

THE LOCAL CHURCH

Part 5

www.WesternHillsChurch.com

Jesus' Church

I want you to look into the future with me to January 2027. Many things have changed at Western Hills. Pastor Wells is 72 years old and has retired as Senior Pastor.

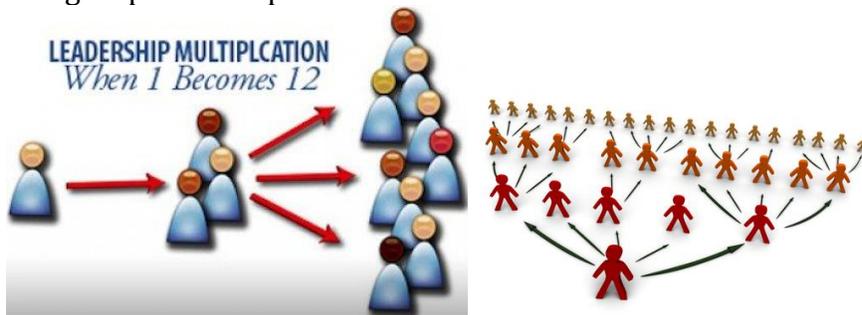


Some people that were here in 2017 are with the Lord. Others have relocated.



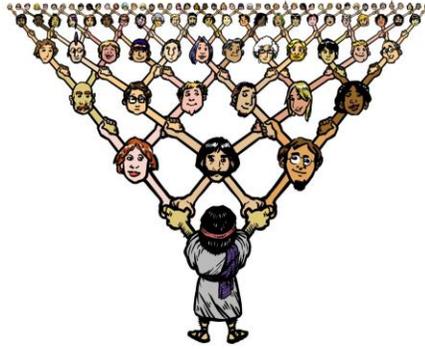
But one thing that has not changed is the vision of relational team discipleship.

The groups have reproduced.



While there are 19 leaders and 19 groups and 164 people in groups in January, 2017.

In 2027, there are 88 leaders and 88 groups and over 800 people in groups.



In 2027, there are 200 youth and children. This is a fulfillment of the vision that God gave Pastor Wells in 1984 from Zechariah about what the church would be like in the evening of his life.

In 2027, the church is discipling 1000 people every week. There are now 3 full time Small groups Pastors and a full time connections Pastor.

In 2027 there are two weekend services to accommodate 1000 people.

How did this happen?

Over a period ten years the church averaged a modest growth rate of 20% a year in new groups. This simply means for every ten groups in the church, 2 new groups were launched each year.

During 2026, 15 new groups were added. Every time a new group was added, more people would be added to the new groups and to the church. So, in 2027, there are 88 leaders and 88 groups and over 800 people in groups with over 1000 people attending on Sundays.

The church is a beehive of activity as different ministries have sprung up from the membership as top of the funnel events to reach out to the community. There are all kinds of clubs that were formed to connect with new people according to their interests and needs. There is a club for teaching English to the Spanish speaking community. There is a club for women's aerobics and it meets in the new gym that sits on top of building B. The church has acquired the building next door to the west and in that building the church has its own coffee shop that rivals a Starbucks. It also has a deli and a bakery. The old barber shop around the corner is still a barber shop but it is managed by church members who turn barber shop talk into ministry and the haircuts are cheap. The building also holds a pro-life health care facility for women and babies are being rescued every week. There is a medical clinic. And yes the old cleaners is now gone and has been replaced by another parking area.



But what is most important, is that the culture of relational team discipleship that was taking shape in January 2017, is the main engine driving the church in January 2027.

- Every member understands that the local church is a team.
- Every member understands that the mission of the team is to make disciples that makes disciples.
- Every member understands the strategy of the team is relational team discipleship in a small group.

This vision for 2027 sounds pretty astounding for a local church that has never been larger than 600 people since the late 60's. So, maintaining 20% growth every year for 10 years and becoming a church of 1000 sounds amazing.

But 20% is really a very modest number compared to what happened in Post Falls Idaho.

From 1998-2008, by using this same vision for relational team discipleship, a local church grew from one small group of seven people to 800 small groups and over 8000 people!

Listen closely to their history.

Video-<http://www.reallifeministries.com/imnew/the-history-of-real-life-ministries/>

Did you catch how this happened?

Seven people who were passionate about loving Jesus started asking one simple question.

What does it mean to be Jesus' church?

This question came from Matthew 16:18

Matthew 16:18

18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

NKJV

They noticed Jesus said, "My Church."

They understood from this verse that the church of Jesus should be winning.

They concluded that if the church was not winning it must not be Jesus' church.

Because they loved Jesus and wanted His church to win, they asked this simple question....

“What does it mean to be Jesus' church?”

They discarded their opinions based on their American experiences and the denominational views they had been taught and they asked Jesus to show them what does it mean to be His church.

From Matthew 4:19, He changed their understanding of what it means to be His disciple.

From the strategy that Jesus used to make disciples, He also changed their understanding of how disciples should be made in the church.

They began to see that instead of church being something you do, church is something you are!

Jesus spoke to them and changed the hearts of 7 people when they began asking the question what does it mean to be Jesus' church. Then he used those seven people and their passion to start a movement that has seen thousands of people saved. Those thousands are now making disciples the way Jesus showed His disciples to make disciples.

One of the most incredible things about their story is that it occurred in Post Falls, Idaho. The church planters that I have known and read about in the Northwest have said that the Northwest USA is one of the most difficult fields in the USA to plant a church. If a Pastor of a church in the Northwest had a congregation of 100 people it was a huge success.

Another incredible thing about what has happened is that Post Falls had a population of only....

16,111 in 1998

That mighty metropolis had grown to....

29,357 in 2013

Another incredible thing about their growth is that nearly half of their growth in the Post Falls church was by baptisms.

Another incredible thing about what started in Post Falls Idaho is that it is not personality driven. There is nothing wrong with being personality driven. God uses gifted men to reach people with the gospel and these local churches become mega-churches if they are in densely populated areas.

But these mega-churches can't reproduce other local churches like the first one unless they have satellite churches with the same personality preaching via video at all the locations.

People identify these churches by the name of personality. What is happening in Idaho when they reproduce local churches is not personality driven. The main engine that drives each new local church is not a personality but is relational team discipleship.

Another incredible thing to me about their story is that you can't start 800 new groups without 800 new leaders. You can't launch a new group without a new leader.

It is incredible to me that they had that kind of response from volunteers over a period of ten years and they are maintaining that 10% percentage of leaders to the general population of the church. That means they have done an amazing job casting vision and developing layers of leadership to recruit and train new leaders.

And it all started with 7 people in a living room asking the question...

What does it mean to be Jesus' church?

Do you love Jesus? (Share the gospel)

If you love Jesus would you ask the question?

What does it mean to be Jesus' church?

Do you think those seven-people got it right? If they got it right, then that means the clear majority of American churches have got it wrong. It means that for many years we got it wrong.

You and I will not make a significant change in the way we do church until there is a significant change in our hearts about what it means to be Jesus' church.

[Matthew 16:18](#)

[18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.](#)

[NKJV](#)

When that change occurs in you, you will understand when you hear me say, church is not something we do but church is something we are!

If you do think they got it right, what are you going to do about it? Will you become the church of Jesus Christ?

- Join a group

Start playing on a team that is practicing relational team discipleship.

- Lead a group

We cannot be Jesus' church without many leaders who are committed to be the church and follow His game plan for discipleship.

Next week after church we are hosting 301. It is for people who love Jesus and who want to be Jesus' church who are interested in learning more about leading a group.