sense than living to pay off a mortgage. Hunger recognizes the endless capacity for wonder in the idea

of a God who wants to be known. How could that journey ever become boring?

Hunger says . . . *I believe God has something greater for my life*. Could there be a greater purpose than the one an eternal God has designed? Can any other agenda compare with the importance of His? We all long for the significance of knowing our lives matter, and most of us spend our best energy looking for such meaning. Hunger knows that the Maker of life is likely the One with the best plan for living it.

In Isaiah 6:1–8, the great prophet finds himself in the overwhelming scene around God's throne. Quickly recognizing that he's exposed by the white-hot holiness of the One he longs to know, he cannot move until his weakness is lifted, an act of mercy somehow extended to him. But Isaiah's focus quickly shifts from himself as he hears the same voice that soothed his failures express an even higher agenda—"Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" Isaiah thrusts his hand upward, longing to embrace the mission of the One who had cleansed him. What journey could matter more? Hunger grasps the wonder of one so limited being entrusted with the purposes of the Eternal.

Hunger says . . . *I want more*.

Mike Clarensau is a writer living in the Dallas area where he also serves as dean of the College of Bible and Church Ministries at Southwestern Assemblies of God University. He has authored more than a dozen books, including *From Belonging to Becoming*, *Journey to Integrity*, *The Sanctity of Life*, and coauthored *Give Them What They Want* and *We Build People*. Mike and his wife, Kerry, have two sons and two granddaughters.

Reference: This article is based on an excerpt from *A Spirit-Empowered Life: Discover the World-Changing Journey God has Designed for You* by Michael H. Clarensau, copyright 2015, Vital Resources, My Healthy Church. All rights reserved.



Are you—or people in your small group—facing a situation that seems impossible? *Believe for Greater Things Small Group Kits* will connect you with dozens of people who needed to see God move in an amazing way. Dr. George O. Wood shares four biblical examples of people who chose to believe God in spite of challenges. As you look at what God has done in the lives of others, you'll be inspired to believe God for greater things in your own life, too.



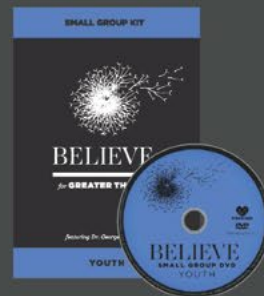
ADULTS
SMALL GROUP KIT



WOMEN
SMALL GROUP KIT



SPANISH
SMALL GROUP KIT



YOUTH
SMALL GROUP KIT



MY HEALTHY CHURCH[®]
Equipping Spirit-Empowered People

MyHealthyChurch.com | Toll Free: 855.642.2011

 /MyHealthyChurch  @MyHealthyChurch

BY ALTON GARRISON



A SPIRIT-EMPOWERED CHURCH: The Missing Process

If we want healthy, vibrant, growing churches, then we need to tap into five biblical principles of the Acts 2 church.

About six months after I was born, my dad was appointed the pastor of a small church—after being saved less than a year.

He and my mother pastored that small church in Sour Lake, Texas, for 22 years. My dad started his ministry with a supernatural experience, but he carried out his ministry without seeing numerical success.

My dad had a great appreciation for the Spirit-empowered message the church received at Pentecost. He often taught about the power of the Spirit, and while he had an experience with Christ and had a message to share, he was missing something.

It wasn't that he was doing it wrong; he just didn't have the whole picture.

What he lacked was a process.

I know what it feels like to try so hard but feel so confused. When I became pastor of First Assembly of God, North Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1986, I followed my dad's example. I had been an evangelist for eighteen years, I had the Pentecostal experience, and I had the message. When I shared my experience and began to preach a Spirit-empowered message, revival came.

But I was missing something.

I knew how to preach a sermon, how to bring people to the altar, and how to help my congregation experience blessing, but for all that my father taught me, he didn't teach me how to take a church from where we were to where we needed to be.

Dad didn't have a process, and neither did I.

I didn't need a trendy, new, unique process for building a healthy church. I needed to look at what God had already done in establishing the very first church. I needed a complete Acts 2 church—not just the experience and message but also a process and a plan. This realization and process changed countless lives, including mine and those of many in the church I pastored and in the Fellowship I now serve.

You may be in the same place my father and I were. You are sincere, dedicated, committed, spiritual, and faithful, but you feel you lack something.

I believe many of us have missed a complete understanding of what the Holy Spirit did in the first-century church. The early church impacted the then-known world, walking out God's plan and doing the work of the ministry as a chosen generation and royal priesthood. The first-century church turned the world upside down.

I'm convinced the church Luke describes in Acts 2 is the model, the plan, and the process that Jesus envisioned for the church on the earth.

The best part is that anyone can do it. It doesn't depend on the size of your congregation, your building, or your town. It depends solely on our limitless God with whom all things are possible.

The Acts 2 Model

In 1988, I began to put together my thoughts on a strategic process that eventually became the Acts 2 process. I developed the material that I discovered in Luke's account of the early church.

This process isn't something I've just read about; it's something I've lived. It's something I developed while leading a church that had plateaued for thirty years, and it all came together as I observed the five functions upon which Jesus founded the first-century church.

Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem "until you have been clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Later He said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you" (Acts 1:8).

Then in Acts 2:4, they had a supernatural experience—Pentecost. In Acts 2:5–41, Peter went out to the inquisitive Jews and began to explain what was happening; he was preaching the message.

The content of the process God was birthing in my heart is found in Acts 2:42–47. In this passage, the Holy Spirit began to explain the process of how to move from a temple model to a church model. Before Christ, the temple had been the center of life for the Jewish people. There, God's people read the Scriptures, prayed, encouraged one other, and worshipped God. It was the place where heaven and earth met, with the Shekinah glory of God dwelling in the Holy of Holies. But when Jesus died on the cross, the thick veil isolating the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom. The presence of God was unleashed and became available to all who believe. Then, at Pentecost, an amazing and dramatic thing happened: Those

who believed in Jesus became the workplace where heaven and earth met! Decades later, Paul explained that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16). Freed from a place, all gatherings of believers have become the place where heaven and earth meet—and all believers are now priests who love, serve, and worship God in all they say and do. Evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry (service), and worship were to be the functions of an effective, Spirit-empowered church—they are the five functions upon which the Acts 2 process is based: connect, grow, serve, go, and worship.

The Five Functions

A biblical, comprehensive, and strategic plan requires the empowerment of the Spirit to produce spiritual fruit in the lives of people. The plan is based on the five functions. The words describing the functions in Acts 2:42–47 are nouns, but because this is a process more than a destination, we converted them to verbs. These changes don't violate the mandate of the functions; in fact, they release the functions into action steps:

- Connect: fellowship and evangelism
- Grow: discipleship
- Serve: ministry gifts, outreach, building up the body, caring for the community
- Go: discipleship, evangelism, missions
- Worship: corporate praise, prayer, teaching, and singing

Let's take a quick look at each of these to frame our understanding of them.

1. Connect. Connection focuses on the vertical and horizontal relationships in life. It begins with the process of salvation and continues through building spiritually strong relationships. The ver-

tical relationship focuses on the process that connects people to God in all aspects of life. The horizontal relationship creates an atmosphere for relationship building person-to-person. Horizontal relationships consist of connections in every facet of life: family, church, local community, and global community.

2. Grow. Growth is about discipleship. It's how your church promotes spiritual formation in the lives of individuals, ministry teams, and the congregation. It's about answering the following question: *How do we grow to be more like Jesus?* Growth centers on belief and behavior, while connection is about the relationship.

3. Serve. Churches of every size need to move laypeople from sitting in the pews to becoming involved in the ministry of their churches. This is where the serve component comes in. As we help people learn about their gifts and abilities, we can connect them with opportunities to serve God and others—in ways that fit them. Service is about giving people outlets for using their gifts and abilities and helping them find their places in ministry.

4. Go. Going is evangelism – reaching out to those who are next door and the other side of the globe. The evangelism component prepares and equips people to share their faith and accept the God-given mission for them and the local church. Going not only brings focus to the power of evangelism, but it also offers missional direction for individuals and the church body. It puts a great deal of emphasis on relational evangelism. This is where your church becomes more outwardly focused instead of staying inwardly focused, a transition that is incredibly important.

5. Worship. Worshipping is the intima-

cy and reality of the presence of Christ. Through worship, leadership teams and the congregation see the character and power of Christ connecting to individuals in their daily lives and, corporately, through the church family. Worship involves far more than music, although that is a component. It includes prayer and powerful preaching.

These five functions provide the framework necessary to help us discover God's plan for living out fellowship, discipleship, ministry, evangelism, and worship.

It Isn't One or the Other

These five functions were the heart of God's original plan for the church. He had a plan—a process—but the plan was always, and only, to be carried out with His Holy Spirit's power.

Some leaders mistakenly assume it is an either/or proposition—either we are strategic and have a plan or we are Spirit-led and spontaneous. That's not correct; it's both/and. Some pastors don't like to plan, so they gravitate toward spontaneous spiritual expressions. Other church leaders become so focused on their plans they don't leave room for God's leading. For a church to be what God wants it to be, both are essential.

Every church—small or large; urban or suburban or rural; American or international; and with whatever blend of ethnicity—needs both the power of the Spirit and a process of growth. Spiritual experiences are wonderful, but without a plan, you'll find yourself wondering how to take your church from where you are to where it needs to be.

The Acts 2 church had Jesus as its foundation and the Holy Spirit as its force. If we are to have healthy churches today,

we need the same foundation, Jesus, and the same force, the Holy Spirit. If we want healthy churches, we must embrace the source of power that enabled the first-century church to explode in the midst of fierce persecution. As it embraced these five functions under the empowerment of the Spirit, the church experienced exponential growth. As we have focused on these same functions, we have seen churches reinvigorated across the country. We have refined our own understanding of the process by working with hundreds of churches through what we call Acts 2 Journeys, multi-weekend experiences for pastors in which we walk them through the Acts 2 process. We are seeing great results as pastors grow in confidence because they feel better equipped, their teams come together behind a unified vision, and their churches experience a profound impact.

The Acts 2 process is for pastors and members of their “dream teams” to help them understand the process that my father and I and so many other pastors once lacked.

The process God revealed to me out of Acts 2 is biblical, transferable, and replicable. It will work in rural and urban areas, as well as in suburbia. It will work for large churches and small ones, healthy churches and unhealthy ones. Why? Because it's the model Christ originally used. It worked for the church I pastored, and it has worked for many others.

It can happen in your church too.

Alton Garrison is the assistant general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, U.S.A. He also serves as the director of the Church Transformation Initiative, which helps churches renew their spiritual vitality and reach their full Kingdom potential.

Reference: This article is adapted from chapter one of the book *A Spirit-Empowered Church: An Acts 2 Ministry Model* by Alton Garrison (Influence Resources, 2015).

DISCOVER HOW THE WORD AND SPIRIT
CAN GUIDE YOUR LIFE.



ALSO AVAILABLE
IN SPANISH



FIND THESE AND OTHER GREAT RESOURCES AT
www.MyHealthyChurch.com OR CALL 1.855.642.2011





MY HEALTHY CHURCH®
Equipping Spirit-Empowered People

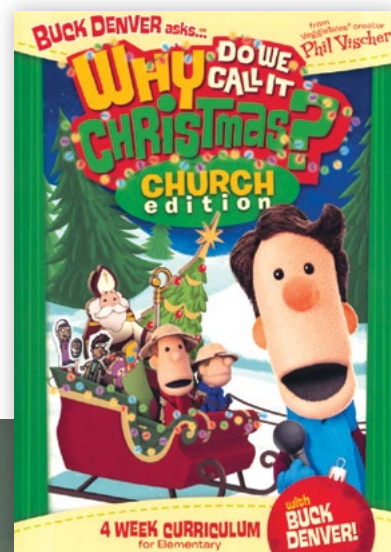
1445 N BOONVILLE AVENUE
SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI 65802-1894

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 48
SPRINGFIELD, MO

Kids are pros at asking why.

Doesn't it feel good when
you have the answers?

Buck Denver Asks...
Why Do We Call It Christmas?





Join VeggieTales® creator Phil Vischer along with intrepid newsman Buck Denver and all his friends on an amazing journey that will have kids singing, laughing, and learning through the entire Christmas season!

Available as a 60-minute DVD or a 3-disc Church Edition curriculum that includes 4 weeks of videos and bonus features, video and music clips, and print materials to make teaching easy and entertaining.

Visit MyHealthyChurch.com/WITB for the *What's in the Bible?* series.



MyHealthyChurch.com

  [MyHealthyChurch](https://www.facebook.com/MyHealthyChurch) Toll Free: 855.642.2011



MY HEALTHY CHURCH®
Equipping Spirit-Empowered People

