

**Excerpts: Introduction & Appendix
(not for reprint)**

SPIRITUAL
WAYPOINTS
Helping Others Navigate The Journey

© by Bob Whitesel

With Interviews and Personal Stories from ...

Tony Campolo
Shane Claiborne
Bil Cornelius
Mike Franzese
Tim Keel
Dan Kimball
Scot McKnight
Sally Morgenthaler
Larry Osborne
Richard Peace
Ron Sider
Mike Slaughter
Len Sweet
Al Tizon
Stan Toler
and Lauren Winner

Acknowledgements

*“Anyone who sets himself up as ‘religious’ by talking a good game is self-deceived.
This kind of religion is hot air and only hot air.*

Real religion, the kind that passes muster before God the Father, is this:

*Reach out to the homeless and loveless in their plight,
and guard against corruption from the godless world.”*

- James 1:26-27 (The Message)

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AND MOST OF ALL TO MY LORD JESUS. The light of Your words correct my course and illuminate my path.

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INTRODUCTION: WAYPOINTS, GPS AND GEOCACHING.

U.S. government satellites have created a Global Position System (GPS) that allows users of hand-held GPS units to track their position within 30 feet. In addition, increasingly smaller GPS units now allow hikers, bikers, commuters and tourists to individually track their journeys with remarkable precision.

When using a GPS unit, a location that a traveler wants to remember can be designated a “waypoint.” The GPS unit will assign a precise longitude and latitude coordinate to this waypoint. This location can then be shared, so that others with GPS units can find the exact location too.

As an avid hiker, I find the capability to designate and share a waypoint a useful metaphor for marking one’s spiritual journey. When a person on a spiritual journey encounters a special place on their route, they can designate it as a waypoint and share it with others. Through marking and sharing spiritual waypoints, fellow travelers can share the joys as well as note the similarities in their journeys.

In addition, in the sport of “geocaching,” hikers post waypoints (in GPS coordinates) to lead other inquisitive trekkers to a hidden stash or “cache.” While the stash may include any combination of valuable and odd paraphernalia, the enjoyment lies in the ability to follow waypoints to a treasure. In similar fashion, the waypoints on our journey lead to a cache where immeasurable good fortune awaits.

FOREWORD:

WAYPOINTS: Two Complementary Books

In this book you will encounter the spiritual waypoints of leading thinkers such as Sally Morgenthaler, Tony Campolo, Shane Claiborne, Dan Kimball, Len Sweet and others. And, the reader will personally know many people who are on this spiritual quest. To help *all* travelers navigate the journey, I have written two complementary books:

Book 1:

SPIRITUAL WAYPOINTS: Helping Others Navigate The Journey

- *Topic:* This is the book you are reading which introduces and explains “Spiritual Waypoints,” and includes the stories of well-known leaders.
- *Purpose:* Written for the “helper” who wants to assist other travelers.
- *Style:* Longer, including an exploration of each “waypoint.”

Book 2:

WAYPOINTS: Navigating Your Spiritual Journey.

- *Topic:* A short companion booklet.
- *Purpose:* Written for the “seeker” (first half) and the maturing disciple (second half).
- *Style:* A self-help book, it helps travelers understand their spiritual quest. Shorter and inexpensive, it can be given away

BONUS:

THE WAYPOINTS COURSE

Book 2 includes a schedule and agenda for a 17-week “Waypoints Course” allowing readers to join together in groups to share their travel experiences and encourage fellow trekkers. Churches and religious organizations have told me that they want a weekly course that can help their leaders better understand their spiritual journey and how they can help others. In addition, travelers new to the journey can take this course as an introduction to the basics of Christianity..

START WITH THE BOOK YOU ARE READING...

But, if you are new to the idea of “Spiritual Waypoints” start with the book you are reading. This book is an introduction and explanation of each of the spiritual waypoints that lie behind ... and ahead.

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CHAPTER 1: EVANGELISTIC NEARSIGHTEDNESS

Life seen as a journey, an ascent, a pilgrimage, a road, is an idea as old as man himself. One of the earliest titles for Christians at the time of the Acts was “the people of the way.”

- Esther de Waal, author and Catholic theologianⁱ

As a human race we are on a journey and we need to know the road.

- Lesslie Newbigin, writer and theologianⁱⁱ

“The church world is disconnected, incomplete...” Thus began the last conversation I had with Doug. He and I had met as political activists, before we both became disillusioned by our inability to bring about political change. Assassin’s bullets had struck down our heroes: J.F.K., Martin Luther King, Jr., and Bobby. The resulting disillusionment had been spiritually crushing, and its aftermath had driven both of us to a new, more organic purpose ... to work for the inner transformation of individuals ... a process we both felt would only be achieved by introducing our friends to the one who had transformed us: Jesus Christ.

Both Doug and I underwent profound changes. Doug had formerly been deep into the drug culture, while political activism had been my obsession of choice. Yet, both avenues seemed ineffective toward addressing the ecological, political and polarizations our generation faced. In desperation perhaps, we had turned to the worldview of Christ, who eventually we came to know as Lord. We found a new life in His compassion, solace, perseverance and transformative power that eradicated destructive habits and haunts, replacing them with an authenticity for which we had longed. In those early years of the 1970s Doug and I became passionate about this new revolution. And, we had been inseparable as friends, until one day.

Doug had announced that he was leaving the church we had both attended, a large and fast growing congregation on the edge of town. In justification Doug huffed, “Their focus is too narrow, and you know that.... (You) use to be the most passionate person I knew for helping the hurting and poor. And now you overlook all of that and just talk about evangelism. You’ve got evangelistic nearsightedness... You’ve left out half the job... you’re trying to mend their souls before you’ve mended their life.”

At the time I dismissed Doug’s protestations because my heart was broken by the loss of my best and most stable friendship. Doug’s last words were even less considered until years later, when my research into how the church must engage culture brought me full-circle, back to reconsider Doug’s painful critique.

I never saw Doug again; though I did hear of his ministry. He became a lay leader in a local Catholic parish, and eventually the director of the city's homeless shelter. I admired Doug, but I always wondered why our friendship was severed. In addition, Doug's criticism that my church world was "disconnected, incomplete" churned in the back of my mind, until almost 15 years later when I began investigating why people do not attend church, and found that many shared Doug's viewpoint.

Charting A Course Out of the Fog

As a church growth consultant, I utilize community interviews to sharpen my understanding of a client's community. In 1991 I began to ask non-churchgoers about their views on evangelism and social action. Over almost two decades, their responses have increasingly mirrored the concerns of Doug. In these interviews I am observing a growing criticism that the evangelical church is fixated upon the conversion encounter, and not the process that leads up to it ... or follows it.

How could this happen? As a professor of church leadership and growth I knew that church writers frequently focused upon the need to minister to the whole person, first to their physical needs and then to their spiritual needs. Scholars like J. Gresham Machen had painstakingly described how the New Testament church ministered to the needy.ⁱⁱⁱ And contemporary leaders such as Billy Graham taught that we are to take regeneration in one hand and a cup of cold water in the other.^{iv} Donald McGavran, who many regard as father of the Church Growth Movement, warned that "Today the sinfulness of the social order offends thoughtful Christians everywhere.... The great inequalities of wealth and poverty among the haves and have-nots, and the revolting treatment meted out to oppressed minorities, are clearly contrary to the will of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."^v Arthur Glasser, Dean of the Fuller School of World Mission even popularized the terms "cultural mandate" and "evangelistic mandate" for the twin thrusts of Christian engagement.^{vi} Pete Wagner suggested that church growth occurs when these two mandates are "balanced," describing the cultural mandate as "the distribution of wealth, the balance of nature, marriage and the family, human government, keeping the peace, cultural integrity, liberation of the oppressed – these and other global responsibilities rightly fall within the cultural mandate."^{vii} Lewis Drummond updated this idiom, stating "in postmodern terms, we might say that Jesus came to bring equal access and opportunity to those in substandard living conditions, to give voice and identity to those other than the dominant social elite, and to alleviate the ravages of capitalistic imperialism and colonialist economic aggression."^{viii}

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A decade earlier one writer had warned that separating the cultural and evangelistic mandates created a false dichotomy for “true Christian compassion does not erect false dichotomies which separate body and soul. . . . If I love my neighbor, I will want to see him fed, clothed, cured and well adjusted. I will want to see also that he is not going to hell, doomed to an eternity separated from God.”^{ix} The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism even described the balance of evangelistic and cultural mandates as analogous to “the relationship between two wings on a bird or two oars in a boat ... being inseparable.”^x

Despite these affirmations, my interviews and recollections have led me to believe that today most churches sorely lack this balance. Donald Kraybill argues that the church has created an “upside down kingdom” uncoupling economic freedom from spiritual freedom.^{xi} Ron Sider regrets that much of the church has succumbed to “melodramatic pessimism,” lamenting deplorable conditions but feeling helpless to change them.^{xii}

There is a historical explanation regarding how the church split into camps that either emphasize social action or evangelistic action. Though the reason is multifaceted and beyond the scope of this book; Roger Finke and Rodney Stark give a detailed overview of this rift, while Wilbert Schenk tenders a useful three page summary.^{xiii} Regardless of the genesis, the divide exists. And, if theologians, practitioners and observers agree that a balance is warranted, then the question this book addresses should be how is that balance achieved? I will suggest that the journey the Good News travels and the *waypoints* that mark the journey may be the procedural map that can pierce this fog of pessimism.

Balancing Mandates Requires Building Bridges

I recently investigated growing churches with leaders primarily under the age of 30. I discovered that one of the primary characteristics of these churches is not only a desire to balance the cultural and evangelistic mandates, but also a success in doing so.^{xiv} I described these churches in the book *Inside the Organic Church: Learning from 12 Emerging Congregations*.^{xv} Each of these churches were succeeding at meeting first the physical needs and then the spiritual needs of their communities.

For example, one newly planted Southern Baptist congregation met in three rented nightclubs around Phoenix, Arizona. Attaining a critical mass of over 155 attendees they set about to purchase office and ministry space. While many churches in such scenarios would purchase a worship facility in the suburbs, this congregation purchased a homeless shelter in downtown Phoenix. At each of the three weeknight locations, the pastor reminded the attendees that “this is not real church. Real church takes place on Sunday mornings at Sunday Brunch.” By Sunday Brunch, the pastor referred to a weekly Sunday morning meal the church provided

“... by leaving the ghetto behind, the church has implied that its mission is meaningless to the poor, the hopeless and the wretched – except when an ocean separates the church from the ghetto.” David McKenna.

for 300+ homeless people. For this congregation, this was *real* church ... a weekly encounter where Christians sat alongside struggling people, helping them make a better life for themselves and ultimately a life changing encounter. “We want people from the nightclubs to serve the urban people, and this is where ‘the service’ takes place”^{xvi} observed the pastor of The Bridge, Aaron Norwood.

The Bridge builds connections to the needy, a metaphor at the center of Donald McGavran’s imagery of the “bridges of God.” McGavran noted, “every human society is like a town on one side of a river over which at convenient places bridges have been built ... people near the bridges are better connected than those far from them ... good stewards of the grace of God should remember the bridges and stream across them. ‘Find the bridges and use them’...”^{xvii}

Building bridges to the needy is a task that many evangelical churches must undertake if they are to reacquaint themselves with the needs that cry out for a cultural mandate. I do not dispute that most churches have a compassion for the needy, but usually they envision this need as somewhere else and far removed. David McKenna warns that, “by leaving the ghetto behind, the church has implied that its mission is meaningless to the poor, the hopeless and the wretched – except when an ocean separates the church from the ghetto.”^{xviii}

To cross even a local chasm, bridge building will be necessary. But bridge building, by its very nature, requires clear planning and patience to execute it. A span is not erected overnight, nor without carefully crafted plans. And thus, purposeful yet unhurried planning and pace are characteristics of all bridge building.

Bridge Building Requires a Plan

A helpful metaphor toward depicting this planned and purposeful process, is that such bridge building can be thought of as a journey. A journey reminds us that outreach is a bridge-building process, requiring time, patience, mapping and perseverance.

Sociologists James Engle and Wilbert Norton depicted this journey as a processes of deepening communication. They noted that it took place over time with a variety of adaptations, stating “Jesus and His followers ... always began with a keen understand of the audience and then adapted the message to the other person without compromising God’s Word. The pattern they followed is as pertinent today as was two thousand years ago”^{xix}

Richard Peace, professor of Evangelism and Spiritual Formation at Fuller Seminary, looked carefully at the 12 disciples in the New Testament and concluded that a step-by-step process unfolds through which the disciples eventually have a transforming experience.^{xx} Peace calls this “process evangelism,” summing up, “The Twelve came to faith over time via a series of incidents and encounters with, and experiences of, Jesus. Each such event assisted them to move from their initial assumptions about Jesus to a radically new understanding of who he actually was. In his Gospel, Mark invites his readers to make this same pilgrimage of discovery.”^{xxi}

Esther de Wall, in *The Celtic Way of Prayer: The Recovery of the Religious Imagination* notes that the Christian life has always been viewed as a journey, stating,

“Life seen as a journey, an ascent, a pilgrimage, a road, is an idea as old as man himself. One of the earliest titles for Christians at the time of the Acts was “the people of the way’. We see the individual Christian as a pilgrim on earth having here no abiding city; we speak of the Church, particularly since Vatican II, as a pilgrim church. But we cannot think of life as a journey without accepting that it must involve change and growth.”^{xxii}

Lesslie Newbigin sums this up nicely, saying that “as a human race we are on a journey and we need to know the road. It is not true that all roads lead to the top of the same mountain. There are roads which lead over the precipice. In Christ we have been shown the road ... God has given us the route we must follow and the goal to which we must press forward.”^{xxiii} Thus, the journey metaphor accommodates the imagery of planned, deliberate and unfolding bridge-building across cultural chasms.

The Holism of a Journey

A journey also denotes a flexible progression with varying scenarios, milestones, interruptions and course corrections. The journey metaphor conjures up the image of strenuous ascents, downhill traces, varying impediments and careful mapping. Maps, sextants, and modern GPS devices attest to the desire of a traveler to pinpoint where she or he may be on their journey. Thus, the use of the journey metaphor accentuates the importance of understanding place in relation to process. Wilbert Shenk emphasized that the “flaw” with most thinking about outreach is that the “parts rather than the whole” are emphasized.^{xxiv}

The metaphor of a journey can help overcome this flaw, by emphasizing the totality of the journey. In three separate books, Ryan Bolger,^{xxv} Eddie Gibbs,^{xxvi} and this author^{xxvii} have noted that younger generations seek holistic understandings of evangelism that do not separate the Great Commission (to make disciples of all people) from the Great Commandment (to love one’s neighbor as oneself). Gibbs and Bolger suggest this be viewed as “different sides of the same coin”^{xxviii} which is an attractive metaphor because only one substance is involved. But, coin imagery suggests that the coin at some point must be flipped over, and a new emphasis begins. The coin imagery in this author’s mind, unfortunately separates into two phases the inseparable progression of a common and continual journey.

Author Bryan McLaren appropriates the term “story” to describe this process, noting,

If you ask me about the gospel, I’ll tell you as well as I can, the story of Jesus, the story leading up to Jesus, the story of what Jesus said and did, the story of what happened as a result, or what has been happening more recently today even. I’ll invite you to become part of that story, challenging you to change your whole way of thinking (to

repent) in light of it, in light of him. Yes, I'll want you to learn about God's grace, God's forgiveness, and about the gift of salvation."^{xxix}

This is a more attractive metaphor. But still, a story is static, inflexible and even when modernized ... historically captive. It carries none of the dynamic, flexible and indigenous attributes of the varying obstacles, excursions, accompaniments and progressions encountered on a journey. Thus, the imagery of a journey better highlights continuity, commonality and elasticity. And, a journey is often a communal undertaking, and thus the journey metaphor accommodates the idea of accompaniment, companionship and inter-reliance.

A Journey of Breaking and Refreshing News

The term *evangelism* is maligned today, often associated with churches that coerce or force conversion in a self-seeking or exploitive manner. Yet Jim Wallis, editor of *Sojourn Magazine*, argues that a response to bad religion, should be better religion.^{xxx} In similar fashion, the argument could be made that our response to bad evangelism should be better evangelism.

Such disparagement was not always the case. The term evangelism originally signified breaking and revitalizing news. Evangelism is an English translation of the Greek work *euangelion* (*Matthew 24:14*), which described the "good news" that Christ and His followers personified and preached.^{xxxi} Customarily an optimistic message brought by a courier, *euangelion* was a combination of the Greek words "good" (*eu*) and "messenger" "angel" or "herald" (*angelion*). For early hearers "to evangelize" or "to bring Good News" carried the connotation of great responsibility, fantastic insights with more news to follow. Alan Richardson says, "for those who thus receive it the gospel is always 'new', breaking in freshly upon them and convincing them afresh..."^{xxxii}

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Because evangelism is a process of bringing this refreshing and breaking news, it is logical that not all of that news could be communicated at one hearing. Because the news we bear is both deep and broad, it requires a journey of dialogue. And as with any subject, this news is best understood when the learning starts with the basics and the moves into more complex and complicated themes.

Is the Joy in the Trekking, Or In the Destination?

Some readers may wonder if merely heading out on this journey of Good News might be sufficiently rewarding, feeling that the recompense is in the going. Robert Lewis Stevenson once famously intoned, "I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move."^{xxxiii} While a trek by itself can

be a rewarding experience, the journey of which we speak is comprised, as Doug and I discovered, of life changing renovations and eternal destinations. Such consequence indicates that simply enjoying the journey along an adventuresome route is not sufficient.

John Stott reminds us that there are spiritual triumphs on this journey and their importance dwarfs even the excitement of the trek., writing:

Evangelism relates to people's eternal destiny, and in brining them Good News of salvation, Christians are doing what nobody else can do. Seldom if ever should we have to choose between satisfying physical hunger and spiritual hunger, or between healing bodies and saving souls, since an authentic love for our neighbor will lead us to serve him or her as a whole person. Nevertheless, if we must choose, then we have to say that the supreme and ultimate need of humankind is the saving grace of Jesus Christ, and that therefore a person's eternal, spiritual salvation is of greater importance than his or her temporal and material well being.^{xxxiv}

Howard Snyder, in his book *The Community of the King*, agrees with Stott, stating that,

Evangelism is the first priority of the Church's ministry in the world (italics Snyder). This is true for several reason: the clear biblical mandate for evangelism; the centrality and necessity of personal conversion in God's plan; the reality of judgment; the fact that changed persons are necessary to change society; the fact that the Christian community exists and expands only as evangelism is carried out. The Church that fails to evangelize is both biblically unfaithful and strategically shortsighted.^{xxxv}

Wagner creates a good summation, stating "When a person dies without hearing that 'God so loved the words that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him should not perish but have eternal life (*John 3:16*, RSV), it is too late. The best thing that could possibly happen to that person has been denied."^{xxxvi}

Some rightly fear that prioritizing either one can undermine the other. Concern about this could be a reason for the evangelical church's nearsightedness. But Snyder reminds us that, "an evangelism that focuses exclusively on souls or on an otherworldly transaction which makes no real difference here and how is unfaithful to the gospel."^{xxxvii} As such, both the trek and it's destination are important.

The Importance of Waypoints

When attempting to understand where a traveler is on their journey and what obstacles lay ahead, the concept of a waypoint provides a helpful metaphor. As noted in the *Introduction*, a waypoint is a place on a trek that explains where the

traveler is in relation to the overall route. As such, waypoints on the journey of evangelism can help the traveler understand their location, progress and direction.

Less flexible terms have abounded to mark this journey. Engle and Norton chose the concept of a scale.^{xxxviii} Later their pioneering diagram would be called: The Engle Scale.^{xxxix} Robert Clinton chose to depict the journey as a series of phases.^{xl} Eschewing scales Billy Graham pictured evangelism as steps.^{xli} Graham distilled the process into a series of just three steps, noting that “students of psychology have agreed that there are three steps in conversion: First, a sense of perplexity and uneasiness; second, a climax and turning point; and, third, a relaxation marked by rest and joy.”^{xlii}

There is nothing inherently wrong with such demarcations, and in fact they can explaining sophisticated concepts via simple models.^{xliii} But to many people today they may appear mechanical inflexible or biased (toward either the cultural or evangelistic mandate). It may be that the very minimalism of these models is what clouds the finer points from being investigated or understood.

The problem may be that all of these earlier demarcations favor a quick telling and not an expanded narrative. Perhaps due to postmodern people who today eschew such mechanical processes, I have favored the image of a story or a journey. A scale, step or phase reduces this important journey into a mechanistic procedure. And, a scale, step or phase seems subject to human manipulation, management and/or control. Nether could be further from the truth. The journey is guided by the Holy Spirit^{xliv} and represents and intersection of the supernatural and the natural.^{xlv} No scale could ever hope to encompass nor depict the manifold routes, obstacles, travel companions or new vistas one will encounter on that route. Thus, exact and precise depiction of this process is not only impossible, but it rails against the creative Spirit of God and His individual interaction with each of His creatures.

Thus, exact and precise depiction of this process is not only impossible, but it rails against the creative Spirit of God and His individual interaction with each of His creatures.

Therefore, rather than futilely try to depict the mechanics, I have chosen to describe common occurrences that the traveler will encounter, which I will designate as *waypoints*. A *waypoint* is a position, not a phase nor an frozen marker. It tells where a traveler is in relation to other features on the road. It gives an indication of a general position on a route or journey. And, a waypoint can be different for each trekker. And, though a waypoint will always occur, because the precise route of the journey varies each time, the waypoint will appear in a different place for each trekker, i.e. indigenously and personally

In addition, a waypoint may not be spaced at even lengths. Rather, the purpose of a waypoint is to help the traveler perceive where they are in relationship to the bigger picture of the journey. And, waypoints allow the companions that will accompany a traveler to gauge where they may intersect the traveler on her or his journey.

My students call these Whitesel’s Waypoints, a title that despite my chagrin seems to have stuck. They use this term as an alternative to Engle’s Scale or

Clinton's Stages. Yet regardless of the appellation, the term waypoint gives those on the road and they that accompany them, a general idea of their direction, position, and most importantly ... the next waypoint.

Earlier Depictions of This Journey Are Incomplete

In the next chapter we shall investigate two popular ways to describe this journey. First we will look at The Engle Scale. We will see that for all of its attractiveness and durability, it is weak on its depiction of the discipleship that occurs.

To address these weaknesses, we will look at Robert Clinton's phases of leadership development. Clinton's stages are helpful for describing the process from new Christian to ministry effectiveness, but lack a robust explanation of the pre-discipleship journey.

Therefore, in this next chapter I shall weave together these two important descriptions, update them for a contemporary milieu, and rename them to help retention and navigation.

Notes for Chapter 1:

ⁱ Esther de Waal, *Seeking God: The Way of St. Benedict* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 69.

ⁱⁱ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1989), 183.

ⁱⁱⁱ J. Gresham Machen, *The New Testament: An Introduction to its Literature and History*, ed. John Cook (Edinburgh, UK: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), 338-354.

^{iv} Billy Graham, *Peace With God, The Secret of Happiness* (New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1953, 2000), 237.

^v Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1970), 25.

^{vi} Arthur F. Glasser, "Confession, Church Growth, and Authentic Unity in Missionary Strategy," *Protestant Crosscurrents in Mission*, ed. Norma A. Horner (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), 178-221.

^{vii} C. Peter Wagner, *Church Growth and The Whole Gospel: A Biblical Mandate* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), 13.

^{viii} Lewis A. Drummond, *Reaching Generation Next: Effective Evangelism in Today's Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 179.

^{ix} C. Peter Wagner, *Frontiers in Missionary Strategy*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), 37.

^x John Stott, ed., *Evangelism and Social Responsibility: An Evangelical Commitment* (Lausanne Committee for Evangelism and the World Evangelical Fellowship, 1982), 23.

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- xi Donald B. Kraybill, *The Upside-Down Kingdom* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1978, 2003).
- xii Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977), 22.
- xiii For more on the emergence of the historical divide between social and evangelistic action see Roger Finke and Rodney Stark's meticulous look at church growth in America, titled *The Churching of America 1776-2000: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (Rutgers University Press, 2005). For the reader seeking a more concise overview see Wilbert R. Shenk, *Changing Frontiers of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 22-24.
- xiv Bob Whitesel, *Inside the Organic Church: Learning from 12 Emerging Congregations* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006).
- xv Ibid., xvi-xvii.
- xvi Ibid., 37.
- xvii McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 395.
- xviii David L. McKenna, ed., *The Urban Crisis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1969), 138.
- xix James F. Engel and Wilbert Norton, *What's Gone Wrong With the Harvest* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975), 35.
- xx Richard Peace, *Conversion in the New Testament: Paul and the Twelve* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999). Peace offers a helpful examination of Mark's account of the 12 disciples and their conversionary experiences. Peace argues that they were not converted while traveling with Jesus as members of his apostolic band, but that Mark's Gospel is organized in part to underscore that "were brought step-by-step to the experience of repentance and faith," 12.
- xxi Ibid. 309.
- xxii Esther de Waal, *Seeking God*, 69.
- xxiii Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1989), 183.
- xxiv Wilbert Shenk, *Changing Frontiers of Mission*, 28.
- xxv Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 149.
- xxvi Eddie Gibbs, *Church Next: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 22-27.
- xxvii Bob Whitesel, *Inside the Organic Church*, xvi-xvii.
- xxviii Gibbs and Bolger, *Emerging Churches*, 149.
- xxix Brian McLaren, "The Method, the Message, and the Ongoing Story," in Leonard Sweet, ed., *The Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 214-215. For a critique of McLaren's perspective see Martin Downes, "Entrapment: The Emerging Church Conversation and the Cultural Captivity of the Gospel," in *Reforming or Conforming: Post-Conservative Evangelicals and the Emerging Church*, ed.s Gary L. W. Johnson and Ronald N. Gleason (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 224-243.

xxx Jim Wallis, *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and The Left Doesn't Get It* (New York: HarperOne, 2006), 66.

xxxii Though familiar to the New Testament hearer this term would be strangely unique because it was rarely used as a verb, i.e. "to evangelize."

xxxiii Alan Richardson, *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, ed. Alan Richardson (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1950), 100.

xxxiiii Robert Louis Stevenson, *Selected Writings*, "Travels With A Donkey in Cevennes: An Inland Voyage" (New York: Random House, 1947), 957

xxxv John Stott, *Evangelism and Social Responsibility*, 25.

xxxvi Howard A. Snyder, *The Community of the King* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press), 101.

xxxvii *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1981), 52.

xxxviii Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 102.

xxxix Engel and Norton, *What's Gone Wrong With the Harvest*.

xl James F. Engel, *Contemporary Christian Communications It's Theory and Practice* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1979), 223.

xli J. Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress 1988).

xlii Billy Graham, *Peace With God*, 133. At other times, Graham depict this process as a series of the phases, c.f. Sterling W. Huston, *Crusade Evangelism and the Local Church* (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publishers, 1984), 52-54.

xliii Billy Graham, *Peace With God*, 133.

xliiii Steps, stages and phases depict an inflexible process of fixed dimensions. In similar fashion, the term mile marker provides a poor metaphor. All of these appellations suffer from a lack of flexibility and elasticity. This may be the result of modernist conventions, where processes are erroneously thought to follow in lock-step fashion and predictability. To embrace such inflexibility would be akin to embracing the erroneous scientific management of Frederick Taylor, where fabrication and consistency were desired (for a valuable analysis of scientific management and its inflexibility, see Daniel Boorstin, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience* [New York: Vintage, 1974]). A more supple and postmodern description (which this author prefers) is that of a *waypoint*, which does not occur at regular intervals, but rather calculates the traveler's current position on the route.

xliiii Billy Graham in *Peace With God* states this well when he says, "It is the Holy Spirit who brings about this conviction. Actually, repentance cannot take place unless first there is a movement of the Holy Spirit in the heart and mind" (p. 146). It is this movement in heart and mind that the journey metaphor used in this present book will seek to chart.

xliiii James D. G. Dunn points out that the involvement of the Holy Spirit in the birth of the Church as well as in new disciples, is seen by John as an example of how the Holy Spirit is involved in many facets of the evangelistic journey. Dunn notes, "his spirit may be experienced in many diverse ways, both in non-rational ecstasy and through the mind, both in experiences of dramatically effective power and in compulsion to

serve ...” *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study in the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), 357-58.

CHAPTER 2: THE POWER OF WAYPOINTS

Evangelistic Effectiveness Is Missing

“Ministry effectiveness must be evaluated and not simply assumed.” Thus, intoned a social scientist by the name of James Engle as he assessed North American church health. As the author of dozens of journal articles on business strategy, Engle had been taken back by the cavalier attitude Christians held toward evaluation. His concerns were echoed by Fuller Seminary professor Donald McGavran, who argued that his term church growth, while valid, had come to mean something unintended: attendance growth. McGavran therefore sought, unsuccessfully, to supplant the term church growth with the more accurate phrase, *effective evangelism*^{xlvi} because this emphasized effectiveness over bulk.

When teaching business students Engle stressed it was not size but effectiveness that was the key. A large organization could be as unhealthy as a small one. Thus, effectiveness, not mass was the goal. And though Engle believed that God wanted all persons to know Him, this did preclude evaluating exactly which methodologies God was using at the time.^{xlvii} Engle’s actions were mirrored by Eddie Gibbs who stated “the intentions of God do not set aside the need for careful evaluation.”^{xlviii}

McGavran therefore sought, unsuccessfully, to supplant the term church growth with the phrase, *effective evangelism* because this emphasized effectiveness over bulk.

Creating an evaluation tool that did not reply upon statistics or ratings but rather tracked progress Engle developed a scale of spiritual decision. Engle celebrate that there was a point when “a new disciple was born,” but felt the church had become ineffective by placing too much emphasis upon the point of decision.^{xlix} He saw churches overly fixated upon altar calls, prefabricated explanations of the Good News, and celebrations of the new birth.¹ Engle, as does this author, sees nothing wrong with such celebration, only that in many churches the celebration clouds the fact that there are waypoints that lead to a spiritual decision, and subsequent waypoints that lead to maturity. When euphoria steals our attention from requisite follow through, the dilemma becomes analogous to a newborn child who is left at the hospital after the initial elation of the parents wanes. All parents can tell you that the journey only gets more complex and complicated after birth, and you better be prepared. And so it is with new births in Christ. In both parenting and discipling there are waypoints up ahead, and each one will require a new set of skills.

Elastic Parenting in Word and Deed

In previous writings I described how the pattern of parenting is a helpful (and Biblical) leadership metaphor in part of elasticity.^{li} By elastic, I mean that a

person must stretch and adjust their parenting methods as a child matures, without changing the parent's underlying principles. So too must the church adjust its ministry (but not its principles) as the new person grows in Christ. If the church does not adjust its methods, the maturing disciple may go elsewhere in search of a spiritual home that can help them with the next stage in their spiritual journey. Such partings undercut a local church's effectiveness, and interrupts the consistency a young disciple needs.

Let us consider an example. Grace Church (a pseudonym^{lii}) might be skilled in helping community residents with a clothing shelf and food bank. But, at the same time this church may be weak in explaining the fundamentals of the Good News. This can occur because Grace Church feels benevolent and compassionate *deeds* are the primary way they express the Good News. This is sometimes called "evangelism in *deed*," where the deed is seen as reflecting the love of Christ. And, it certainly can and should. However, such a church can be weak in their explanation of the tenets of the Good News. Skill in explaining the tenets of the Good News is sometimes called "evangelism in *word*," where teaching about the words of Christ form a church's primary thrust of the Good News.^{liii}

We saw in chapter one that both of these actions, charitable deeds (the cultural mandate) and explaining the biblical Word (the evangelistic mandate), are part of our Good News. But a church that majors on one, and only minors on the other, risks creating missing links in the traveler's journey. If a parent did not adapt their parenting style as the child grows into teen years, that teenager might leave home complaining that they were still being treated as a child. And so, it happens in similar fashion in our churches.

There is nothing wrong when churches divide up this process, with some churches focusing on the Good News in deed and other churches focusing on the Good News in word.^{liv} Ron Sider and his colleagues have even suggested practical strategies for creating partnerships between such congregations.^{lv}

But a problem emerges when we look at this from the viewpoint of the wayfarer. The traveler begins to make friends with those helping them on their journey, only to find that once they travel to another waypoint, they must break these ties with former friends and seek to penetrate a new community. This forces the wayfarer to continually cut his or her ties and repeatedly seek a new community that can facilitate the next stage of their journey.

The problem is exacerbated because churches often find it challenging to offer ministry at more than a few waypoints. So, most churches just don't exert the effort. A result is that most churches focus on a narrow band of the journey and give lip-service to the rest. This must change. If it does not, then for the convenience of church workers, we are forcing new disciples to break-reestablish, break-

... most churches focus on a narrow band of the journey and give lip-service to the rest. This must change.... we are forcing new disciples to break-reestablish, break-reestablish and break-reestablish relationships just to continue on their spiritual path.

reestablish and break-reestablish relationships just to continue on their spiritual journey.

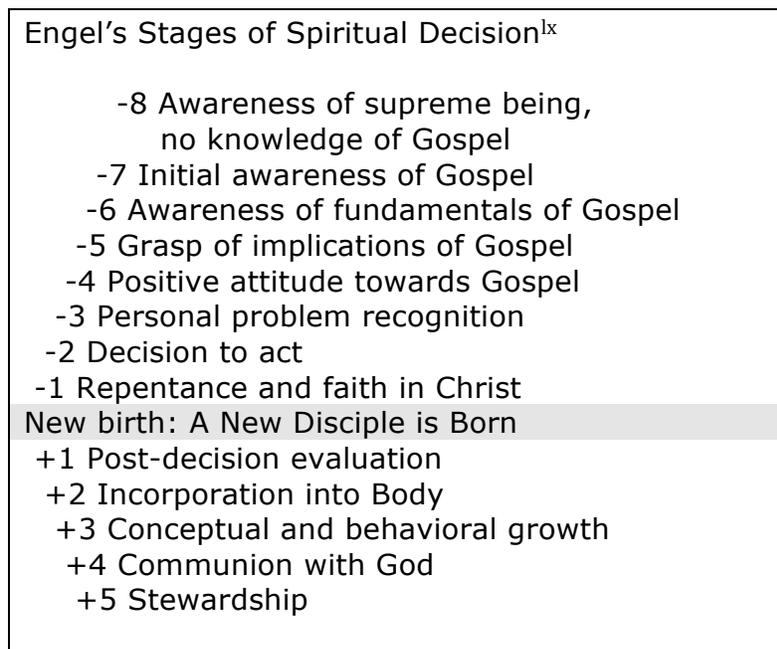
An even more worrisome outcome is that when severing relationships with one congregation and initiating relationships with another, wayfarers may drop out of the journey. The person who exits a congregation often feels as if they are betraying their friends.^{lvi} The result is that relationships are rent, and looking back becomes painful.

The answer begins by creating a map of how the Good News travels, one that depicts the direction, waypoints and progress of the journey. Once churches grasp this visual depiction with its many waypoints, churches can either encourage a disciple to move-on, or the congregation can decide to expand their ministry into adjacent waypoints ... and beyond.^{lvii}

Engel's Scale

To visualize this process, Engle began with what he called "the Great Commission in common dress"^{lviii} and viewed this as a process of stages. Let us look briefly at each stage (Figure 1) in what Engel labeled "a model of spiritual decision processes,"^{lix}

Figure 1



-8 A person at this stage might label themselves an *agnostic*, knowing there is a god but not knowing who that god is.

-7 Here a person becomes aware of Good News about God (i.e. the Gospel) through the deeds, words, testimony, etc. of Christians or others.

-6 A deepening awareness of the fundamentals of this Good News could include the traveler experiencing charity, forgiveness, graciousness, reciprocity, etc.. This could be exemplified in acts of mercy, sacrifice, justice, etc., which fulfill the Great Commandment (*Mark 12:31*) to “love your neighbor as yourself” (sometimes called the “cultural mandate”). A sizable portion of people today may lie in this realm, appreciating the good deeds of Christians but not moving into the next stage (-5) where they grasp the personal implications of the Good News.

-5 This indicates the person understands the personal requirements of the Good News. Here is where major disconnects may occur, when people see good deeds but fail to grasp that the Good News has requirements and obligations upon the hearer. Jesus noted this many times, for instance when he said, “take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (*Matthew 11:29-30*).

-4 The person develops a positive view of the Gospel. Again, because of what was noted above, many unchurched people today probably reside in a realm between -7 and -4.

-3 Here a person recognizes a personal deficiency, incapable of being addressed without divine interaction and assistance.

-2 A person makes a decision to act and reach out for supernatural assistance to address the deficiency.

-1 A person recognizes they have not lived up to God’s standards, and that only by faith in Jesus Christ and His death on their behalf can they escape the penalty of their sins.

New birth. God creates an intersection between the spiritual and physical words; and a new person is born (*John 3:3-8*).

+1 Here the person reviews what has happened and whether the decision was worth the effort and/or the emerging criticism. Some, after reevaluating their decision, lapse back to -3 or -4 with either a decision not to act, or to reevaluate their positive attitude toward the Good News.

+2 If forward progress occurs a person will seek out a support network of fellow Christians, fulfilling the admonition of *Hebrews 10:24-25* to “let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another...”

+3 Here spiritual growth is observed in faith and action. In *Acts 2:42-47* we observe three types of church growth that should emerge: growth in maturity (growing in passion for the Bible, fellowship and prayer), growth in unity (growing in harmony with others) and growth in service (growing in service to others both inside and outside of the church).^{lxi} Engel places traditions associated with new birth, such as adult baptism or confirmation, in this stage.^{lxii}

+4 At this point Engel clouds the picture a bit, referring to this a stage as communion with God “through prayer and worship.”^{lxiii} Though he acknowledges that this happens earlier too, by stressing it here Engel gives the unintended impression that supernatural encounter mostly flourishes later.^{lxiv}

In fact here is a weakness of the Engle Scale, it is stronger and more descriptive of the pre-birth process than of the post-birth journey. If both aspects of the journey should be balanced as Engel suggests^{lxv} then further waypoints must be added to the upper realms of Engel Scale to make it truly holistic.

Clinton's Phases

Bobby Clinton from Fuller Seminary focused on the phases of the journey after new birth (Figure 2). Though other authors have offered similar process models,^{lxvi} Clinton's is one of the best organized and defined. In addition, Clinton emphasizes that these phases overlap and are indigenized for each person.^{lxvii} Let us look briefly at each of what Clinton calls "Six Phases of Leadership Development."

Figure 2



I. Sovereign Foundations. Clinton suggest this phase begins in the period before new birth. Clinton sees God imbuing His creation with certain personality characteristics that after new birth will correlate to spiritual gifts. During this phase God is preparing a leader through experiences and character traits.^{lxix}

A New Disciple is Born. Between Phase 1 and 2, Clinton sees "an all out surrender commitment, in which the would-be-leader aspires to spend a lifetime that counts for God."^{lxx} Here Engel offers here more depth as he charts the minute, but important, mental steps that lead up to a "surrender commitment." Therefore, Engel's preparatory steps to this experience will contribute more robustly to our waypoint approach.

II. Inner-life Growth. In this phase Clinton describes the mentoring and modeling that the new Christian experiences. Clinton neglects Engel's insights regarding the post-birth evaluation, yet Clinton adds to our understandings the influence of both informal apprenticeships and formal training.^{lxxi}

III. Ministry Maturation: Ministry as the Prime Focus of Life. This phase occurs as the disciple senses ministry is increasingly becoming a focus of their life. The disciple is motivated to explore ministry options and spiritual giftings.^{lxxii} At this

juncture, Clinton offers the most satisfying insights, pointing out that much of the growth in the new disciple is self-directed, meaning the disciple must take it upon themselves to look for opportunities to volunteer, minister to others and evaluate effectiveness. Ministry is thus often organic, unpaid and unscripted.^{lxxiii} Though Clinton notes that “most people are anxious to bypass Phase II and get on with the real thing – Phase III, ministry,”^{lxxiv} in hindsight Phase II can be very satisfying because all options are possible and hope abounds.

IV. *Life Maturation: Gift-mix With Power.* Here Clinton offers a critical insight into the powerful synergy that is unleashed when a person finds a ministry that corresponds to their gifts. Ministry priorities are also established during this phase, which Clinton describes as a phase of “mature fruitfulness.”^{lxxv}

V. *Everything Converges.* In this phase personality, training, experience, gifts and geographical location converge to release ministry that is not only effective but also widely appreciated. Clinton points out that not all disciples reach this stage, but by just defining the stage Clinton gives us a mental picture of God’s potential for the individual. “Ministry is maximized” sums up Clinton.

VI. *Afterglow.* This is a phase when a person’s ministry is so influential over such an extended period of time, that the person enjoys the afterglow of effective ministry. Thought a end that should be considered, Clinton notes that in reality few get there. However, travelers should not be discouraged nor surprised, for the Scriptures are replete with examples of saints who never attained (at least in this life) *afterglow*.

Clinton provides an interesting roadmap toward the growth of influential and effective leadership, even if the higher phases are often not realized in this lifetime. It is in the phases of leadership development that Clinton bests Engel.^{lxxvi}

A New Roadmap for a New Era

Engel’s and Clinton’s scales provide helpful visual reminders in a world increasingly comfortable and dependent upon symbols and icons.^{lxxvii} But both Engel and Clinton are still rooted in a modernist world where inflexible stages and lock-step phases rob the journey of outreach of its elastic and local flavor. Who would want to blindly follow someone else’s travelogue, and not experience surprises, scenic byways and flexibility in route?

A new postmodern era is emphasizing the importance of learning through experience, not just from books.^{lxxviii} These are people who want to experience the journey, not just live vicariously through someone else’s diary. For these people a new roadmap is needed, a map that draws from the best of Engel and Clinton, but also emphasizes how each traveler experiences the journey uniquely. This new map must emphasize that there are common waypoints that each traveler will encounter though at different times and with different facets. Our new map must focus less on stages and phases, and instead concentrate on the natural experiences that the traveler will encounter on the journey.

To begin to chart this new route, let us see how (in Figure 3) both Engel and Clinton contribute insights, but on different segments of the journey.

Figure 3: Engel's Stages and Clinton's Phases Compared

Engle's Stages of Spiritual Decision	Clinton's Six Phases of Leadership Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -8 Awareness of supreme being -7 Initial awareness of Gospel -6 Awareness of fundamentals of the Gospel -5 Grasp of implications of the Gospel -4 Positive attitude toward Gospel -3 Personal problem recognition -2 Decision to act -1 Repentance 	 <p>I Sovereign foundations</p>
<p>New Birth: A Disciple is Born</p>	<p>New Birth: A Disciple is Born</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +1 Post-decision evaluation +2 Incorporation into the Body +3 Conceptual and behavioral growth +4 Communion with God + 5 Stewardship 	 <p>II Inner-life growth</p> <p>III Ministry maturation</p> <p>IV Life maturation</p> <p>V Convergence</p> <p>VI Afterglow</p>

As seen in Figure 3, both scales have their strong points. By combining the two, taking out some overlap, updating terminology, and focusing on the process rather than static stages/phases, a new roadmap can emerge that is more attune to today's traveler. Therefore to provide a more elastic and organic alternative, I suggest that the stages and phases become less prominent, and they be replaced with moveable waypoints that give a general understanding of where one is within a certain segment of their journey. Figure 4 then is a new scale, born from the above,^{lxxix} but with emphasis upon indigenous waypoints for tracking the traveler's progress.

Figure 4:

WHITESEL'S WAYPOINTS

-  16 No awareness of supreme being
-  15 Awareness of supreme being, no knowledge of the Good News
-  14 Initial awareness of the Good News
-  13 Awareness of the fundamentals of the Good News
-  12 Grasp of the implications of the Good News
-  11 Positive attitude towards the Good News
-  10 Personal problem recognition
-  9 Decision to act
-  8 Repentance and faith in Christ
-  7 **NEW BIRTH**
-  6 Post-decision evaluation
-  5 Incorporation into the Body
-  4 Spiritual foundations (conceptual and behavioral growth)
-  3 Inner-life growth (deepening communion with God)
-  2 Ministry emergence (spiritual gifts emerge)
-  1 Impact emergence (life influences others)
-  0 Convergence (experience, gifts and influence converge into a life of integrity and inspiration)

Each one of these waypoints will be examined more fully in each of the following chapters. However, at this juncture let us look at some unique characteristics that a waypoint approach affords.

Features of Whitesel's Waypoints

Feature 1: Churches Should Expand Outward From Their Current Waypoints To Cover New Waypoints

Just as it is important for travelers to know where they are on this journey, it is likewise critical for organizations to know what waypoints they address best. The first question to ask is, were on this journey is our church offering effective ministry?

Let's look at our illustration of Grace Church. Grace Church is heavily involved in social action through a clothing shelf and food bank (the cultural mandate) and thus is probably ministering primarily at Waypoints 14 or 13. It might be too big of a leap for Grace Church to immediately commence ministry to travelers at Waypoints 9 or 8. The important intermediary waypoints of 10, 11 and 12 would be missing.

Here is how this misstep might occur at Grace Church. As noted, Grace Church has an effective ministry utilizing a clothing shelf and food bank (Waypoints 13 and 14). Some congregants feel that what is missing is a call to decision (Waypoint 9). Thus, a nationally known sports figure is invited to share at an event that is heavily publicized and attended. The sports figures calls for hearers to respond. Twenty eight patrons of the clothing shelf or food bank respond with professions of new birth. A true story, with only the names changed, the result one year later was that of these twenty eight respondents, only four are continuing on their journey of Christian discipleship. While four are certainly worth any effort, one wonders what might happen if Grace Church had covered the missing segments of the journey, the segments called Waypoints 10, 11 and 12.

In my experience, churches reach out more effectively when they move to cover the next adjacent waypoint, and strengthen their ministry there. This eliminates the problem of creating gaps or disruptions in the traveler's journey. After increasing in effectiveness in the adjacent waypoint, the church can then proceed further outward to more waypoints, increasing the holism of their ministry.

Let us see how Grace Church could have done things differently by undertaking two exploratory steps, and one result.

- a. First the leaders of Grace Church would ask themselves, "is there a nearby or associated church that is effectively doing ministry at either of the waypoints next to us?" If there is, then Grace Church should first contact them and explore partnering in ministry. Partnering however will depend upon theological and doctrinal differences and/or if the nearby ministry is reaching a different culture.^{lxxx} If a suitable ministry partner can be found, then a church can readily increase their span of ministry on the journey of evangelism.
- b. However, if there is not a viable partner to increase Grace Church's ministry span, then the church should work from the waypoints they are effectively doing (Waypoints 14 and 13) *outward* to adjacent waypoints

(Waypoints 15 or 12). From here this expansion would eventually increase to as much of the journey as feasible.

- c. If Grace Church expands its ministry to first help those travelers at W12 and then those W11, then the church is progressively helping travelers navigate a larger portion of their spiritual journey. Without intersecting bridges between waypoints, a traveler can become confused, disorientated and at worst, lost.

Feature 2:

Focusing on One Waypoint Can Stagnate a Church

There is a danger for a church that becomes a specialist in only a few waypoints. Waypoints by their very nature indicate a “point on the way.” Thus, stopping any where on the continuum becomes unnatural, and worrisome. This can result in the nearsightedness of which my friend Doug spoke. Churches can get fixated on the few waypoints they are doing well, and not see the needs on those travelers on other parts of the journey.^{lxxxix}

Some churches may be too small or even too successful to want to offer ministry at more than a couple waypoints. If that is the case, then as noted earlier partnerships can help churches build bridges to adjacent waypoints. Such collaboration will ensure that travelers can readily move to the next waypoint, even if it means going to a partner church.^{lxxxix}

There is a danger for a church that becomes a specialist in only a few waypoints. Waypoints by their very nature indicate a “point on the way.” Thus, stopping any where on the continuum becomes unnatural, and worrisome.

However, by emphasizing a journey with ongoing and long-term processes, a church is less likely to succumb to focusing on just a few waypoints.^{lxxxix} And a journey metaphor reminds us that each new waypoint builds upon an earlier one. Because churches are communal expressions called out to demonstrate God’s love and purposes,^{lxxxix} then churches should seek to help as many travelers as possible to travel as far along on their journey as possible.

Feature 3:

Countdown to Convergence

The reader might wonder why these waypoints count down (16-0), rather than up (0-16), to convergence? The count-down motif was utilized for several reasons.

- a. Counting upward would end at some arbitrary number for eternal convergence. The magnificence of eternity seems too grand to assign a number.
- b. If the numbers were assigned in an upward fashion from 1 to 16, then an unintended impression might be that a person at 12 is superior to a person at Waypoint 3. While growing in Christ is redemptively lifting,

maturity fosters humility and thus assigning higher numbers for Christian maturity clouds our intentions.

- c. Finally, zero for convergence carries the sense of the last waypoint of one journey and the stepping off into a new journey of timeless dimensions. Zero can thus be the launching place for another journey ... otherworldly and eternal.

*Feature 4:
Biblical Support for an Ongoing Journey*

As seen earlier, the Great Commission of *Matthew 28:19-20* is the apex toward which the Great Commandment (*Mark 12:31*) aims and instructs.^{lxxxv} Within the Great Commission are four verbs: go, make disciples, baptize and teach. Though in the English they appear identical, in the Greek only one of these verbs is the main verb, and the other three describe it (the other three are participles, i.e. helping verbs that modify or explain the main verb).

Which then is the main verb, the one that the other three are describing? The Greek language holds the answer, for the unique spelling of *matheteusate* indicates that “make disciples” is the main verb, and thus “to make disciples” is Jesus’ choice for the goal of our going, baptizing and teaching.

But what exactly is this disciple that we are commissioned to foster? *Matheteusate* is derived from Greek word for “learner” and means to “make learners.” McGavran stresses that *matheteusate* means “enroll in my (Jesus’) school.”^{lxxxvi}

And yet, the Greek grammar holds more surprises. *Matheteusate* has a unique Greek spelling, indicating that it is in the *imperative* voice and the *present perfect* tense. These grammatical constructions tell us the following.

- The *imperative voice* indicates that to make learners is a *crucial* and *urgent* undertaking.
- The *present tense* denotes that making learners should be a *current* action.
- And the *perfect tense* carries the idea that making learners should be a *continual* and *ongoing* action.

In our search for a culture-current metaphor we see the image of a “journey” emerging, with “traveling wayfarers” moving forward to encounter new “waypoints.”

Therefore, the present *and* ongoing imagery of a journey becomes a welcome metaphor. Engel said,

In short, discipleship requires continued obedience over time.... Thus becoming a disciple is a *process* beginning when one received Christ, continuing over a lifetime as one is conformed to His image (*Phil 1:6*), and culminating in the glory at the end of the age. In this broader perspective, the Great Commission *never* is fulfilled but always is in the process of fulfillment.^{lxxxvii}

In our search for a culture-current metaphor we see the image of a “journey” emerging, with “traveling wayfarers” moving forward to encounter new “waypoints.” For churches to focus too narrowly on a few waypoints, slows and disconnects the process as travelers will have to seek out new churches to help them travel on the next leg of their journey. Many wayfarers will find the change too awkward, and many will not make the leap at all.

In the following chapters we will carefully examine each waypoint. In the process we will encounter personal stories that illustrate each waypoint and learn what churches can do to help travelers negotiate each point on life’s most important journey.

Notes for Chapter 2:

^{xlvi} Donald A. McGavran, *Effective Evangelism: A Theological Mandate* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1988). Eugene Nida had earlier warned of the Christian propensity to eschew assessment in *Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960).

^{xlvii} C.f. *John 17:3* and *Romans 10:13*, also Engel, *Contemporary Christian Communication*, 66-68.

^{xlviii} Nida and McGavran emphasized that outreach should to be evaluated and not simply assumed. See Eugene Nida’s *Message and Mission* (1960) and McGavran’s *Understanding Church Growth* (1970), where McGavran called the church’s avoidance of evaluation equivalent to creating a “universal fog” of empirical murkiness, 76-120.

^{xliv} Engel, *Contemporary Christian Communication*, 79-80.

^l This is not to say that presentations of the Good News are not necessary, effective or needed. They are. But Engel saw, as did my friend Doug, a fixation or “nearsightedness” in evangelical churches, where the new birth event blinded the church to its important task in the process that leads up to the new birth waypoint and beyond, *Contemporary Christian Communications*, 86.

^{li} Whitesel, *Inside the Organic Church*, 108-123, *Preparing for Change Reaction*, 117-131.

^{lii} This and subsequent ecclesial examples in this book are hypothetical organizations. While based on actual cases, to preserve anonymity these illustrative organizations were created from a compilation of actual case studies.

^{liii} Al Tizon, *Transformation After Lausanne: Radical Evangelical Mission in Global-Local Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2008), Ron Sider, *The Scandal of Evangelical Politics: Why Are Christians Missing the Change to Really Change the World?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008).

^{liv} This can help small churches whose only option is to partner with another church to offer more waypoints on the evangelistic journey. It can increase congregational self-esteem to know that they are helping in a portion of the process. An example of a two churches that partnered two decades ago and have now grown into a “yoked mega-church” is St. Thomas’s Church of Sheffield England (Anglican Church of

England) and the Philadelphia Church (Baptist Union of Great Britain). For their remarkable story, see Paddy Mallon's *Calling a City Back to God: A Sheffield Church, Over 2,000 Strong, Most Below 40 Years Old ... What Can We Learn?* (Eastbourne, UK: Kingsway Communication, Ltd., 2003).

^{lv} Ronald J. Sider, John M. Perkins, Wayne L. Gordon and F. Albert Tizon, *Linking Arms, Linking Lives: How Urban-Suburban Partnerships Can Transform Communities* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008).

^{lvi} For more on why group exits occur and preventative measures see, Bob Whitesel, *Staying Power: Why People Leave the Church Over Change, and What You Can Do About It* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003).

^{lvii} Some may wonder if expanding a church's ministry into neighboring waypoints might undermine nearby churches that are succeeding in those waypoints. However, since the majority of Americans do not attend church, there is a substantial need for more holistic and multiple-waypoint approaches to disciple the current population.

^{lviii} Engel and Norton, *What's Gone Wrong With the Harvest?*, 45.

^{lix} James F. Engel, *The Church Growth Bulletin* (Fuller Institute of Church Growth, Pasadena, CA: 1973). Engel stressed that his decision scale emphasized how a church's "communication ministries" must change as the traveler journeys through the spiritual decision process, *What's Gone Wrong With the Harvest?*, 44-45. Unfortunately, the published designation, "Engel's Scale of Spiritual Decision" clouds Engel's emphasis upon the elastic role of the church's communication, and thus this scale's designation does not correspond to its content.

^{lx} Engel's Scale of Spiritual Decision has been codified from several of Engel's variations, c.f. James F. Engel and Wilbert Norton, *What's Gone Wrong With the Harvest? A Communication Strategy for World Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1975); 45, James F. Engel, *Contemporary Christian Communications: Its Theory and Practice* (New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1979), 63-87, 225; James F. Engel and William A. Dyrness, *Changing the Mind of Missions: Where Have We Gone Wrong* (Westmont, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2000), 100-101. The current example has been adapted by the author.

^{lxi} For an explanation of each of the four types of church growth found in *Acts 2:42* along with measurement tools to track each, see Bob Whitesel and Kent Hunter, *A House Divided: Bridging the Generation Gaps in Your Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 207-218.

^{lxii} Engel, *Contemporary Christian Communications*, 81. Scot McKnight's observations indicate that some denominations might disagree with Engel's placing baptism at +2. McKnight notes that some liturgical traditions place baptism earlier, at Engel's New Birth juncture. McKnight offers a helpful overview of when and how different denominations view baptism as corresponding to the conversionary experience. He notes that evangelicals and Pentecostals view "personal decision" as the place of conversion, while some mainline Protestants see conversion associated with a long nurturing process (McKnight calls this "conversion through socialization"). He then notes that some liturgical traditions may view conversion as attached to liturgical

acts such as baptism, the sacraments and “official rites of passage,” Scot McKnight, *Turning to Jesus: The Sociology of Conversion in the Gospels* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 1-7. Subsequently, depending on the tradition and practice, baptism may be viewed as occurring anywhere between the stages of New Birth through +2.

lxiii Engel, *Contemporary Christian Communications*, 82

lxiv Engel sometimes talks about communion with God (+4) and Stewardship (+5) as subsets of +3 Conceptual and Behavioral Growth. Engel, *Contemporary Christian Communications*, 83; *What’s Gone Wrong With The Harvest*, 45, 52-56.

lxv Engel in *Contemporary Christian Communications*, 66-68.

lxvi I.e. John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader, Becoming the Person Others Will Want to Follow* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1999); Max DePree, *Leadership is an Art* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1989), Tom Rath and Barry Conchie, *Strengths-Based Leadership* (Washington, DC: Gallup Press, 2009); Seth Godin, *Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us* (New York: Portfolio, 2008).

lxvii Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1988), 30.

lxviii Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader*.

lxix Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader*, 31.

lxx Ibid.

lxxi While Clinton addresses the influence of personal mentoring, he does not address the influence of the Christian community to the degree of Engel. Research shows that the health of a church community is an important factor in fostering leadership development (Whitesel, *Growth by Accident, Death by Planning, and Inside the Organic Church*, along with parallels in the business world, Mary Jo Hatch and Majken Schultz, *The Dynamics of Organizational Identity* [Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004] and Mary Jo Hatch, Monika Kostera and Andrzej K. Kozminski, *Three Faces of Leadership: Manager, Artist, Priest* [Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005]).

lxxii This would be Engel’s sub-stage of “discovery and use of gifts.”

lxxiii For “A Comparison Between Institutionalization and Improvisation” see Whitesel, *Inside the Organic Church*, 119.

lxxiv Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader*, 32.

lxxv Ibid.

lxxvi While Engel emphasizes spiritual disciplines, there is no guarantee in Engel’s scale that spiritual maturity will correspond with these actions. For example, just because a person is experiencing Engel’s +8 Stage of stewardship of resources, or +9 Stage of prayer, does not mean that person is actually growing in maturity. These are actions that should accompany maturity in faith, but do not necessarily do so. Thus Engel emphasizes the artifacts of the journey, but Clinton emphasizes their influence.

lxxvii For examples of the widespread use of icons in contemporary communication, see Whitesel, *Inside the Organic Church: Learning from 12 Emerging Congregations* (Abingdon Press, 2006).

^{lxxviii} See also the author's analysis of postmodern church patterns in *Inside the Organic Church* and *Preparing for Change Reaction*. Especially note Chapter 3 on change and culture in the latter volume.

^{lxxix} Whitesel's 16 Waypoints and Their Correlation to Engel and Clinton

Whitesel's Waypoints and Their Correlation to Engel and Clinton
16 No awareness of supreme being (Engel)
15 Awareness of supreme being, no knowledge of Gospel (Engel)
14 Initial awareness of Gospel (Engel)
13 Awareness of fundamentals of Gospel (Engel)
12 Grasp implications of Gospel (Engel)
11 Positive attitude towards Gospel (Engel)
10 Personal problem recognition (Engel)
9 Decision to act (Engel)
8 Repentance and faith in Christ (Engel and Clinton)
7 New birth (Engel and Clinton)
6 Post-decision evaluation (Engel)
5 Incorporation into the Body (Engel and Clinton)
4 Spiritual foundations (Whitesel) +3 Conceptual and behavioral growth (Engel) +3.1 Sovereign Foundations (Clinton)
3 Inner-life growth (Clinton) +4.1 Communion with God (Engel) +5 Stewardship (Engel)
2 Ministry emergence (Clinton)
1 Influence emergence (Whitesel) Life Maturation (Clinton)
0 Convergence or Afterglow (Clinton)

^{lxxx} To learn more about the importance of cultures and how to grow indigenous and organic ministries, see *Preparing for Change Reaction: How To Introduce Change to Your Church* (2008) and *Inside the Organic Church: Learning from 12 Emerging Congregations* (2006).

lxxxix Churches might counter this argument by saying “but we are effective at one waypoint, why should we try to create ministry in areas in which we are not good?” This is an argument rooted in a common misperception regarding management theory, that organizations should focus on doing only one thing well. In the business world, an organization does not want to engage in too many *disparate* fields. However, if that business can enter a field that builds upon a field they already do well, then that becomes a good strategy. For instance, a company that builds homes will find that if it can add a realtor business, it can capitalize on the business generated before and after the house is built. The firm becomes more competitive because it covers more of the fields related to its purpose. So too the church becomes more holistic and helpful, if it helps people on more waypoints on the journey of evangelism.

lxxxix Such partnerships often organically develop in churches that have been planted by a mother congregation. Often an offspring congregations is more effective in meeting the needs of the disenfranchised, because the offspring is less administratively distant and nearer to the need. However, as the traveler moves along the journey of Good News, they may find they are in need of ministry that only the mother congregation can provide. In such scenarios, the connection between the daughter and the mother congregations often allows the wayfarer to shift to the mother congregation in a relatively smooth manner.

lxxxix Researchers have suggested that an emphasis upon social concerns has in the past led some evangelicals to become more liberal in theology and less evangelical in methodology (Ed Stetzer, address given to American Society for Church Growth (La Mirada, CA: Biola University, Nov. 14, 2008)]. However, understanding the journey of outreach can assist in halting this digression, by emphasizing the direction and waypoints of this journey of Good News. An immunization against this malady might be greater use and familiarity with a waypoint model, where the progress of the human condition is highlighted by waypoints that are not the ends of the journey, but merely markers toward an ultimate convergence.

lxxxix The Greek word commonly used for church in the New Testament, *ekklesia*, indicates a *community* or *assembly* that is called out for joint action. Walter Bauer, trans. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 240-241.

lxxxix Still, the mandates are two parts of the same process. Engel however makes a persuasive argument that Wagner (*Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, vol. 12 [July, 1976], 177-180) separates too greatly the cultural mandate from the evangelistic mandate (*Contemporary Christian Communications*, 66-68). Engel argues from Scripture and from practicality that it is a “grave missiological error” to separate the cultural mandate from the evangelical mandate at all. It is toward re-coupling these mandates that metaphors of a journey and waypoints are employed.

lxxxix McGavran, *Effective Evangelism*, 17.

lxxxix Engel, *Contemporary Christian Communications*, 66.

AFTERWORD:
ARRIVAL ...AND BACK AGAIN

“Anyone who sets himself up as ‘religious’ by talking a good game is self-deceived. This kind of religion is hot air and only hot air. Real religion, the kind that passes muster before God the Father, is this: Reach out to the homeless and loveless in their plight, and guard against corruption from the godless world.”

- James 1:26-27 (The Message)

As the reader has noticed, the journey of the Good News never ends, it just leads to more responsibility. Successfully traversing a waypoint only affords the trekker an opportunity to help others navigate that same waypoint. My friends and colleagues have contributed their personal stories for this purpose.

*A companion book:
WAYPOINTS: Navigating Your Spiritual Journey
by Bob Whitesel*

To provide a clearer map of this route I have written an important companion book titled: *Waypoints: Navigating Your Spiritual Journey* (The Wesleyan Publishing House, 2010). The companion volume is designed to help the person who is presently struggling with the obstacles, challenges and detours of this spiritual road. This companion book is for non-Christians, new-Christians and Christian-leaders alike. If you know of someone on this journey, *Waypoints: Navigating Your Spiritual Journey* is the roadmap they have been seeking.

*THE WAYPOINTS COURSE
by Bob Whitesel*

Additionally, to help people come together and traverse this route, I have written a 17-week course that can be used in Sunday School classes, home groups, Bible studies, small groups, leadership committees and home fellowships. The companion book, *Waypoints: Navigating Your Spiritual Journey*, provides an agenda for each of the 17-weeks. In this course travelers will share their experiences, help others, make an impact on their community. Weekly agendas of the WAYPOINTS COURSE are included in the companion book: *Waypoints: Navigating Your Spiritual Journey*.

For more information on either the companion book or the course see:

www.Waypoints-Book.com