

# INTENTIONAL MULTIPLICATION



John Wesley never set out to start a new church... Or did he? Perhaps a better way to describe assumed intent is to better frame as a new way of being church. Though he remained an Anglican Priest, Wesley's passion for the gospel and disciplined approach to personal piety yielded the nickname "methodists," referring to those who participated in the The Holy Club at Oxford. This was not intended to be a compliment by those introducing the label. However, at the core of our identity as United Methodists today, lies an intentional approach in how our personal and corporate values inform our unfolding story. Together, our values and narrative point toward how we behave in the world. Our church became well known for its engagement in social justice. For Wesley, it was about how our person devotion to God informed and embodied our social engagement with others — personal piety and social holiness.

Is this how Methodism spread across a young America? The short answer is yes. When our values, narrative, and behaviors are aligned, intentional multiplication happens — we make disciples that make disciples, we develop leaders that develop leaders, we create new places for new people that create new places for new people. However, this rhythm requires culture shift in each of our local churches.



## INGREDIENTS

1. **Revisit our heritage** and rediscover how the Methodist movement spread across the land
2. **Curiosity** about how your church/community of faith names its values (Is multiplication a value?)
3. Name and **tell stories** of how these values are/were lived out in ministry with the community
4. **Record** how the behaviors, embodied by the church/community of faith, are reflected in the values and narrative (Is there alignment?)

## 1. Talk about how the Methodist movement spread across the land.

What do you know about the heritage of the Methodist movement? In order to understand the concept of intentional multiplication, we need to understand more about the cultural underpinnings that defined Methodists, when the church first emerged.

- How would you describe your understanding of personal piety?
- What does social holiness mean to you?  
--Is social holiness and social justice the same thing?
- If you could name the values of early Methodists, what would they be? (list them out)
- How do you understand the mission of "making disciples" as it relate to personal piety and social holiness?

## 2. Name the values with which you believe your church would identify.

Make a list of the values you believe are important to your local church. Here is a way to frame these values:

- When you think of how you see your church, what values come to mind?
- Based on your experience, how do you think your local neighborhood/community sees your church?
- Does your list represent your church fully?
- What would you add? What would you remove?
- After reviewing your list, is multiplication a value?

## 3. Think about the many stories that make up your church's narrative in the community in which it was planted.

We all represent and shape stories. How do you describe your church when you tell others about it? Stories are a powerful reminder of how we are formed and shaped.

- List one story that has become a defining example of the life and work represented in your church/community of faith?
- Is there a particular story from your church/community of faith that has shaped you (share/explain)?
- If you asked a local neighbor that does not attend your church to share a story from their experience of the church, do you have a sense of what they would share?
- Do you see a relationship between the values and narratives named?

## 4. How would you describe the behaviors of your church/community of faith? Is the "talk" reflected in the "walk"?

We all aspire to be someone we are not. And, we often see what we want when we look in the mirror. The same can be said for our Christian identity as a community of faith.

- What are some of the predominate behaviors (good and bad) of our church?
- How are these behavior contributing or detracting from the church's full identity in the community?
- Do you recognize a misalignment of your behaviors in relationship to your values and narrative?
- What needs to change?
- Are you intentional about multiplication (new disciples, new leaders, new people, new places)?