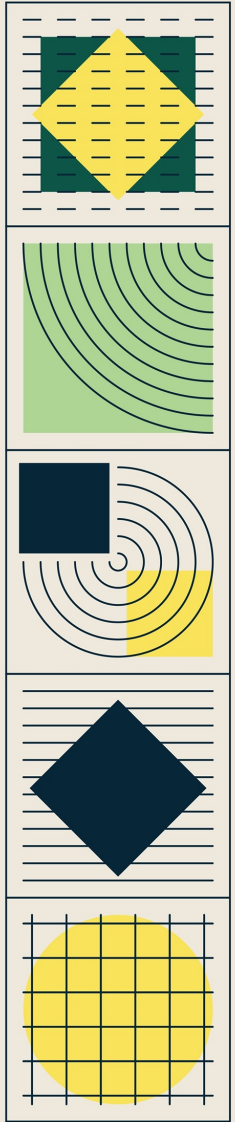


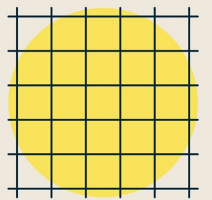
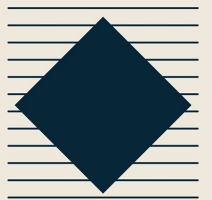
# Thriving in Relational Ministry

Bruce Dick – EvangelismSHIFT USA/Ambassadors for Christ Int'l



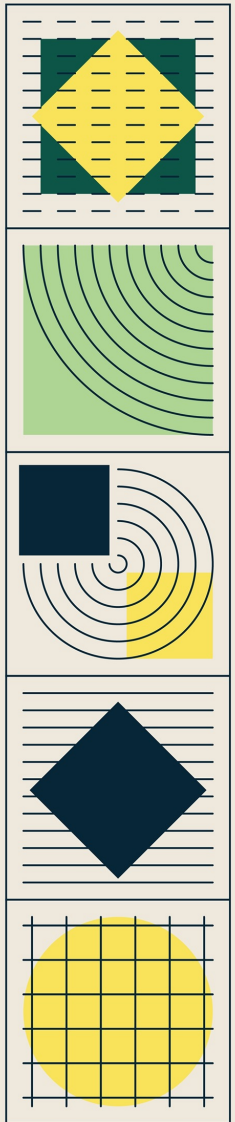
# Overview...

- In this webinar we will be considering how evangelism can happen in rural communities. After all, everyone knows everyone and knows almost everything about...well everything!
- The short answer: *authentic relationships* and *small steps that lead to the gospel* is what we will talk about.



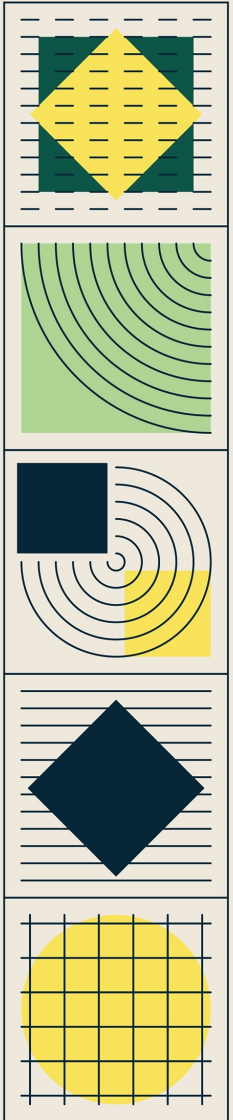
# Bruce Introduction...

- North Dakota farm boy (Munich, ND)
- German Mennonite background, solid Bible church.
- More Introverted than Extroverted (Ambivert?)
- Guilted into evangelism (If I don't tell them and they go to hell, that's on me...).
- Pastored Bethel EFC in Devils Lake, ND from 1997-2018 (a town of 7500 people) – what is my role as pastor in evangelism?



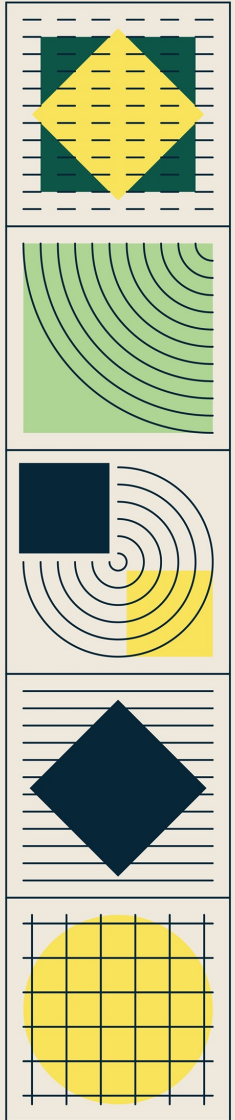
# The Pastor and Evangelism

- Pastor's Talk – a podcast by 9Marks
  - April 8, 2025 – “On the Pastor’s Personal Evangelism” – conversation with Jonathan Leeman and Mark Dever
  - The question they pondered – *Does the pastor have a responsibility to be involved in personal evangelism outside those opportunities he has in his role as pastor?*
- How would you answer that question?



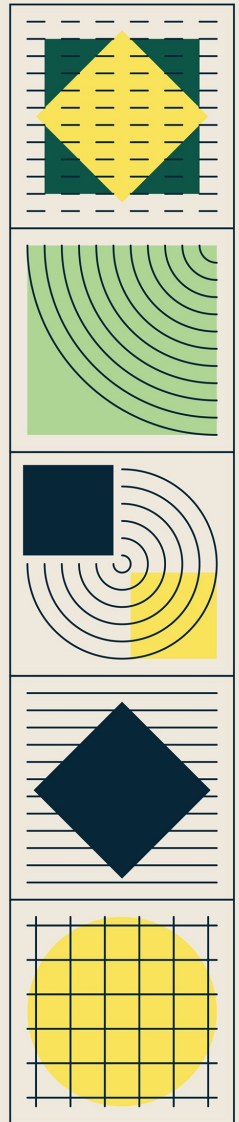
# Rural Evangelism Challenges

- What challenges have you (or your people) had when it comes to rural evangelism?



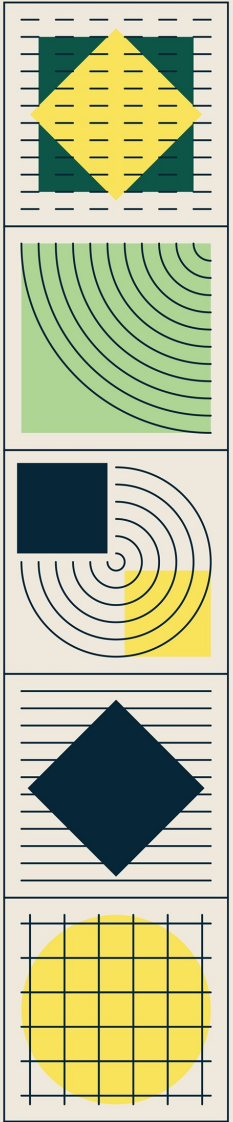
# EvangelismSHIFT Mission...

- *We are working toward a discipling movement of churches across the nation, whose people have a culture of living as witnesses in their everyday encounters, calling others to respond to Christ.*



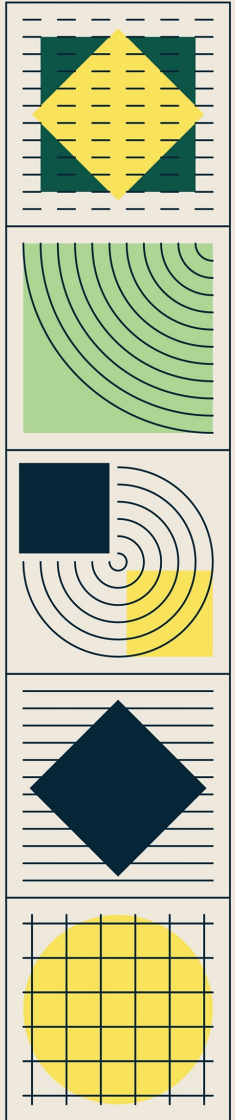
# Key Elements...

- **Disciplemaking** defined (the whole journey....)
- **Living as witnesses** in our everyday encounters...
- **Focus** - Friends, neighbors, co-workers and family members (i.e., people we already know and have some connection with).
- **Culture** - (making evangelism part of our personal and church DNA). (And research says that culture change in a church takes at least 2 years...)
- **“Sentness...”**



# Culture...

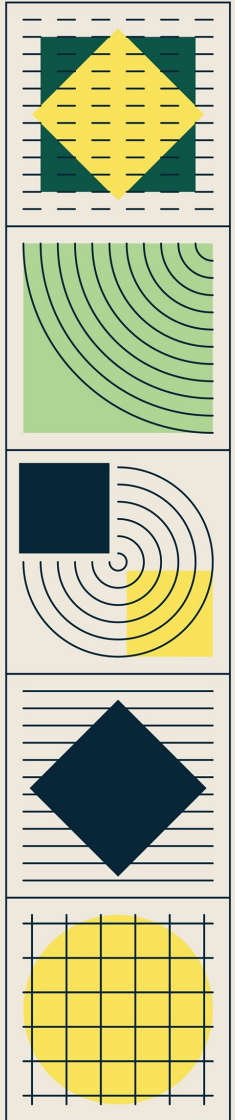
- **CULTURE**: What we mean by a “**culture**” of living as witnesses for Jesus is that if a new person were to come into our church, within a couple of weeks it would be obvious to them that if I am a part of this church, I **live as a witness** for Jesus.





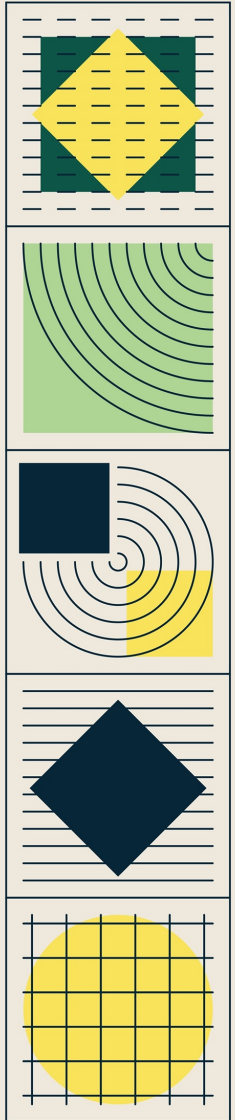
# Begins with "SENTNESS"

- 59 times in the Gospel of John, the word "send" or "sent" is used!



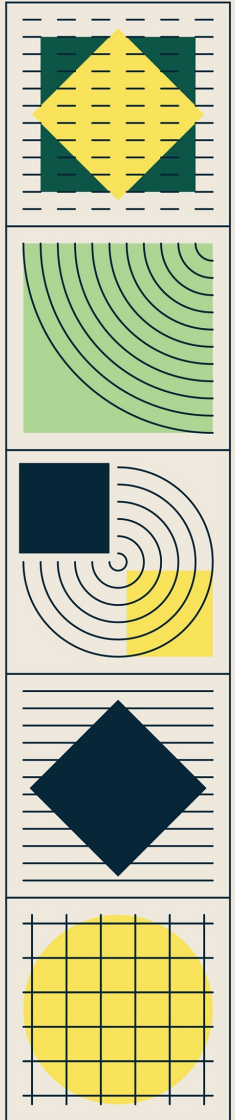
# Rural Evangelism...

- My Experience: “On the Street” and “Living as a witness with people I know...”
- All of us: What are we already involved in within our communities?
- Circles of Relationships: Too often then do not intersect. How could they?



# 5 SHIFTS needed...

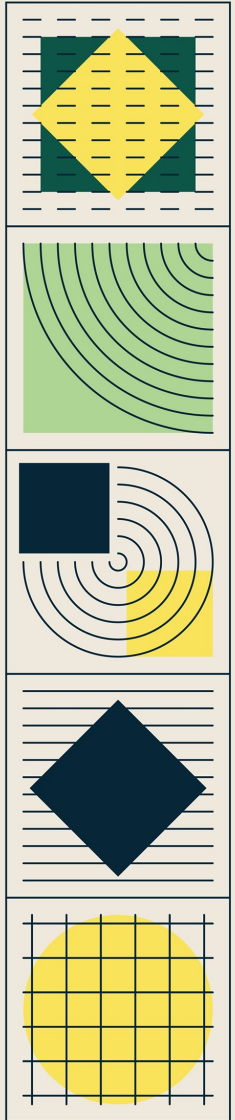
- From leader-owned evangelism to congregation-owned evangelism.
- From event-driven evangelism to relationship-driven evangelism.
- From decision-driven evangelism to journey-driven evangelism.
- Shift our focus in evangelism from reaching the lost to activating believers as effective witnesses.
- Shift our strategy from special-focus evangelism to developing a witnessing culture and lifestyle.



# What Method to Use?

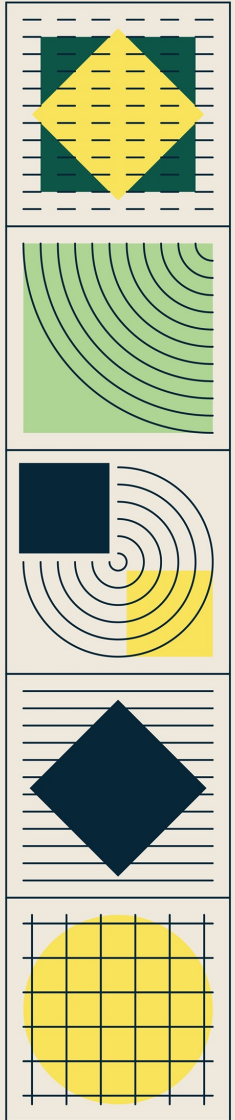
Dr. Roy King (Professor of Ministry Studies, Columbia Intl University)

- 200 churches surveyed 1) before their training, 2) immediately after the training, and then 3) 6 months after their training.
- “*Within six months people were back to their pre-training levels of evangelistic involvement.*”
- ...with ONE exception: They built into their structure 2 things:
  - *Pray specifically for names of people they want to see come to Christ.*
  - *They hold themselves accountable to see this happen.*

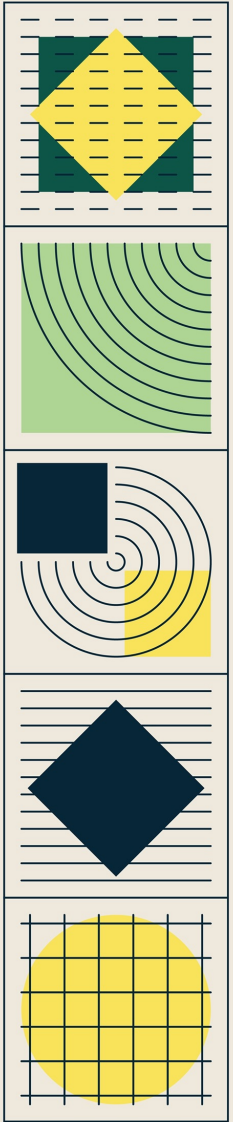
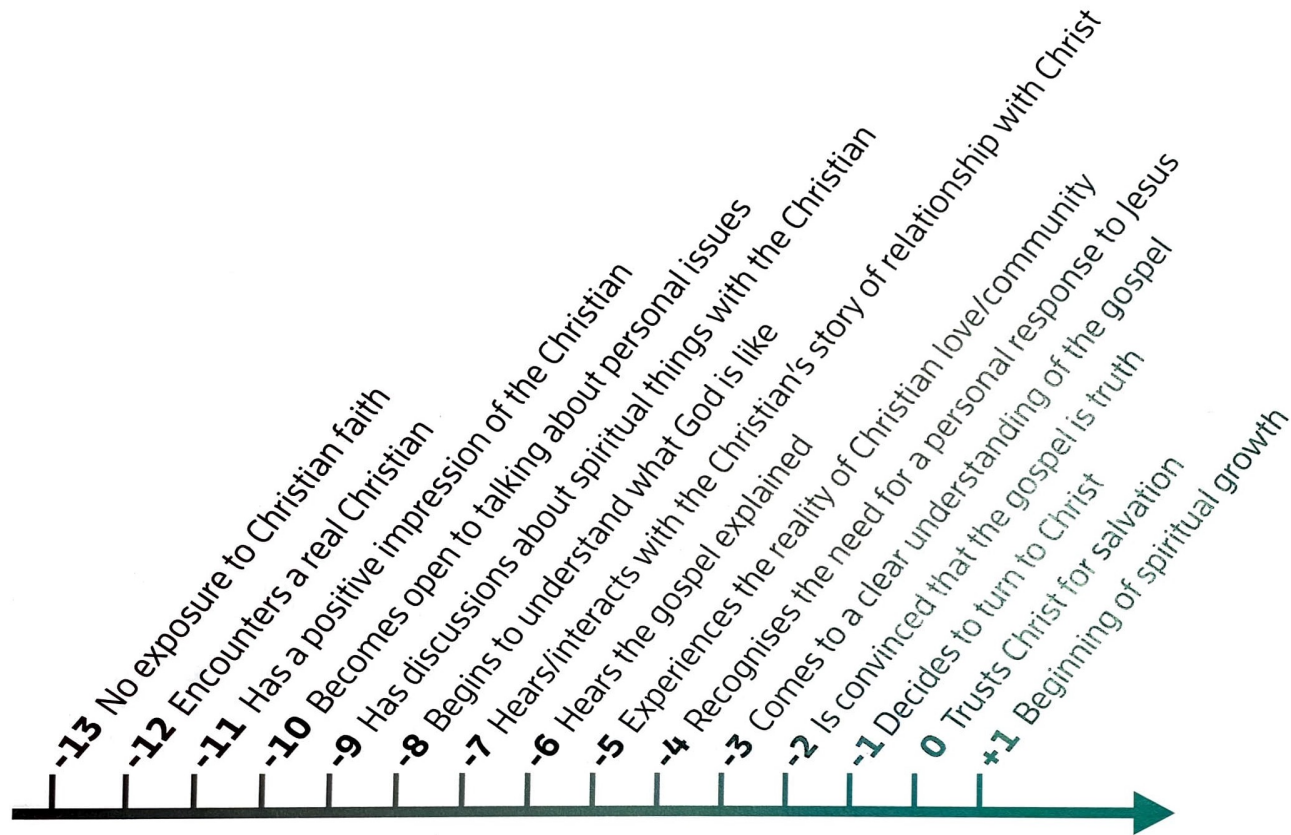


# The Journey Toward Jesus

- Our informal survey of participants indicates that the average journey to Jesus/salvation from the first “inkling” of the work of the Holy Spirit is 2 years.
- But we also feel that this is getting **significantly longer**.
- This is why relationships are the key and often must have the **long view** (especially in rural communities?)

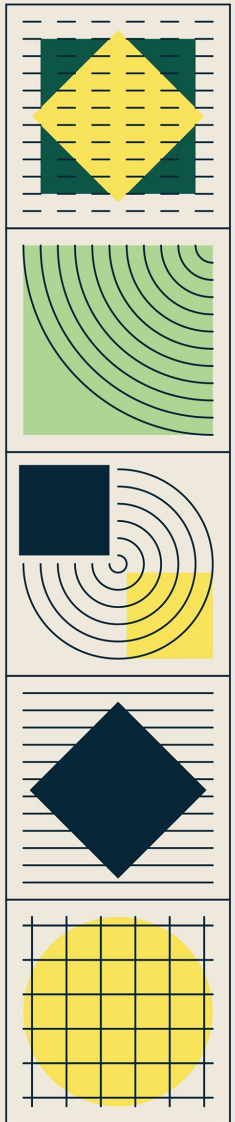


# The Journey Toward Jesus



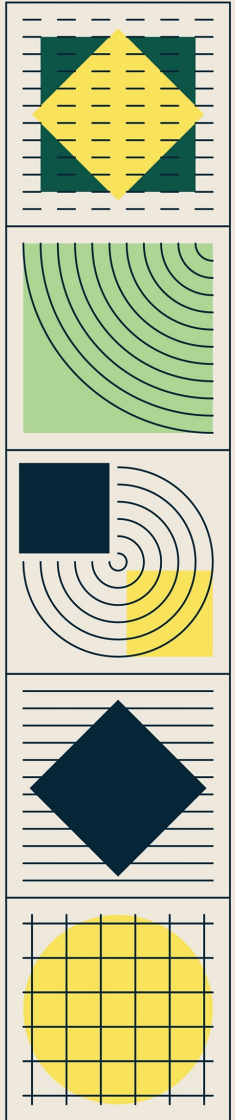
# The Journey Toward Jesus

- The goal is to help my friend take the NEXT step and not just the FINAL step.
- Our overall goal for a church is to work toward having a **CONVERSION GROWTH PERCENTAGE** of 10%. (But let's start where we are, take some steps and see what God does!)



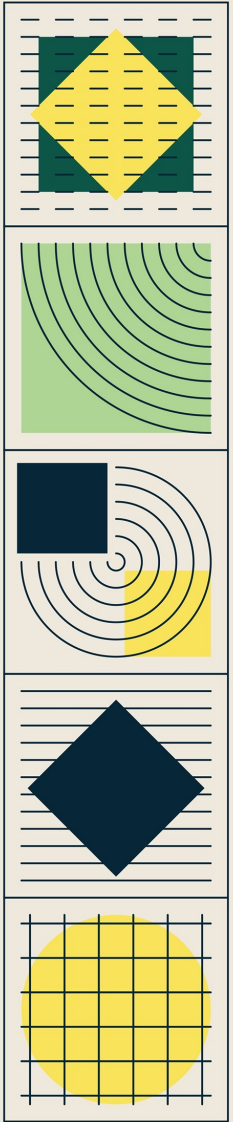
# How do we engage?

- Be a LEARNER.
- Use QUESTIONS (no, you don't need to know all the answers!).
- What about other ethnic cultures and connections? (Devils Lake is adjacent to the Spirit Lake Nation, for example).
  - There is no separate strategy. It's the same.
  - The key is often a "person of peace."



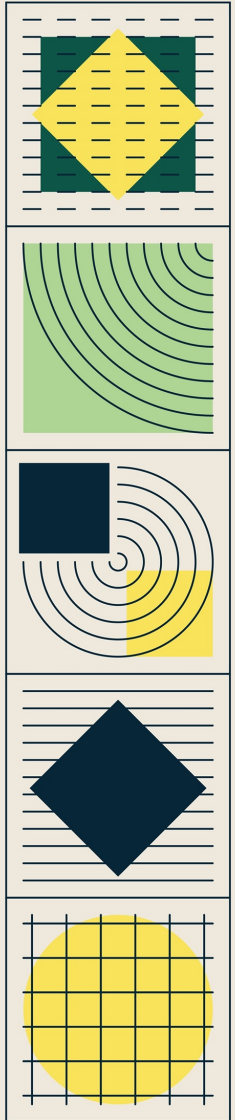


# Questions?



# Connections...

- **Contact me!**
  - [bruce@evangelismshiftusa.com](mailto:bruce@evangelismshiftusa.com)
  - (701) 381-2661
- Check out our web site: [www.evangelismshiftusa.com](http://www.evangelismshiftusa.com).
- Find us on Facebook or Instagram – EvangelismSHIFT USA.
- Join the Prayer Team – monthly Praise and Prayer updates. Sign up with your email address.





Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

1 Cor 11:1

Learning to live as a witness

Principles & Priorities Seminars  
Accountability & Prayer Acct Partner  
Mindset Daily Devotions  
Model Ambushed By God

Leaders

KEY LEADERS

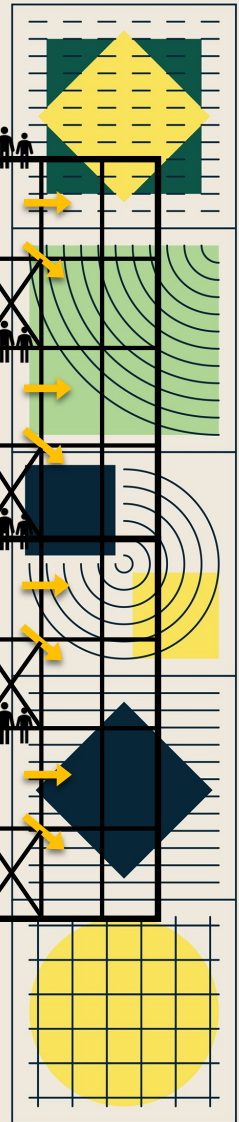
Movement  
building strategy  
from the life of  
Christ

Passing on the  
witnessing lifestyle

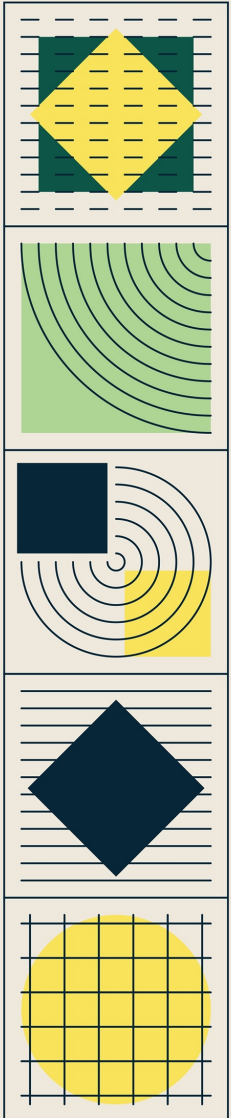
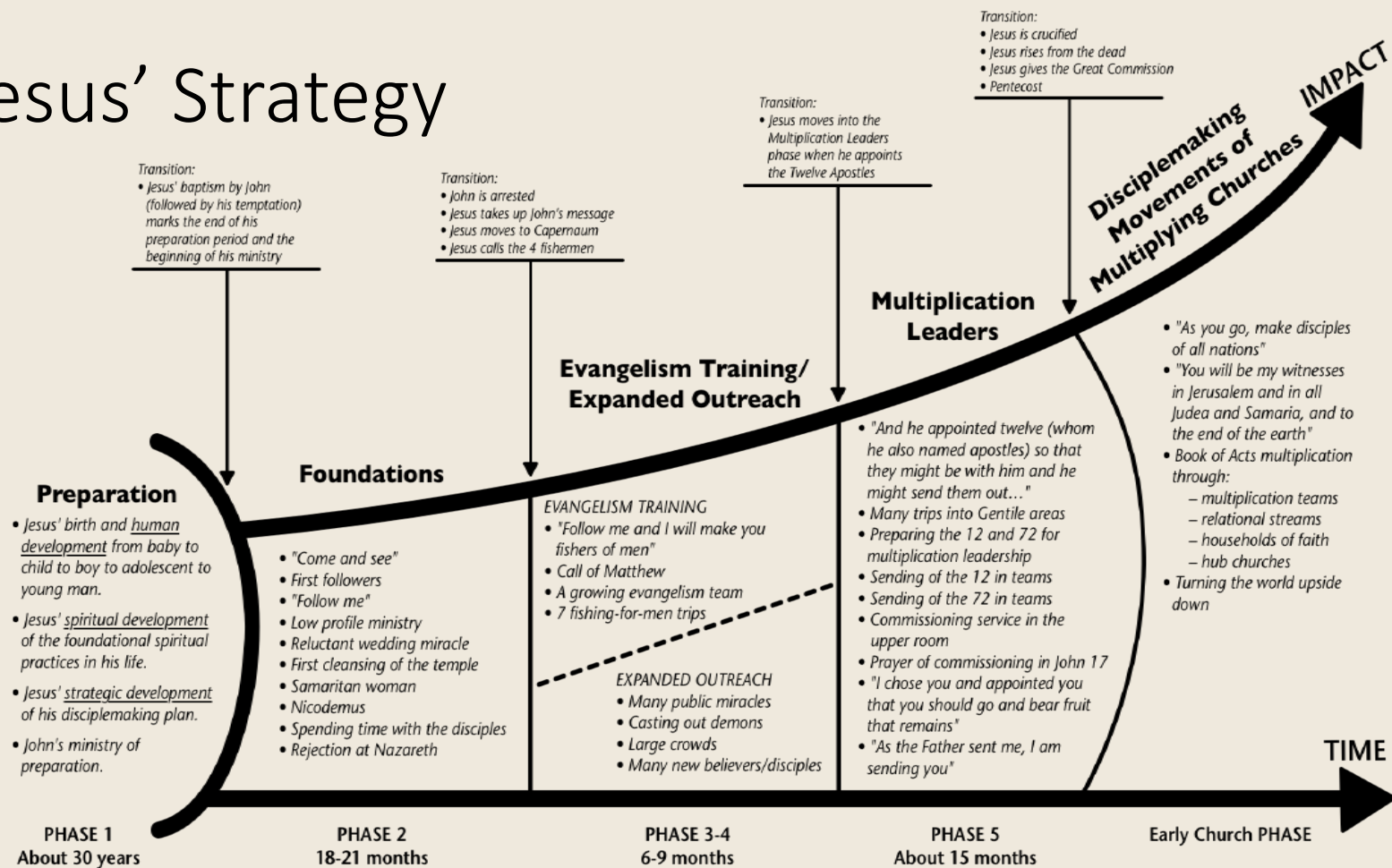
Life2Life

LifeWorks

Congregation



# Jesus' Strategy



Year 2 – Core Leaders  
develop a framework to  
*SHIFT* their ministry  
strategy so the church  
can effectively develop  
mission-based leaders.

Jesus started out with  
nothing.

But Jesus knew he  
would send out  
multiplying  
disciplemakers.

