

November 13, 2016

Dear Pastor Barry and team,

Thank you for hosting me the weekend of November 6-7 and sharing your love of Christ and neighbor with me. I am grateful for the energy, enthusiasm, excitement, and passion I observed in conversation. If you are going to fulfill your mission to make new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, it is essential that you have those characteristics just mentioned.

In the pages that follow, I am sharing my observations with you as to what I perceive would be your overall effectiveness in doing what you have said you want to do, which is to grow numerically as a faith community and ultimately make more new disciples of Christ. The strength I bring to the table is experience. I see many churches in many locations and contexts, larger and smaller, effective and not so effective. I am aware of cultural trends in numerous places around the midwest (North Central Jurisdiction) and beyond; and how those trends impact worship design. The deficit is that I am not you and I am not an expert on you or your context. I am a specialist; and that means you must evaluate everything I say based on what I bring to the table that can help you and also what you know is the truth for your specific location.

Regardless, I trust that we share a common goal: to — as noted — fulfill your calling. For all that you evaluate of what I say to you in the coming pages, please keep in mind that none of this is about me, and none of it is about you. It is all about the next person that you have said you want to reach out to; persons who have a distant relationship with Christ and the Christian church, for their transformation. How can you do that? Are you truly being effective now? What needs to change? You are all very talented, gifted, capable people, and made by God to continuously grow spiritually, and thus to continuously be open to change. That is what my comments are meant to help you do.

The mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. I look forward to working with you over the next few months to set some goals, strategies, timelines and to begin to implement your plan, to help you fulfill your mission. Do not hesitate to question and dialogue on your way to finding your way forward!

Blessings to you,

Cathy Townley

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Growing churches plan and lead worship with the guest in mind. The reason is to help new people fit in to an existing environment. Growing churches teach church regulars to welcome changes that help new people fit in, who are in your mission field and whom your church has said they want to reach out to. Jesus comes to us on the way to someone else.

Growing churches teach discipleship to new people, even as part of the worship service. In so doing, they teach discipleship to everyone. The idea is that a guest is only a guest one time, on the way in for the first time. On the way out, they are a “budding disciple” of Jesus Christ. If they land at your church, then they, too, would learn about giving Jesus away and expecting changes in the worship service that help you welcome the emerging mission field. Mission fields are always changing and evolving. Therefore, worship must continuously change.

For an existing church with long established traditions, some of those changes can be difficult. However, in the end, in most cases, most of the changes are good changes that even most long established members tend to accept and even like. You have a chance to bring approximately 85% of the congregation along in the changes I am recommending in these coming paragraphs. About 15% will never accept what you do ... the classic bell-shaped curve.

Change is not rushed and it does not languish. We will work together to establish a sequence, rhythm and timeline in the follow up coaching over the next few months.

One of the words I will use is “normal” (and “not normal”). To plan and lead worship with guests in mind means you must know what would be “normal” to your mission field. Fitting in is about normalcy. In worship development, we always want to remove obstacles so that new people can not have any distractions when you tell them about Jesus. In today’s culture, if people can hang out with you, they can learn about Jesus from you. If there is too much that is not normal, they will not be able to hang out with you and thus will not stick around long enough to learn about Jesus from you.

WHAT IS NORMAL AND WHAT IS NOT NORMAL AT Chapel Hill

- Several first impression items would fall into the category of “not normal”
- Musical quality overall is “normal,” style is in question
- An experience of Jesus is possibly missing, thus “not normal”
- Lack of clarity about the mission field makes mission “not normal”
- Worship times are potentially “not normal”
- The building has the potential to be compelling, which is normal, but needs a bit of work to make it so
- Leadership competence is “normal.” Communication of that competence may be “not normal.”

This is a short summary of what you are about to read. No one really knows what is normal or not normal for anyone. These are general observations for your consideration.

1. THE COMMUNITY EXEGETICAL TOUR

I enjoyed our afternoon exploring the mission field and gaining a sense of the breadth and expanse of the Portage / Kalamazoo area. I found it difficult to pinpoint the lifestyle of the persons you might want to connect with — their age and overall demographic information. You have said you want to reach out to 25 to 40 year olds. Where does that age bracket live and what do you know about them in terms of lifestyle?

I am not an expert on MissionInsite (MI), though I have had a bit of training on how to interpret it. I have studied your MI reports. The more valuable of the two Executive summaries you shared with me is the one-mile radius report. A few things stand out to me: your population is aging, but there is a surge of younger children coming up and thus you must have younger families or grandparents raising grandchildren. Also, some of the aging population still falls within the 25 to 40 age range, though at the higher end of that.

Your mission field drives your worship style, music style, worship time, communication, advertising, programming, building decor, building usage, overall hospitality, and children's ministries. The one thing the mission field does not drive is the content of your message. You must know your own identity and what you want to tell people about God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Everything else is external. The passion of worship derives from your content and the drive you have to share that content in whatever way you can so as to fulfill your mission to make new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

CONCERN: I did not sense an overall passion to want to reach an emerging mission field. It is a first impression. The lack of clarity on who the mission field is was part of that observation. The normalcy factor is skewed because of this. MI information is valuable, but it is not the same as what you see with your own eyes and know with your own heart. Who is it that lives near your church that you have a burning desire to touch with the gospel in your way and your context? What is the gospel message you long to share? These things must be clear for you to fulfill your calling to make new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

- **RECOMMENDATION ONE:** I encourage you to get one more MI report based on limited zip codes. One of the studies you shared with me has lots of zip codes. Limit the zip code study to one or two, and use the zip codes where you think you'd like to concentrate your outreach efforts. You do not need to decide to ultimately go after any one zip code; but you may find that you gain much insight into your area if you can narrow your search.
- **RECOMMENDATION TWO:** I encourage you to take a series of prayer walks and prayer drives in the areas where your mission field lives to determine with your heart who your target is. Do that either before or after the MI study, then compare the two.

SPECULATIONS ON MISSIONINSITE MOSAICS: The highest percentage of your population is Booming with Confidence — Aging of Aquarius. If you determined that this is your mission field, my subsequent comments might be different. You have another “C” category also: Boomers and Boomerangs. Together, these two segments comprise about 21% of the population in your study area. These demographics do not represent your 25 to 40 year old population that you have said you want to reach out to.

As far as I can tell, your target demographic is represented largely by the category, Flourishing Families, Babies and Bliss. This is close to 6% of your population in Portage, in the 1 mile radius you identified. You have another category of Flourishing families, which is older than your target demographic, or at least at the older end of the 25-40 age range, but which may have a fair amount in common with your target demographic, and that is Family Fun-tastic, at over 7% of your population (in your research study area). Together these comprise over 13% of your population. There may be merit in finding out more about these two categories, combined, particularly if they are people that touch your heart and to whom you feel you can reach out with your particular spin on the gospel and life transformation.

- **CAVEAT:** If your one-mile radius search area includes Kalamazoo, I fear your results are skewed. It appears that your primary current demographic of church attenders has wealth. Portage as a whole seems to have an upscale ethos. Kalamazoo is a very different culture. It will be very difficult to get people from Kalamazoo to be part of your faith community. I am aware you have some attenders already that live in Kalamazoo.

2. ACTS OF WELCOMING *before and after the service*, to increase the hospitality factor

HOSPITALITY. The umbrella of holiness we call hospitality is a Biblical phenomenon. The concept of hospitality is that we would meet people where they are so that we can include them in Christian community. Meeting people where they are indicates that hospitality practices are cultural. The heart is, however, eternal. Even in 1950 or 1980, people knew if you genuinely cared about them.

The hospitality umbrella includes acts of welcoming, kids ministries and music, because those are three prominent cultural values that seem to affect every mission field. This is critical information for the “hangout” factor. Most new guests will determine if they are going to stay with your church **within ten minutes or less** of being on site. That makes front end hospitality and first impressions a very important factor for welcoming new people. For groups in the age range of 25 to 40, the following typically matter a great deal to increase what seems “normal”:

Directional signage. Include directional signage at the driveways where you want people to enter, and pointing to the doors where you want people to enter. The sign needs only an arrow on it, since no one will see much other than that as they are driving by. Go to dirtcheapsigns.com

Parking lot greeters. On the way in: it is always useful to have two or three persons in the parking lot to help people find a place to park. It is not about the parking spot. It is about the touch point. Anyone from driving age can be a parking lot attendant. Wear orange vests and a smile. **On the way out:** resume posts and wave goodbye.

Door greeters. On the way in: Every door where you want people to enter needs two greeters — either two women, or one man and one woman. Their job is to hold the doors open as people enter and say hello and welcome. **On the way out:** back to posts, to say thanks for being here and we hope you had a good experience. See *Clip In*, by Jim Ozier.

Connectors. On the way in: The job of connectors is to connect with new people. You need extroverts who do not have trouble approaching someone they do not know. Connectors greet new people, find out a little about them and help them make a connection with someone in your church and with the experience. There is an art to connecting, see *Clip In*, by Jim Ozier.
On the way out: If you introduce the idea of connection appropriately during your worship service, you will have an opportunity to invite new people to stick around after the service to connect with a connector on finding out more about your church. This invitation occurs during the welcome of the service ... see chart at the end of this doc. Use a picture on the screen and announce a location where the connector will be for the new person to meet up with.

Lobby decor: You have a wonderful, large open space. It could be used better. Find a real estate stager (perhaps a church member) that can walk through the entire space of the church apart from the worship space to help you see the space anew and arrange it for traffic flow and participation. I did not make a specific note about the color; but I vaguely remember that it is yellow. White would be better, or at least a lighter color and fresh paint. I remember a few tables around the room that appear to have little usage / value. Everything should have a very clear purpose. If something has become expected and new people do not interact with it, it has probably outlived its usefulness. The welcome station / desk may be one of those things. Your lobby area is not huge, like a mega church, where a welcome station matters. In space your size, if you have connectors, you may not need the welcome desk. I mention this because anything you can do to increase the expanse of your space and set up ways for new people to interact with the space and with others will benefit their experience and make the space seem more welcoming and “normal.”

Lobby seating: The square of chairs jumps out as closed, and that is not normal! In any seating where people have to sit face to face, the only people you will get in that seating is people that already know each other. New people will avoid sitting with people they do not know where they have to look at them and therefore are forced to talk. A real estate stager could help you think through different seating arrangements, and even different types of chairs or sofas. Almost everything in the lobby is at the same level. You had a couple taller tables, but you could do more with varying heights, especially if you do something with your coffee station.

Coffee: You are using a local brand coffee, and that is a win! (normal, for guests!) However, the coffee bar is relegated to a corner, and that is not normal. It is an effort for a new person to walk over to get the coffee. There is no disagreement about bringing coffee into the worship space, and that is normal! But there is no lid (or at least I did not find a lid), making it not normal to drag a coffee cup around. Generally, the cup should hold 8 ounces. You may wish to reposition the coffee bar to be more central. Do not forget flavored teas!

Bulletin boards v digital. The bulletin boards on the way in are well done, but they are more informational than relational. They also give your place a dated look, which is not normal. The wall on which you have all the pictures are relational, and should be the first thing people see when they come in. The frames are somewhat large and heavy; you may wish to consider streamlining the framing for a more up-to-date, modern look. Ideally, the photography wall would be “interactive,” which is “normal” for the emerging culture. Interactive means that pictures change, they represent the entire church (older and younger alike), and more than one photographer or artist can take part in developing the interactive wall.

Chalk boards are interactive. If you were to move your bulletin boards to the wall where your pictures are currently, you may choose to use chalk boards for information, or, if you truly want to update your communication style, utilize **flat screen TV's**. Juxtapose **chalk boards** near high tech for high touch. Make the chalk boards (or white boards using whiteboard paint) long so that little kids can be part of the interactivity.

Finding the way around the building. I did not make a specific note of finding the way around the building, but I did not get lost. That is normal (and good). If there is any question about where things are after you work with a real estate stager, then you can increase directional signage non-worship space. Some new people will find their way around with a connector; some will find their way around with signage. The location of the nursery is critical to make sure people know where it is, and also bathrooms.

Background music. You will hear recorded Christian music playing in most growing churches, in the lobby, the worship space, sometimes even outside the church. This music plays all week as the announcements scroll on flat screen TV's. Announcements change each week, for Sunday worship. On Sundays, background music plays until worship music begins, thus increasing the "normal" factor. It is a way for guests to acclimate. New people feel exposed when they enter into silent space. Background music alleviates the tension and creates warmth and ambience.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** I included several recommendations in the previous narrative. Generally, entry space should be light and airy, and purposeful. The first impression of your space is that it is dated. You do not have a lot of clutter, but you have some. Look to update and streamline. A "compelling building" is very important for new people that are younger, with new kids, new jobs, new houses, new cars.

3. THE WORSHIP SPACE, a place of hospitality and holiness

In some ways, your worship space is great. It is wide and not narrow. There is some clutter; a couple tables, and the "Greek looking walls" at the two corners of the room. I looked behind those and found that you are storing things there that probably should be stored elsewhere. The Greek walls do not appear to be good quality and, to be honest, look "cheesy" in the room. They fall into the category of "not normal" for a guest. The color of the room, I seem to remember, was that same yellow. White, or a lighter color, would be better.

The problem part of the room is the front of it. The choir loft is fairly large and the choir sits there during the entire first service, and is much more visible than the preacher. That is not normal. The preacher seems to be in a hole. I was sitting in the back of the room and the height of the choir loft makes the pastor seem to sink down. In a contemporary space, the choir would not be more important than the preacher. For the second service, the choir is not there, but all the chairs are and it looks empty. The band is cramped into the corner.

I do not have a solution for how to fix the front part of the worship space. You will need a stager or an architect or both.

Technology: You can fix the "pastor in the hole" problem with technology. You already have the capability of putting kids on the screen (wall), you can do the same thing with the pastor.

However, you do need a screen, and in fact, it would be better if you had two. Google the Tea campus of Embrace in Sioux Falls South Dakota ... the fastest growing United Methodist church in the country. That is the type of thing you see with screens in most new churches. They are widescreen, and they cover the entire wall.

You have a cross front and center, so you could not do an entire wall covered with screens, though that would be the most modern look you could create. I do not know if the cross is what you might call a sacred cow in some churches. There are many ways to include crosses. The cross in your space is fixed and permanent, and not modern looking. The entire space in the front appears “stuck.”

The organ also seems out of place. If you removed the Greek wall in the front corner, could the organ go there? Just a thought.

FURTHER COMMENTS ON SCREENS: Screens are interactive; walls are not. The image will be much better on the screen than it is on the walls. Additionally, you will find flat screens on walls of worship spaces, which come back further into the room. You might find that including flat screens will help sight lines around the room improve (screens in front, flat screens on sides toward the back of the room — the back being the entry doors). Screens are about participation. The general idea for worship is to get people to participate, because when they participate, they experience God.

If you include flat screens in the lobby, new people and younger regulars might want to participate in the service in the lobby. The service should be on the screens in the lobby.

I was surprised, as a guest, that the words to the hymns were not on the wall during the first service. It was very confusing for me as a guest. That is a big “not normal!” It belies a deeper conflict that you are choosing not to put words on the wall and not have a screen because of a possible offense to some older persons. That is really the challenge you face. None of this is about the screens or the updating of the building. It is about the desire to do whatever it takes to welcome new people so that they can fit in and learn about Jesus from you. If there is conflict, new people will tend not to stick around.

- **GENERAL WORSHIP SPACE RECOMMENDATIONS:** It appears you have the capability to dim lights. During our follow up coaching, we can talk about how to use lighting. To reconsider or repurpose your worship space, think in terms of participation. How can you get more people to have more of an experience of God? How will lighting, screens, decor and room arrangements impact those experiences? A stager and an architect will help.

4. KIDS, a current culture front line expectation and part of the umbrella of holiness known as hospitality

In general, churches that are reaching out to a 21st Century culture of families with younger children cannot afford to not focus on kids and kids’ programming. The primary concerns are safety and engagement for the kids. Background checks for all persons working with kids, including parents and volunteers.

Nursery. Professionally staffed, not with paid younger persons and not with volunteers. Local day-care centers with workers looking to make extra money is the place to look for nursery workers. Two per Sunday per service, at a rate at least 50% higher than what they make per hour at their day job is appropriate. They already have the background check.

Location of the nursery and kids ministry areas. I did not observe where the nursery is. Google “church nurseries images” to find pictures of kids nurseries and other kids areas on Pinterest and elsewhere on line. In growing churches, we often see kids areas front and center as soon as you walk into the worship space. The most prominent room we see in your lobby is the church office. Dream with me a moment: what if that were the nursery? If anything says to your guest with small children, “we really want you here,” it is the front-and-center positioning of the nursery and the children’s church areas. That is normal.

Children’s church. Larger churches (over 500 in worship) often have completely concurrent children’s church for kids, AKA Kid’z-Own Worship / KidZone worship. Under 500 may prefer to have kids in worship for the opening praise set and then send them to age appropriate learning. The general concept is that new people will not give your church two-hours on a Sunday morning. They think they have given you an entire morning when they are there for an hour. There must be something for kids during adult worship. A two-hour culture is not normal.

Must register kids for kid’s ministry engagement BEFORE the time of the adult service. This requires training and organization for your church, for volunteers and paid and non-paid staff. You will need a children’s coordinator that knows how to communicate with adults. We can discuss various ways to organize registration before the service.

When children are dismissed to children’s church *during* the worship service, it is a vulnerable time for the kids. The larger your church, the more difficult this is to do.

Children’s sermon. One would be hard pressed to find a children’s sermon offered in a truly growing church. It is far too difficult to manage the exit of kids to children’s church. And, it is far too difficult to engage numerous wiggly kids in front of the congregation for a growing church, presumably with more than twenty kids present.

That said, if you are going to promote children’s sermons in your worship service, it is important to remember a few things:

- ***Do not objectify kids.*** Most churches that offer children’s sermons are far more concerned about the adults in the room than the kids in the room. If you want to make children’s sermons meaningful, then have the kids deliver the sermon, in their way. In other words, the kids become the worship leaders. This takes tremendous organization and practice. It would be a ministry endeavor for a children’s worker in your midst to develop kids as presenters versus receivers of a message.
- ***Manage the children’s sermons you are already doing.*** Generally, the children’s sermons showed lack of attention to detail in the worship presentation. Both sermons in both services went on too long, to the degree that you would lose persons in seats. It was not possible to hear the kids. It was not clear what was happening (because you could not hear the kids or the comments that were made that were not amplified). If you are going to do a

children's sermon, make sure there is a criteria for quality and then work together, hard, with training for those that deliver the sermons, to produce a quality experience for kids and their families. Currently, they are too long and need focus.

- **Worship time.** For service number 2, this is a huge topic. 11:30 a.m. is a most unusual time for a worship service to begin. For the vast majority of families, the time is not normal. It would be counterintuitive that children would be able to manage their own biological clocks for food to endure a sixty minute service at that time. If, in fact, you are in the pocket of your cultural environment that new people would want to attend at that time, then that is something you should know. At this moment in time, your awareness seems random. You are responding to what you see in your own context, v what the mission field is actually telling you. To know what your mission field would care about, you must know your mission field, and then, you must do a focus group with them to get details. 11:30 in most contexts competes with family life (it is mid-day, so nothing available before or after); competes with NFL football (even in the Eastern timezone, 11:30 pushes against pre-game TV shows); and kids' biological clocks (they get lunch in school about 11 or noon). My sense is that you do not truly know what your mission field will bear and thus cannot make serious decisions about how to best reach out to your context (if in fact you were able to articulate your specific mission field).

5. MUSICAL STYLE

I want to proceed in this topic with much caution. It is never comfortable for an outsider to come in and critique a music program, especially when you have musicians as good as yours. Truly, your musicians are very good. I have no issue with any of the quality of the music in either service. I am questioning the style. Style is a mission field issue.

The assumption most churches make is that new people will not like what we might call "traditional" worship. I prefer to refer to such worship as "choir led" worship, because most new people will know what "choir led" means, though they will not fully be on the same page as to what "traditional" worship means. We all have different definitions or experiences of "traditional" v "contemporary." Your traditional, choir led service music is good, but perhaps almost too traditional. Your choir is a decent size, and perhaps could grow from where it is if you offer more musical variety. Many churches with growing choirs have moved to a more contemporary praise style music. If you google "contemporary praise music arranged for choirs" you will find a plethora of resources. The role of the worship leader is always to grow the music ministry, even in a choir led service. I am aware that the new choir director has many resources and connections in the neighborhood. That is a huge plus. I encourage the choir director to draw from those groups and continue to expand the musical expressions of the 9 a.m. service.

The subject of music and musical style is more difficult for the second service. The band is quite good. I am uncertain if it is the right sound for the group I am assuming is your mission field (that group needs clarity).

Indy style, who that normally appeals to. I was told that you patterned the sound of the second service after an "Indy" sound that you cooked up to appeal to the group you thought would like what you are doing. I am in favor of you creating a sound. You may be on to something with what you have, but it could be tighter and more diverse.

The “indy” sound, or contemporary folk, tends to mostly appeal to a more urban or artsy crowd. That is not to say that it would not appeal to a suburban crowd, or to your mission field. We tend to relegate mission fields to a specific taste, when most of the time, their tastes are more diverse.

The current sound (and worship format) that you have now could be expanded. All Sons and Daughters and Rend Collective come to mind as a groups to listen to. These groups have a country (ASAD) and blue-grass (RC) feel. I do not know if you are familiar with some of the following groups (which one of my millennial church planters referred me to) — for your consideration:

Artists that are in the "Christian" scene

1. Gungor
2. Jenny & Tyler
3. John Mark McMillan
4. Jon Foreman
5. Wayfarer

Artists that are in the secular scene who are also Christians:

1. Sufjan Stevens
2. Mumford & Sons

This guy is a hasidic Jewish reggae artist:

Matisyahu <https://youtu.be/WRmBChQjZPs>

THE WORSHIP LEADER ROLE. The worship leader role appears to be lacking in the second service, and possibly in the first. The worship leader will help develop the sound and the band and create a rotation of various musicians to grow the music ministry, regardless of style. They also help develop the culture of invitation and growth. Churches and worship services grow in large part because of the leadership of the worship “leader.” Persons in seats know who the worship leader is during the worship service by the way they lead the congregation through the worship experience. The worship leader works hard to work themselves out of a job (thus creating a larger role for himself / herself). The worship leader must develop more worship leaders to make this a viable congregation. The development of the worship leader may be a role to expand for the choir director in service one, and for one of the musicians in service two.

In service two, the vocal configuration of three women singing as an ensemble could expand from where it is. You may wish to add some music with a lead vocal and one or two back up singers. To grow a sound is to vary the sound for different music, rather than having everyone do everything all the time.

ACOUSTICS. The sound of the piano during the first service was thin. The sound of the band during the second service was also thin. What I mean by thin is that there was no real sense of the presence of the music in the back of the room. You will need an acoustic audit by a professional who can help you “beef up” your sound.

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP. This is not about musical style, per se, but the connection between worship music and the worship sequence greatly impact the discussion of musical style. The true impact of the service is lacking because of starting with talking head announcements. Always, this zaps the energy from a service. Talking head announcements are very NOT NORMAL for guests. Most guests will not fit in to talking head announcements. You have scrolling announcements on the wall before the service, and that is good. We can discuss how to improve those. Including recorded background music will help, as well as improving the slides themselves. But when it is time for the service to start, then it should start with music or some type of liturgy, and infuse energy into the room. From that point forward, music is a tremendous connection tool to thread the experience together and create God moments. There were many missed opportunities for God moments during the service because the service currently — in both time slots — is not organized for them. I have included a chart with an ancient-future format for your consideration, as a separate attachment.

SECOND SERVICE TIME SLOT. See previous comments under kids.

- **RECOMMENDATION: focus groups.** We return to a lack of clarity on your mission field. I recommend making some “guesses” about who your mission field is, then researching that group to see what assumptions and conclusions you can make about them. The primary questions would be around worship times, worship styles, musical styles, worship location, and kids. I would be happy to help you determine some of the content of the questions. A focus group specialist with experience organizing and leading such groups would know more about how to get a group organized and what you need to do to get non-church participants that represent your mission field to gather together to tell you the truth!.
- **RECOMMENDATION: worship leader.** This is a role worthy of developing in both services.

6. THE GAPING HOLE: *Prime time worship time is missing*

As I told you when I was there, and also as I mentioned earlier in this document, the 11:30 start time of your worship service is highly unusual. I am aware that you can get 150 in that service at times but that 150 drops to 50 and then bounces back up. That inconsistency is a clue that something is amiss. I am not believing that many of those who attend are new, or that they have younger children. Most services in churches are started for convenience of church members, not for the mission field. If the service is started with the mission field in mind, most of the time it is based on assumptions about the mission field rather than reality. Across the country, 11:30 is not prime time and in most places you would have a great deal of trouble making that service grow. Between 9 and 10:30 is prime time, and you have nothing at the 10:15 hour. Generally, this is a gaping hole for what you could be doing to help you reach out to newer, younger, more diverse populations. My encouragement to you is not to take my word for it. Do some focus groups of your mission field to determine truly what start time would matter to them. See my previous comments about focus groups. If you find that the 10:15 start time for a service would be valuable for your context, my encouragement to you is to get involved in the MULTIPLY program that your conference is offering for starting new services or new sites.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** talk with Gary Step about Multiply, after you gain some insight from your focus groups.

7. THE CHARTS

In my new book *Building Worship Bridges*, I offer numerous charts to give people an idea of how to implement the suggestions we make for creating more compelling worship experiences for people. Our book will be out soon. We are giving away the workbook / charts. I will be happy to share those with you, but they will not be very meaningful without the book. I do think the book would be useful to you for helping you determine where your true passion for worship lies. I have included a couple charts that may be of value to you right now, in a separate attachment.

8. WORSHIP DESIGN AND SERMON WRITING TEAMS

I have included a couple charts to show you how these teams work (in a separate attachment). The charts I included give you some ideas of where in a worship service you may wish to do things more creatively. The design team helps you think creatively. The sermon writing team helps develop sermon themes and messages. Both are cutting edge approaches for growing churches. The Hartford Study for Religion Research has researched that churches that innovate in worship tend to reach more new and more diverse populations.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** We will spend some time during coaching to process how to develop a worship design team, a worship implementation team, and a sermon writing team.

9. TRAINING

Your worship leaders, designers and sermon writers (see next document) would benefit from a training on how to put a compelling worship order together and then how to lead with intention of helping persons in seats truly experience God. Passion and meaning are normal for a guest that is looking for hope when they come to your church. In our current, unchurched culture, for a new person to attend means they have passed up numerous other opportunities for self help. What sets the church apart? That is the question you must answer, and then reveal that in the worship service.

Again, I am not the expert on your context. My goal is to give you some ideas and to help you see how you can improve what you are already doing. Consultation and coaching is a dialogue. We are entering into that dialogue through these pages and through the conversations we will have for the next few months.

Blessings to you on this exciting journey!

Cathy Townley