

A close-up photograph of several green leaves with prominent veins and small water droplets on their surfaces. The leaves are arranged in a fan-like pattern, filling the entire frame. The lighting is bright, highlighting the texture and color of the foliage.

Tips for Cultivating Fruitfulness in Ministry

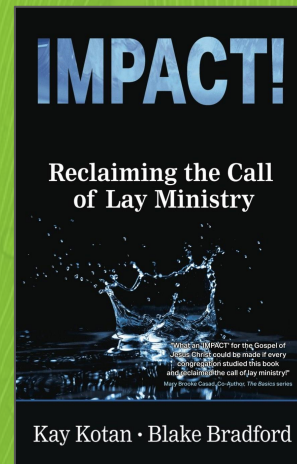
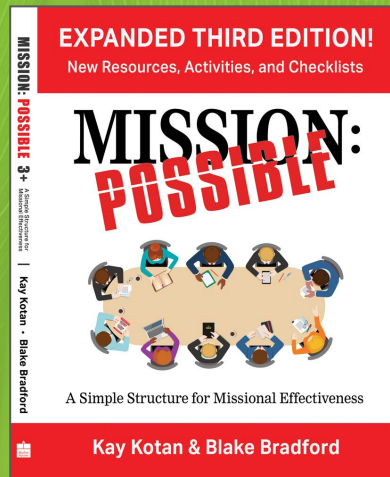


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CLERGYEDUCATION
Continuing Education for Clergy



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2019 isn't coming back... and it wasn't actually that great.

Nostalgia for 2019 is real, so we must leverage the RELAUNCH moment before churches forget what we learned and return to the Egypt of pre-COVID ministry, but with $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ less people.



Ministry in the future is simply going to be *different*

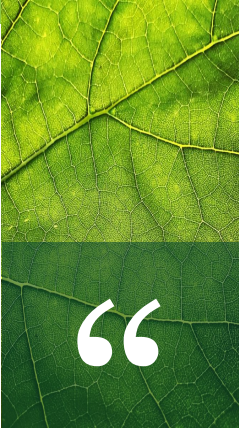
- COVID “hit the fast-forward button” on trends that were already challenging congregations.
- Congregations experienced the last 18 months in disparate ways, so cookie cutter responses will not work. Each pastor and congregation must be tuned to differing experiences.
- The multiple ongoing crises of 2020-2021 have created opportunities, experiments, and appetite for innovation.



Embrace Innovation

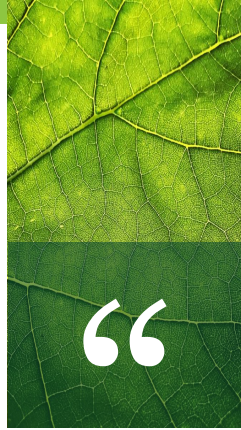
Most institutions, particularly churches, were not designed to innovate and adapt to this level of fast cultural change and cascading challenges.

Innovation lies in nexus of leveraging existing assets and a willingness to identify and engage the incoming reality



Be Gardeners, Not Program Directors

**Sower &
the Seeds**



**The
Mustard
Seed**

Be Gardeners, Not Program Directors

**Vine & the
Branches**

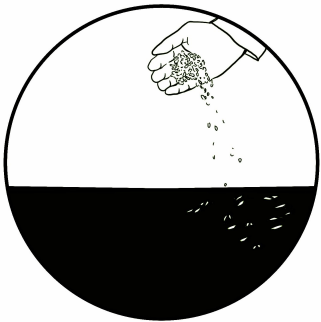
**The Worker
in the
Vineyard**

**God the
Gardener**

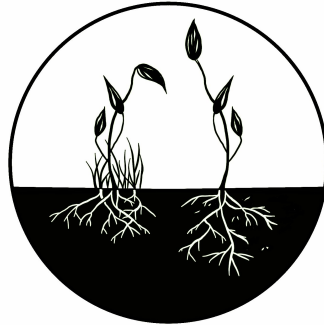


Gardening: Cultivating Fruitfulness

New Seeds



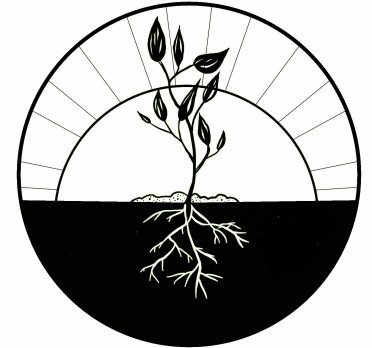
Weeding



Nutritious Soil



Sunlight





New Seeds

- Stick to the church's **identity, purpose, & context**.
- Welcome the reality that hybrid **Both/And** in-person and digital worship is here to stay.
- Embrace innovative **ministry experiments** by adjusting budgets, calendars, staffing, and expectations.



Programs and Buildings don't make disciples.

***God uses disciples
to make disciples.***



New Seeds

PURPOSE

- Don't plant palm trees in Maine!
- Leverage the opportunity of the post-COVID relaunch to make necessary and often long overdue changes.
- Stick to only what the CHURCH can do.
- "Engagement" is today's metric.

WORSHIP

- Embrace hybrid Both/And Worship.
- Worship ≠ Church. Remember that all the churches that relied on in-person worship as their only ministry & identity are now closed or closing.
- Keep counting to see post-COVID trends. Metrics from 2019 are interesting, but count from Zero, not from pre-COVID averages.

EXPERIMENTS

- There are a lot of people craving community and meaning.
- Try short term ministry experiments as a way of learning about the post-COVID reality in your community.
- No blame zone! If it works, grow it. If it doesn't, see what you learned.



Weeding & Pruning

- You can't sustain all the pre-COVID ministries. So STOP. NOW! Seriously, just stop trying to "keep the calendar full."
- Triage: the stove, the refrigerator, the freezer, and the compost pile.
- Leverage the moment to rightsize ministries, committees, and governance for your church.



Weeding & Pruning

Keep Engagement and/or Encouragement Ministries

- Prune ministries that don't engage people relationally.
- In an era of anxiety, polarization, and anger, how can your church offer hope, encouragement, and sanctuary?
- Checkbook charity is not a replacement for the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Consolidate for Impact & Sustainability

- Instead of 20 separate ministries for the poor or children, how could the church consolidate ministries and efforts to make a huge focused impact, such as a single local school?

Weeding means more capacity for growth

- Simplified accountable governance structure to reduce redundant committee work.
- Less maintenance of existing ministries means more space and energy for innovation and experiments.



Nutritious Soil

- The Church has a clear mission: to make Disciples for the transformation of the world. Just because something is “nice” does not mean it is strategic.
- Focus on Relational Ministry and Transformational Impact.
- Utilize outcome-based action planning.



Nutritious Soil

Disciple-making Mission

- People are online. A lot. What are they consuming? Is it building up Disciples? Are you offering or sharing midweek content that is healthy and nutritious?
- Help people BE disciples and MAKE disciples, not just check the box.

Relationships are the Soil of Discipleship

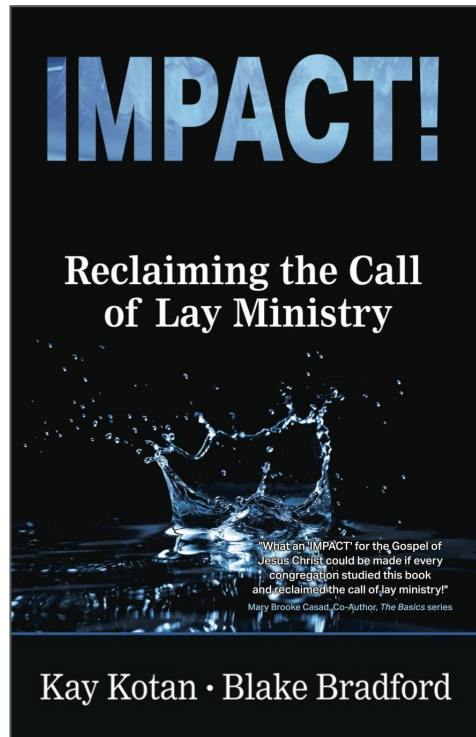
- Beware the distractions of Blessing Boxes, Fill the Funnel events, and Backpack programs. These ministries have their place, but they also have limitations.
- Online or hybrid gatherings to encourage, equip, and support disciples and guests.

Don't Water the Weeds

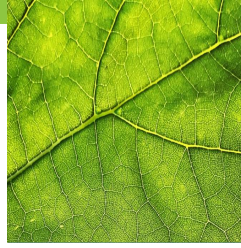
- Fund innovation instead of maintenance of ministries that no longer make a Kingdom-impact.



“A fruitful, Christ-centered, and grace-filled outreach ministry is not really about what we do to or for people. Rather, it is how we build relationships with people.”



Adapt Ministries for Relationship-Building

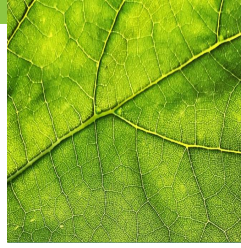


Pre-COVID example: From DMV Line to Community



Equip Classes and Groups for Relationship Building in a Hybrid Format





**Missions
as the new
Front Porch
to
Discipleship**



Sunlight

- Communicate the post-COVID reality ~ both challenges and opportunities with honesty and transparency.
- Highlight community impact with storytelling.



Sunlight

Would you like to share a review?

- A culture of reviews, recommendations, and “click to share”.
- How do we encourage members in the pew to share about their transformative experience as disciples?

Share Stories of God

- An “evangelist” comes from the Greek to describe a “messenger.” What’s your message?
- What tools can you use to put a spotlight” on what your church is doing post-COVID?
- Don’t say, “Our Church shut down”

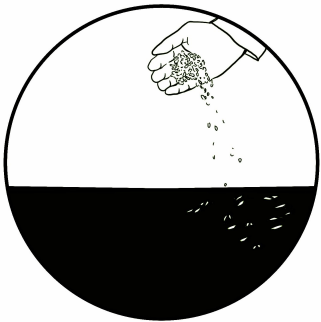
Describe Reality

- COVID destroyed the casual hallway and coffee time communication that your church depended upon. Get intentional!
- Be transparent about finances, engagement metrics, and board decisions.
- COVID encouraged church autocracy, so get back to healthy and transparent governance

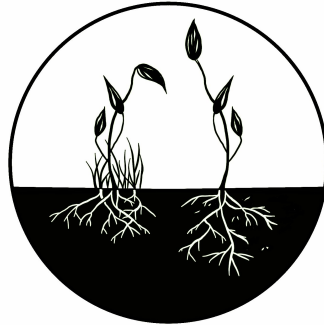
Cultivating Fruitfulness in Ministry



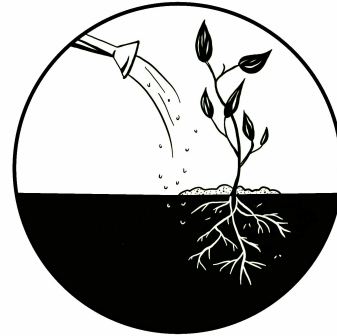
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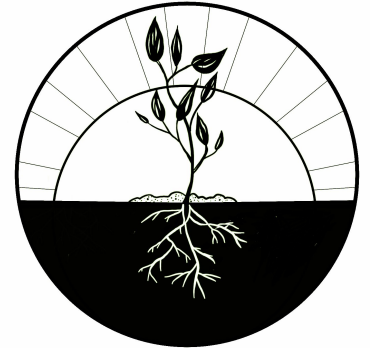
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