

# Catechumenate as a Ministry of Making Disciples



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Cover art is icon depicting the visit  
of three strangers (angels) to  
Abraham and Sarah—hospitality!





# What is a Missional Church?

- ▶ **Common View:** Congregations have a mission.
  - ▶ **New Testament:** God has a mission and congregations to help carry it out—sharing the Good News for the sake of the world!
  - ▶ A **missional congregation** is one that seeks to be a partner in God's mission!
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# Miseo Deo: What is God's Mission?

## *"TO REDEEM THE WORLD"*

- ▶ **Great Commission:** *"Go into all the world and make disciples!"*

**Great Commandment:** *"Love God and love your neighbor."*



# The Apostolic Paradigm\*: 33 AD–333 AD

## Characteristics:

- ▶ 1. The world and culture are hostile.
- ▶ 2. The door of the church opens up onto the mission field.
- ▶ 3. Every member is a missionary of the gospel.

\*Loren Mead (Alban Institute)

# Christendom Paradigm

## 333 AD–1960 AD

### Assumptions:

- ▶ 1. The culture is friendly and supportive toward the church.
- ▶ 2. The mission field is somewhere “out there”.
- ▶ 3. Church professionals carry out the work of ministry. Lay members support mission w/ prayer & money.

# 1960 to Present--Post Christian Era: Return to the Apostolic Era?

## Roles Change in New Paradigm Church:

- ▶ 1. Laity are front line ministers.
- ▶ 2. Church professionals train and support the ministry of the baptized people of God.
- ▶ 3. Ministry takes place in the world--not only in the church. (Ministry in daily life.)

# Post Christendom Paradigm Shift

Everyone a Minister


Trainers: Staff & Leaders

Purpose: Mission Outreach

- ▶ 1. Care of members is not end in itself, but “means to end” –  
– nurturing disciples.
- ▶ 2. Staff train and empower missionaries.
- ▶ 3. Outcome: Ministry in Daily Life

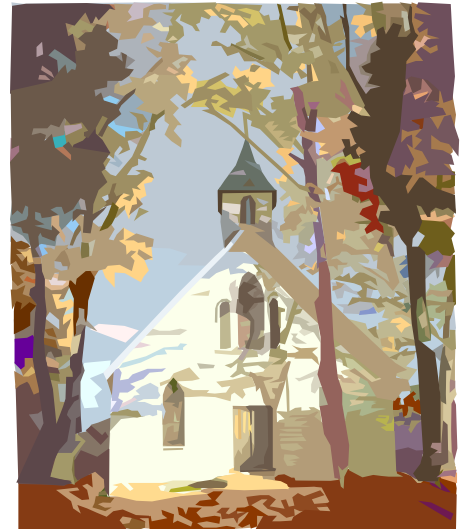


# Designing Congregations as Centers for Equipping the Baptized

- ▶ Post-Christendom Model (Return to ACTS) which is a MISSION model
  - ▶ Focus is on **DISCIPLESHIP** (mission of the gospel--Matt 28) not **MEMBERSHIP** (maintenance of the institution)
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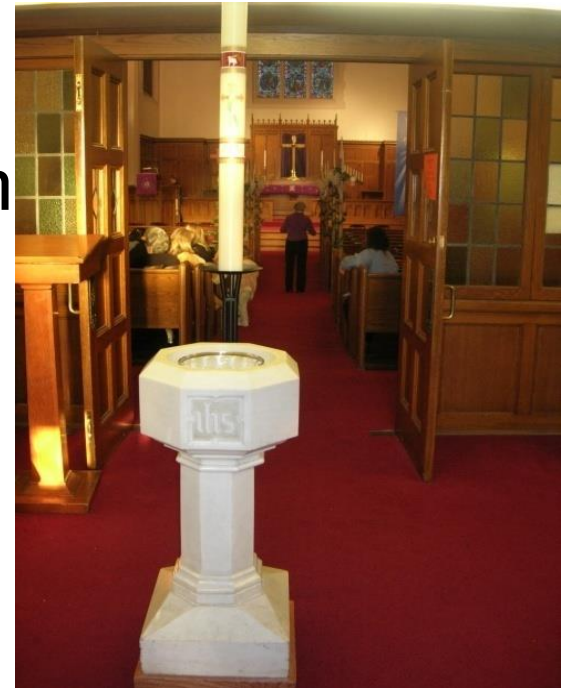
# Discipleship or Membership?

- ▶ Not as concerned about numbers but about how well people are living their faith and sharing the Gospel.
- ▶ Not as concerned about how well we care for members but how well we serve needs of world around us.



# Reclaiming the Catechumenate for Training of **Christian Disciples**

- ▶ An Ancient Rite of Church: Preparation for Baptism
- ▶ Spiritual Formation for Adults: Baptism/Affirmation of Baptism
- ▶ Means of “making disciples” with focus on baptismal living
- ▶ Renewal of “Priesthood of All Believers” (Martin Luther)



# Pattern of Christian Initiation: A Journey of Discipleship

- ▶ 1a. Inquiry Stage
- ▶ 1b. Welcome Service (Rite of Welcome)
- ▶ 2a. Formation Stage
- ▶ 2b. Call to Baptism (Rite of Enrollment)
- ▶ 3a. Intense Preparation
- ▶ 3b. Initiation: Baptism or Affirmation of Baptism
- ▶ 4a. Integration Stage
- ▶ 4b. Affirmation of Ministry in Daily Life

Candidates for Baptism

Affirmation of Baptism



# A Journey of Discipleship

## STAGE ONE: COME AND SEE

- A. Inquiry/Exploration
- B. Service of Welcome

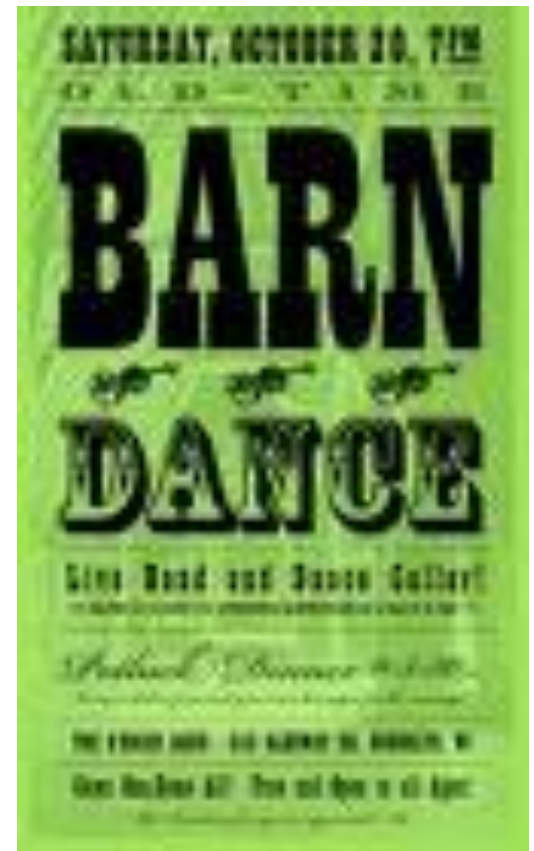




# A Journey of Discipleship

## STAGE TWO: COME AND EXPLORE

- A. Faith Formation—  
Learning the Basics
- B. A Call to Baptism or  
to Renew One's Baptism



# A Journey of Discipleship

## STAGE THREE: COME AND PREPARE

A. Preparation for the Rite: Learning the Steps

B. Baptism or Affirmation of Baptism



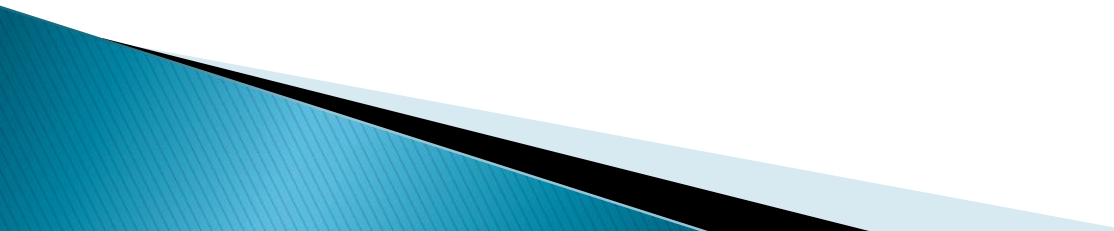
# A Journey of Discipleship

## STAGE FOUR: GO AND SERVE

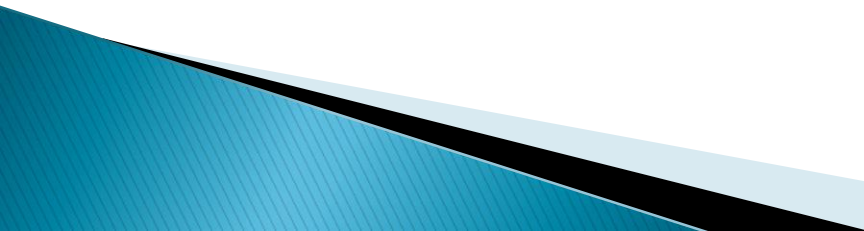
- A. Integration Stage: Exploring our Gifts
- B. Affirmation of Ministry in Daily Life



# A Journey of Discipleship: 4 Stages

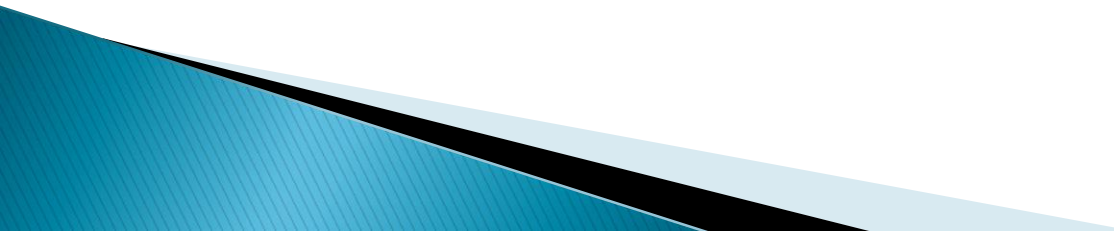
- ▶ 1. Come and See: Inquiry (Questions)  
*Rite of Welcome*
  - ▶ 2. Come and Explore: Catechesis  
*Rite of Enrollment*
  - ▶ 3. Come and Prepare: Getting Ready  
*Rite of Baptism/Affirmation of Baptism*
  - ▶ 4. Come and Serve: Baptismal Living  
*Rite of Affirmation of Vocation*
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# What the Catechumenate Is:

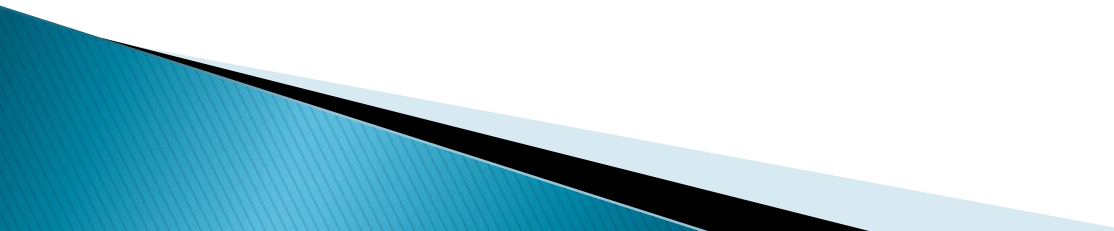
- ▶ A journey and celebration for those called to the Way of Christ.
  - ▶ A natural **process** of Christian formation developed in early days of the Church that can be adapted to fit any congregation.
  - ▶ “Leaven” for any faith community seeking new members and renewal of current members.
  - ▶ Jesus’ way of making & nurturing disciples.
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# What the Catechumenate Is Not:

- ▶ A program demanding more time of already over-extended clergy and parish leaders.
  - ▶ A complicated, time-consuming program.
  - ▶ Another adult education program.
  - ▶ An expensive program demanding “experts” in Scripture or Christian doctrine.
  - ▶ An inflexible, prescribed program of study.
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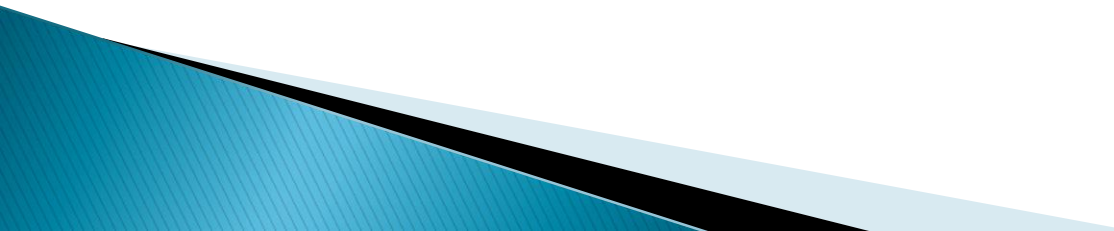
# Your “Faith Walk” Team

- ▶ 1. **Coordinator of Discipleship Process:** Help with design, training, and publicity.
  - ▶ 2. **Pastors:** Help recruit, assist w/ inquiry, and lead the rites for public worship.
  - ▶ 3. **Catechists:** Instructors for the journey.
  - ▶ 4. **Candidates:** Learners for the journey.
  - ▶ 5. **Sponsors/Mentors:** Companions on journey.
  - ▶ 6. **Host/Hostess:** Provide refreshments.
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# The Four Stages of the Journey for the “Faith Walk” Team

- ▶ 1. **Inquiry**: Planting the seed; making a connection with mission and discipleship.
- ▶ 2. **Exploration** (catechesis): Introducing the parts of the Catechumenate.
- ▶ 3. **Intense Preparation**: Training
- ▶ 4. **Baptismal Living** (mystagogy): Ongoing prayer and support for the team.

**PURPOSE:** *Welcoming people into a deeper relationship with Jesus and with each other so they can live faithful lives of discipleship.*



# Questions for Reflection:



- ▶ How do we welcome the unchurched? Are we eager to invite them into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ?
- ▶ How well do we prepare people to live out their baptismal calling in the world?
- ▶ Do you agree or disagree that the way to grow the church is to first **grow disciples**?