

phx Underground

The Mission Pathway

A PRIMER





Phoenix Underground is a network of reproducing disciples and simple churches saturating the Phoenix Valley with the love, presence, and power of God's kingdom.

How will it happen?

Our dream is to equip, empower, and multiply a network of mission catalysts and simple churches in the Phoenix Valley.

We envision missionaries and simple churches in neighborhoods, business, schools, prisons and places where people gather.

The PHXU primer is an invitation to go back and rediscover Jesus' original design for His church. This primer is also an invitation to go forward by reimagining what that design looks like in our day, in our city. This is one of the many tools used to equip ordinary people as disciple makers in the PHX Underground.

PHXUNDERGROUND.ORG

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THE MISSION PATHWAY:

An Introduction on Movements of God

Did you know that we are living in unprecedented times? Would it surprise you to hear that as you sit here and read these words, the spread of God's kingdom advancement throughout the world is at a rate that we may have not yet witnessed in 2,000 years of Church history? Although much of the world is not yet touched, in the places where the Good News of the kingdom is growing, it's spreading like wildfire. For most of us in the West, this is borderline shocking to hear. We have had a front-row seat to the decline of Christianity and its influence in society. We've witnessed an almost allergic response to the "church" by many in our community, and it's hard even to imagine that kind of fruit in other places.

God is moving, and His Kingdom is spreading, the world is being transformed, and the book of Acts seems to be playing itself out thousands of times over. All around the world, Kingdom Movements (also known as "Church Planting Movements" or "Disciple Making Movements") are breaking out, resulting in generations of new disciples, new churches, and new leaders who are saturating entire regions, many of which were previously unreached. There are movements in India that have seen millions of new followers of Jesus and tens of thousands of new churches. Similar numbers exist

in China over the last few decades (at its height, these movements produced 10,000 new disciples daily).

Indigenous movements seem to be taking over Africa, and tens of thousands of churches have emerged out of new believers in the past decade alone. In the last five years, similar things are happening in countries like Honduras and Cuba where Discovery Bible Studies and new fellowships number in the tens of thousands. The growth is not slowing down. The underground Church in the Middle East has not only seen similar results, but it's the place where movements are growing fastest. God seems to be specifically doing a new thing among Muslims.

Every region of the world is experiencing multiplying Kingdom Movements. and that's just a snapshot. Every sort of culture, from rural to urban, from Eastern to Western, from black to white to brown, is seeing Kingdom Movements emerge within them. The question for many Americans, then, is this: "Why not here?"

Although, it may seem that this kind of fruit is unattainable here in America, here's the truth: The tide is beginning to shift. It may appear the Church in America is dying on the surface level, but there is a very tangible undercurrent in the unseen places. Amid global pandemics, deep political division, and systemic racism, the Lord seems to be drawing hearts to Himself in a new and

powerful way. The world and its answers are not satisfying the desires of hearts. In many ways, our day's environment is ripe for God's move that mirrors what we see worldwide.

We understand that new wine necessitates a new wineskin. Although many churches and Christians have yet to wake up from their slumber, the Holy Spirit seems to be stirring more and more every day to rise and remember their missionary identity as the sent ones of God. Christian leaders in the West are increasingly taking on humility as they seek to learn from the Global South. New prayer movements are spreading across the country as the Holy Spirit stirs people to cry out for our nation and join Him in the neighborhoods and networks in which He has already placed them.

From high school students to baby boomers, prisons to suburban neighborhoods, refugee communities to addiction recovery homes, we see Discovery Bible Studies and simple churches born in every sort of environment. In certain parts of the country, megachurches have radically changed their structure to function as mission sending centers. New local simple church networks like Phoenix Underground, dedicated to Kingdom saturation of entire cities are popping up around the country. What once seemed radical now seems necessary. And here's the truth: We see the first fruits of significant Kingdom movement right

here in the U.S. The question is whether or not we will join God as He invites His Church to live into a movement dream of seeing a multiplying Kingdom spreading among the unchurched in every sphere of culture. It's a vision of disciples making disciples, churches birthing churches, resulting in the good news of God's kingdom filling up our cities.

PARADIGM SHIFTS

Movement Mindset vs Traditional Western Church Mindset

THINK: Extraordinary prayer as power

DON'T THINK: Human strategy as power

THINK: Planting the Gospel in existing networks of relationships.

DON'T THINK: Extracting people so we can "disciple" them in church

THINK: Obedience-based discipleship

DON'T THINK: Knowledge Based Discipleship

THINK: Send the ordinary and the willing

DON'T THINK: Send the gifted experts

THINK: Disciple groups of people

DON'T THINK: Discipleship only means one-on-one

THINK: Disciple to and through conversion

DON'T THINK: Evangelism then discipleship

THINK: Viral multiplication

DON'T THINK: Addition

THINK: Extended Spiritual families on mission

DON'T THINK: Church Services

CHARACTERISTICS OF MOVEMENTS

Disciple Making Movements are sociological phenomena that are, in many ways, measurable. Generally speaking, in the missions' world, something is considered a "movement" when 4+ generations of new groups/churches in multiple streams, resulting in at least 100 new churches. Additionally, it seems that there are significant similarities and shared DNA present in every movement. These characteristics tend to fly in the face of traditional western ministry assumptions and practices. However, each one is deeply rooted in the examples of Jesus, the early Church, and movements throughout history.

Many Americans who have grown up in the church may find the paradigm shifts here challenging. However, God may be calling many of us to lay aside our cultural assumptions in order to participate in His mission in new and significant ways.

DISCOVERY BIBLE STUDIES & SIMPLE CHURCHES

The primary discipleship tool in Disciple Making Movements is [Discovery Bible Study \(DBS\)](#)—a simple and reproducible method used all over the world. Generally, Discovery Groups consist of spiritually interested people who read a Bible story together, discover what

it says, and respond with tangible obedience. As we join God in mission and plant the Kingdom in our natural contexts, Discovery Bible Study becomes the methodology of making new disciples. It's not a program, but rather a "way" of disciple making from the ground up.

[Over time, as new disciples and new spiritual families emerge, DBS environments mature into ongoing simple churches](#) (extended spiritual families, led by ordinary people, who live in everyday Kingdom community and own the good news of God's Kingdom in a particular network of relationships). Disciple-making and church formation grows from the ground up, just like what we see in the book of Acts.

SIMPLE CHURCH:

It is an extended spiritual family, led by ordinary people, who live in everyday kingdom community and own the mission of Jesus in a particular network of relationships.



THE MISSION PATHWAY

Capture God's Heart

Disciple Making Movements begin by capturing God's heart. As we walk with God, we are captivated by His desires and our hearts begin to beat as one. We become passionate about the things He is passionate about and broken by the things that break His heart. As we encounter God's heart, we can't help but sacrifice time, energy, and resources to join Him on His mission to restore all that was lost and to bring each of His children home. The heart of God that comes from walking close with Him is the force and motivating factor behind everything we do.

Pray - Extraordinary Prayer and Fasting

A prayer movement precedes every Kingdom movement. New disciple-making flows from the heart of God, so our job is to simply hear and know His voice and then join Him in His work. We are praying to discover and discern where He is already working in order to join Him, rather than asking God to bless our strategies. In this huddle, we will discuss and implement missional prayer practices focusing on the contexts and people to whom God has already called you.

Engage - Live as Missionaries

When we understand our identity as missionaries, we are free to run with purpose. This huddle will focus on practical elements of living on mission, including rhythms of blessing others, engaging in spiritual conversations, and finding those spiritually interested (Luke 10 identifies these people as "Persons of Peace").

Find - Identify Persons of Peace

Through engagement and blessing others, Persons of Peace are discovered. They are individuals whom God has already begun preparing to bridge the message of Jesus to social networks. They are interested in spiritual things, generally have a lot of relational connections, and play a key role in reaching whole communities with the good news of God's Kingdom.

Discover - Plant the Gospel

When we live as missionaries, we find people God has prepared to hear the message. Instead of extracting people from their relational networks, we plant God's kingdom and begin making disciples, from the ground up, in the everyday rhythms of life. We will focus on a simple yet effective tool used worldwide called "Discovery Bible Study" to help us make new disciples right where people already are.

Assemble - New Church Emerges

Disciples grow and learn together. New faith families emerge. Within the Phoenix Underground, we call these simple expressions of church "simple churches." In the book of Acts and within movements worldwide, believers' primary gathering occurs within homes and everyday spaces. Simple churches can love one another, worship intimately together, and be on a mission in powerful ways. They are lightweight, inexpensive, and easily reproducible from context. When followers of Jesus engage in worship, community, and mission, they are the Church.

Multiply - Reproduce Everything

In a movement, everything multiplies. New missionaries set out, Discovery Bible Studies begin, new disciples grow, new simple churches emerge, and new leaders arise. The only way to see cities and nations reached is to multiply every stage in the missionary pathway continuously.

This Mission Pathway:

Capture God's Heart

Pray - Extraordinary Prayer & Fasting

Engage - Live Out Loud Spiritually

Find - Identify Persons of Peace

Discover - Plant the Gospel

Assemble - A New Church Emerges

Multiply - Replicate Everything



YOU ARE INVITED

Hearing stories of what God is doing around the world among Disciple Making Movements is breathtaking. The book of Acts is happening over and over again. As Americans, we are crying out to the Lord that we would see a similar work of God in our nation and our cities. As followers of Jesus, this is not merely a pipe dream; rather, it's the example that we see in the New Testament. The Kingdom, when released, is multiplicative and transformative, possessing the power to radically change entire cultures.

Here's the best part: Jesus is inviting you to join Him in this epic story of redemption. He's not just calling the experts, the educated, or even the super gifted on this journey. No, it's quite the opposite. Jesus is inviting the ordinary who are willing and obedient. If this is you, you have the right posture to make disciples in your everyday spaces.

KINGDOM SATURATION

Sent by Jesus to Heal and Restore

Jesus spoke and taught most about the Kingdom of God. In Matthew 4:23, after He called his first disciples, He goes throughout Galilee, "Teaching in the synagogues, proclaiming the **good news** of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people." In Luke 4:43, after teaching about the Kingdom and healing, Jesus states, "I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." When asked for advice on how to pray,

He includes praying that the Kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10). In Matthew 6:33, He makes clear that it should be our main priority in life.

THE INVITATION

Jesus is inviting you to join Him in this epic story of redemption. Jesus is inviting the ordinary who are willing and obedient.

We also see His priority of the Kingdom when Jesus sends out the 12 in Matthew 10: 7. He states, "As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give."

Finally in Matthew 24:14, He declares, "And this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

In the Gospel of Matthew alone, He makes 37 references to the Kingdom of God and all four of the gospels mention it 86 times. It is easy to see that the Kingdom of God was of great importance to Jesus.



So what is the Kingdom of God and why is it considered "good news"? There are a lot of definitions out there, but it can be boiled down to this: the Kingdom of God is where the rule and reign of God exists. Another way of saying this is where what God wants to happen actually happens. When someone begins to follow Christ and surrenders their life to Him, the Kingdom of God has come among you. When someone is investing their time and wealth to help the poor, the Kingdom has come. When someone prays for a sick person, and they are healed; the Kingdom of God has come. When two people reconcile, the Kingdom of God has come. It starts now and will find its total fullness in the future heaven.

Jesus' message is this: God's desire is to make everything right again. He is restoring everything back to its original intent and beauty. Jesus doesn't just die for the penalty of our sins, but He dies for our sin as well. The power of sin and death are now broken. We are now free to change, to be like Christ and to do the things He did. The powers of darkness, addictions and death are broken with the cross and resurrection paving the way for new life. Everything that is wrong about the world can be restored with Jesus. This is Good News!

When you begin to study the Scriptures on what it looks like when the Kingdom entirely comes, you'll realize very quickly that yes, the Gospel includes forgiveness of sin and a life indestructible beyond

the grave. But the Gospel is much more expansive than that. The Gospel of the Kingdom consists of every sphere of human concern and engagement, from caring for the poor, bringing justice to the oppressed, feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, fostering education, providing healthcare, building safe and decent housing, creating art and beauty, freeing souls, to propagating healthy and deep community. When Jesus told us to pray, "Let your kingdom come, let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven," these are all the things He wanted to see break into the present.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The Kingdom of God is where the rule and reign of God exists.

What is Our Part?

It is clear from the Gospels that we were not given a gospel that simply speaks of an after life but one that speaks of a mission life. From the onset of Jesus' ministry, He invites His disciples on a mission immediately and gives them the power and resources to accomplish it. He says to a group of fishermen, "Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19). The calling is not about getting our needs met or becoming more fulfilled. He says, "Come follow me, and I will make you into a person that is no longer about yourself but about loving and serving others."

Jesus' last words to His disciples (Matthew 28:16-21) is commonly referred to as the Great Commission. He expects everyone of His followers to expand His Kingdom by making disciples of every group in every corner of the world. These new followers are to live in relationship with Him and to obey all of His teachings, including the responsibility of extending His reign and rule by making more disciples.

The bottom line is we are not just saved from something, but we are saved for something. Jesus is asking every one who is in relationship with Him to join Him on mission to restore, heal, and saturate the world with the reality of His Kingdom. The only way that we will see the reality where every woman, man, girl, and boy has the opportunity to see, hear, experience, and respond to the good news of His Kingdom is if they understand their responsibility to be a loving missionary and disciple maker. It will only happen when we equip and empower everyday believers to move into networks of people who don't yet know how much they matter to Jesus and begin to demonstrate and proclaim the good news of the Kingdom.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and

teaching them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. MATTHEW 28:18-20

OUR PART

Jesus is asking every one who is in relationship with Him to join Him on mission to restore, heal, and saturate the world with the reality of His Kingdom.

A Kingdom Saturation Vision Affects our Church Strategy

The Church, as described in Ephesians 1, is fundamentally about Kingdom saturation. Here, Paul says that Jesus is filling everything in every way, and the Church is the fullness of Him. The vision of Phoenix Underground, therefore, is to see Kingdom saturation in Phoenix. Phoenix Underground is a mission agency that equips and empowers a decentralized network of mission catalysts and simple churches in Phoenix.

Our mission is to inspire, equip and empower ordinary people to live on mission where they live, work, learn and play. We seek to create a network of reproducing disciples, leaders, and simple churches that will saturate

Phoenix with the love, power, and presence of God's kingdom.

To find success in that vision, two things must be true. First, we must understand God's Kingdom and the mission He has called each of us to. Second, our strategies must match our prayers.

If Kingdom saturation is our ultimate aim, then "planting a church" cannot be the extent of our strategy. To reach an entire city, we must regain the simple and multiplicative method of Jesus and the early Church. Heavy structures built around non-reproducible personalities or programs will never help us reach our true goal. Expensive buildings and lengthy, scholarly-focused training environments will never crank out leaders fast enough to see Kingdom saturation, let alone keep up with simple population growth. We must go back to a lightweight and deep-rooted disciple-making strategy that unleashes ordinary people to plant the Kingdom, make new followers of Jesus, and see simple forms of church emerge in contexts all over the city.

Our strategies flow from a vision of Kingdom saturation founded in the authority and mission of Jesus. As we send mission catalysts into every corner of culture to make disciples and bring light to the darkest places, we will see simple churches emerge in every network of relationships. These extended spiritual families will bring healing to broken

homes and elevate the city. They will be small enough to move quickly and adapt to new contexts. Then, new disciples and mission catalysts will multiply into other unreached pockets of people. These mission catalysts and simple churches will be the everyday representation of Jesus.

OUR MISSION

We seek to create a network of reproducing disciples, leaders and simple churches that will saturate Phoenix with the love, presence and power of God's kingdom.

SPIRITUAL FAMILIES EMERGE

[An Introduction to Simple churches](#)

If you could clear all the dirt away in your local forest and peer beneath the surface, you would discover an elaborate interconnected network. The trees' roots and fungi intertwine into a complex system that passes information to one another, and even eats together by sharing nutrients.

This doesn't always mean that every individual tree has a deep root system. Certain larger trees like redwoods possess a shallow root structure. One might assume that a hefty storm with powerful winds could quickly bring these giants crashing to the ground. But this rarely happens. The reason is not due to the depth of their roots, but that

redwoods grow in clusters. Their roots intertwine in a way that profoundly provides for one another.

In many ways, this is the perfect analogy for the way Jesus designed His Church. Throughout Scripture, we see a handful of consistent images used to metaphorically describe God's people (bride, body, temple, etc.). However, one that consistently seems to make its way into our everyday language within the Phoenix Underground is the family metaphor (Galatians 6:10). Jesus designed His Church to function as a family that operates much like what we witness in the forest. At its core, the Church is the family of God whose members intentionally allow their lives to become rooted together. Alone, we are too shallow to withstand the storms of life. But together, an extended spiritual family with Jesus at the center can withstand anything.

Spiritual Family

The theme of family weaves throughout the narrative of Scripture. Jesus Himself instituted and affirmed the biological family. He called people to be faithful in marriage (Matthew 19:1–9) and honor their parents (Mark 7:9–13). Similarly, Paul thought it wisest for most people to marry and have children (1 Corinthians 7:8–9; 1 Timothy 5:14) and provided clear instructions for how families can flourish (Ephesians 5–6).

And yet, according to Jesus, the biological family is not our primary family. First and foremost, we are “members of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19). In cases of conflicting loyalties, Jesus made it clear, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26)

We understand the Kingdom when we see it through the lens of family. Although we have sinned and become illegitimate children, God sent His Son so that we could be reconciled to the Father. Through Jesus, anyone can join the family by faith in Him (John 1:12–13; Galatians 3:6–9). Because our God is the perfect dad, because Jesus is our reconciling Savior, and the Spirit is the very presence of God within us, we are now a part of an eternal family.

What is Simple Church?

For this reason, within Phoenix Underground our working definition of a simple church is an extended spiritual family, led by ordinary people, who live in everyday Kingdom community, and own the mission of Jesus in a particular network of relationships.

The Church is first and foremost about identity, not activity. We have a deep ache in our hearts for people to

understand that Church is not a building or a program or an event. The Church is not built around one or two influential voices. But the Church, at its core, is family.

THE CHURCH

The church is family and not a building.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ACTS 2:42-45



If we understand this fundamental truth, the people of God are free to live with passion, love, and purpose. We are open to living with new rhythms that mirror the ways of the early Church. Perhaps the most concise description of these rhythms is portrayed in Acts 2.

Furthermore, readers of Acts get a glimpse of where and when these rhythms played out. In Jerusalem, the believers gathered both in the temple and in the home. In the larger setting of the temple courts, the apostles taught, performed miracles, and evangelized. The early believers learned, worshipped, prayed, and fellowshiped together in this corporate space.

In the houses, however, is where the church functioned as extended spiritual families. It was in this setting that they lived in an everyday Kingdom community. These spiritual families were led by ordinary people who owned the mission of Jesus in their relational network. These simple churches in Jerusalem had everything in common, sharing possessions, meals, laughter, and conversations. They celebrated together as new people joined the family daily. Stories of life with Jesus were shared with openness and honesty. Dinner was prepared with many hands, and the eating was accompanied by more laughter and stories, for they were sincerely glad to be together. Each would say, "These are my favorite people!" The conversation always moved to the rediscovery of the apostles' teachings, each retelling what they heard about Jesus and His ways. And the discussion was catalytic. They had been "taught to obey" (Matthew 28:18-20), so the conversation moved to practical obedience. Prayer flowed continually. And it was challenging to figure out who was "in charge," as each person brought "a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation" (1 Corinthians 14:26) to share. What a beautiful picture of the family of God!

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying all the people's favor. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved
ACTS 2:46-47

Simple churches Emerge out of the Oikos

The Greek word used in the New Testament for the family is oikos. This is a robust word that went beyond the immediate family's idea to include extended family, household slaves, and their network of friends, neighbors, and business associates.

According to Michael Green, author of *Evangelism in the Early Church*, "Christians... made a deliberate point of gaining... households as lighthouses... from which the *Kingdom* could illuminate the surrounding darkness."

As the Kingdom spread, more and more households flipped their allegiance and became part of the mission of God. The Kingdom, therefore, took oikos and transformed it into something more significant. What was once merely an earthly family had now been transformed into an eternal, spiritual family on mission. And church planting was directly related to new disciples produced within previously existing networks of relationships.

For this reason, within the Underground, we say that simple churches emerge rather than are planted. As new disciples are made, natural networks of relationships (oikos) are transformed into spiritual families. We do not plant churches; instead, we plant the Kingdom. As the Kingdom is planted, disciples are formed from the ground up, resulting in new simple churches. We believe the order is important. Kingdom planting and disciple-making that lead to the emergence of churches is the model clearly present throughout the book of Acts. To understand church formation in this way is the difference between redistributing Christians into smaller groups and birthing new simple churches out of new disciples.

Oikos is at the core of Kingdom planting. Instead of extracting individuals from their families and friends to attend services at the temple courts, the early church infiltrated and transformed existing houses to become new spiritual families. In this sense, form follows function. A simple form of Church is the natural setting for a group to function as a family. Why is this important? The honeymoon phase of early believers in Jerusalem would not last long. A nimble form of church, rather than the bulky temple form they knew so well, was essential as the Gospel spread "throughout the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

WHAT DO WE PLANT?

We do not plant church; instead,
we plant the Kingdom.

The Simple Church as the Primary Expression of Church

Following Stephen's martyrdom, the Church experienced severe persecution, resulting in the complete shutdown of public gatherings at the temple courts. What happens next is not the church's death, but instead, a multiplicative scattering of God's people. The persecution and shutting down of the temple resulted in an increased disciple-making rate across the Roman Empire. The form of church that endured was the simple church.

Simple Church is not the trendy next thing. It's not a program that will attract the masses. Simple Church is not a JV church that's secondary to a larger congregational meeting.

Simple Church is not a small group that merely seeks to learn new spiritual truths together. Instead, simple church is the primary expression of God's people. It is the form that best houses the essential functions of the spiritual family. It is a form that can change, adapt, multiply, and thrive regardless of the environment. In many ways, the book of Acts and the Epistles is the story of Jesus living in and through a movement of simple churches.

The Functions of a Simple Church

In the book *Microchurch*, Brian Sanders says, "If you strip everything away that is not essential to being a church, what are you left with? In the Underground, the answer we decided on was worship, community, and mission. When Christians work together in sincere worship and genuine community to accomplish the part of God's mission, they function as the church. Worship, community, and mission, then, are the basic elements. The church can include more elements, but not fewer. What makes a group of people a church is that they worship together, are committed to each other, and undertake the mission together. Whenever those three things overlap, that is the church."

Worship, community, mission. We call this the "ecclesial minimum" (ecclesia is the biblical word from which we get our word for church). When a group of Jesus-followers together engage in these lifestyles and practices, we have church. As an *oikos* discovers Jesus together and begins to walk in obedience to His voice, these rhythms start to take shape, and new spiritual families emerge. As those who were once far from God begin to confess their sins, respond to Jesus' words, get baptized, and share the news with others in their lives, we have a fully functional New Testament church. We don't graduate from that. Although the simple churches may mature in those

practices, the functions of worship, community, and mission remain the church's primary function

...On that day, a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ACTS 8:1 (NIV).

Simple Church is an Apprenticeship Network (Worship)

Here is the biblical definition of worship: "Offer your bodies as sacrifices...this is your spiritual act of worship" (Romans 12:1-2). Worship, therefore, is so much bigger than singing songs on a Sunday morning. The simple church is the family in which we grow into the Lordship of Jesus in every area of life. We learn the Word of God together. We learn together to hear the Spirit speak. We learn together how to embody the words in our lives. We disciple one another in the Lordship of Jesus by learning to obey all He has commanded us (Matthew 28:18-20).

Discipleship is best seen as an apprenticeship to Jesus. Fundamentally, an apprenticeship is a journey toward mastery in a given area. In Jesus, we are being apprenticed into the fully-alive life (John 10:10).

Like any other pursuit, transformation is an apprenticeship that

requires us to come alongside someone who is further down the road. As disciples, we are willing to be a beginner again and again, as we discover more areas of needed transformation in our lives. We are always students who need teachers. We are always players who need coaches. The simple church, an extended spiritual family on mission, provides a relational network broad enough and deep enough to help each of us find teachers in the areas in which we need an apprenticeship. Information is not enough. An example that is mostly modeled from the stage is not enough. We imitate and embody what is tangible and expressed right before our lives.

We then do the same for others. As we move forward, we are also always teachers who need students, coaches who need players. Again, others' transformation requires imitation, which requires a relationship with us in a given area. It requires a whole.

Simple Church is a Mission Base (Mission)

In the early Church, families were mission bases. Entire households heard, believed, and spread the Kingdom together (e.g., Acts 16:30–34; Romans 16:10–15). Many simple churches start as immediate biological families that become extended spiritual families through missionary living and Kingdom planting.

The mission of Jesus is at the very center of a simple church family. Mission reaches down to our very deepest understanding of who God is, why we are here, and how we live. Mission is not a tag-on. Mission is not a department. The mission isn't something we volunteer for a few hours a month. Mission is not something reserved for the elite or the paid professionals. Mission is the sweeping force that runs through everything we are and do.

Ultimately, the mission is not first about the activity. Mission is first about identity: God's identity and ours, as His offspring. Mission starts by understanding that we serve a God who is a missionary. By His very nature, our God is a sent one who left His throne, on mission, to redeem all of creation in Jesus. It's this simple: The Father sent Israel. The Father sent the Son. The Father and the Son sent the Spirit. The Father, Son, and Spirit are sending the Church. If God is a missionary God, then as an offspring, we are a missionary people.

Simple churches know their missional context because often they have emerged out of that context themselves. Mission was in the DNA from the beginning. They know the people to whom they are sent and the people there who don't yet know how much they matter to God. A simple church continues to own God's mission in a particular space or people through planting themselves deep into that context. They

live like missionaries, establish credibility about God's kingdom while drawing new disciples to Himself. From there, multiplication is a natural byproduct. New life begets new life.

Simple Church is a Care Network (Community)

Consider the dozens of "one another" commands about the community in the New Testament. Essential and straightforward commands like love one another. Be devoted to one another. Honor one another. Live in harmony with one another. Accept one another. Instruct one another. Serve one another. Be kind and compassionate to one another. Submit to one another. Teach and admonish one another.

Now, think about the environment in which these commands are best fleshed out. Is it in a larger setting or a micro-setting? The Church is most tangible and embodied at the smallest level, not the largest. The simple church expression makes sense of the one-another commands to the church. For example, "bear one another's burdens" (GALATIANS 6:2). We can do that most meaningfully and sustainably at the micro-level. It starts to lose its tangibility, meaning, and transformation if it's only at the "big" level of hundreds or thousands. At the simple church level, we can walk with others daily, bearing those burdens, as a care network.



But here's the truth: As an organization that operates one-part missions organization and one-part network of simple churches, we sit in an interesting place of tension. On the one hand, we simply desire to see the people of God live as a network of spiritual families, led by ordinary people, owning their particular mission. We want to see a simple model of church that will help followers of Jesus flourish in every part of life. We want to validate these simple-expressions for what they truly are: church.

The Family Business

The church is the family of God, and family is best experienced in a setting where lives can intersect and overlap in real ways. The church has never been about structures, personalities, programs, or professionals. Church is about family. And the family business has always been about filling every corner of the earth with beauty, justice, and good news. Perhaps today is the day that God is reminding you of your place in His family and your purpose in the family mission.

Our vision within Phoenix Underground is to see the Kingdom of God established in greater Phoenix. We envision missionaries and simple churches in neighborhoods, businesses, schools, prisons, and every place where people gather. This vision cannot be done with expensive and heavy structures but can only be done by returning to the Scriptures and remembering extended spiritual families' role.

On the other hand, we have no desire to merely re-form Christians into smaller groups and relabel them as "simple church." The goal is not to retreat and go small, but instead, it's to be nimble and replicate. Our collective heart beats for creating new disciples within new networks that will eventually, like a Kingdom-virus, slowly take over the entire city. It's not division; it's multiplication. It's disciple-making that leads to church planting, not the other way around. We agree with Mike Breen, who said, "If you make disciples, you always get the church. But if you make a church, you rarely get disciples."

We aim to simultaneously validate the simple church as the primary expression of church while always training towards Kingdom-planting, leading to the transformation of the already existing oikos. We believe that the form of simple church is essential, but the form alone will never

reach the goal Jesus gave to us in the Great Commission: to make disciples of all nations, all people groups, in every corner of the earth (Matthew 28:18). This grand mission, simply put, is the purpose of the family business. And simple church, the extended spiritual family, is the form best set up to house a mighty move of God.

OUR VISION

The Phoenix Underground desires to see the Kingdom of God established in greater Phoenix. We envision missionaries and simple churches in neighborhoods, business, schools, prisons, and every place where people gather.

HUDDLES:

[A Boots-on-the-Ground Training Experience Purpose & Vision](#)

If you are reading this, then it's quite possible that you are either Our Vision The Phoenix Underground desires to see the Kingdom of God established in greater Phoenix. We envision missionaries and simple churches in neighborhoods, business, schools, prisons, and every place where people gather. Preparing for or thinking about taking practical steps to live on mission, make disciples, and perhaps see new simple churches emerge. If this is you, you are invited to participate in a seven-

week huddle covering the Mission Pathway. Grab a few friends, perhaps people you are in community with already or people who share a desire to be missionally-focused in new ways (whom we call "potential missional Christians"), and begin to work through the huddle together.

The Mission Pathway huddle intends to equip, empower and multiply everyday followers of Jesus to make disciples of Jesus within their existing networks or relationships within an on-the-go training environment.

The goal is that these huddles would directly lead to Discovery Bible Study environments that often mature into new spiritual families (simple churches).

A secondary goal would be for members to reproduce this huddle with other potential missional Christians. As multiplication occurs on both fronts (among non-believers and potential missional Christians), we could see a powerful move of God that sees new groups of previously unchurched people surrendering to Jesus, as well as an army of trained-up believers equipped and unleashed into an unbelieving world.

HUDDLE STRUCTURE & EXPECTATIONS

The seven-week huddle will be organized by the seven major elements within the Mission Pathway, focusing on

the first five (Capturing God's Heart, Extraordinary Prayer & Fasting, Live Like a Missionary, Identify Persons of Peace, and Plant the Gospel). The emphasis is on practical learning and immediate implementation of the concepts and practices that will be discussed. The huddle itself is set up in a "reverse learning" model in which participants will complete online pre-work throughout the week (found at missionarypathway.com) before meeting in-person (or online) with others in their huddle.

The weekly format:

- Before the huddle: complete the online pre-work throughout the week.
 - Personal Discovery Bible Study
 - Training video/reading
 - Practical tool to implement

- During the huddle: gather together to discuss and troubleshoot the content/practices of the week, discover critical concepts in Scripture, and create personal obedience statements called "I Will Statements."

- After the huddle: live it out. Practice what you're learning—experiment.

NEXT STEPS

Following this huddle, you will be equipped with some essential tools and language to help set you on a trajectory of making disciples and seeing

new simple churches emerge. Each participant is encouraged to reproduce this huddle with other potential missional Christians in their spheres of influence.

PERSONAL DISCOVERY PROCESS

Engage the process and discover your unique gifts and calling.

NETWORK WITH OTHERS

Don't travel this pathway by yourself. There are more and more networks emerging that are focused on movements, multiplicative disciple-making, and simple churches. Find them and partner with them. Ongoing coaching is an essential part of seeing movements of God endure. Networking with others is crucial for camaraderie and encouragement.

If you are in the Phoenix area, you are invited to partner with Phoenix Underground, a network of simple churches dedicated to seeing Kingdom saturation in the Phoenix Valley.

NEXT STEPS

- Mission Pathway Huddle
- Personal Discovery Process
- Ongoing Coaching