

Notes for Foundation for Change.

3 Phase approach

**The bylaws are the heart of institution. They are the engine that drives the ship.** When the bylaws are out of sync with the reality of the congregation they become a millstone that quickly sinks the ship.

Ex: the congregation has 30 active in worship. The bylaws require a board made up of 50. It does not take long for the focus of the congregation to be on trying to stay afloat by covering all the positions.

Ex: The process for becoming a leader or serving the congregation is too cumbersome and outdated to have relevancy today. For example – A young man started participating actively in the life of the congregation. After about 6 months he approached me following worship to offer his help in serving communion and passing the offering plate. He noticed that there seemed to be a scramble each Sunday finding people to do these jobs. He wasn't familiar with the terms deacons and elders having no church background. He just saw there was a need and he wanted to help. I introduced him to the chair of the deacons who promptly explained the process for becoming a deacon – He would have to be nominated, placed on a ballot and then voted on by the congregation at the next meeting which would not be for a year. That's what the bylaws said. She was correct. What the bylaws said was a hinderance to what the congregation needed in its current context.

That young man never returned. I saw him several months later out in the community and he explained that he was now worshiping with a more evangelical church that was happy to welcome him and let him serve immediately.

**Blocks – what are the core values of the Old institution structure that are preventing New life and transformation?**

**Membership** – The old institution structure was put in place at a time when membership in institutions was important, sought after. The value of membership was to belong and also to be exclusive.

Sacred Rituals are tied through the bylaws to membership. In order to be a member you must be baptized. In order to take communion you must be baptized. Confession of faith....

Leadership and Membership – In order to serve as elder, deacon, teacher, or in any other leadership role you must be a member.

Stewardship and tithing – attendance and participation is required for membership as is tithing. Keeping membership attendance helped to monitor tithes and participation.

Membership was part of a status.

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**Building** – The building and the congregation were one in the same. It was inconceivable to think the congregation could exist beyond the building. The value is placed on Dwelling rather than seeking.

**Leadership** – The value was based on an assumption that Leadership was a privilege and everyone has a desire to serve and be a leader. With so many people on the membership rolls there had to be ways to identify those better suited to serve. Exclusion. Also, to make more positions available they increased the number of committees within the bylaws. They created the process of holding elections. A nominating committee would put a slate together that the congregation would vote on at the yearly meetings.

**The Old institution model served the congregation in the context of the day but is not helpful in our current context.**

- 1. General mistrust of institutions including and perhaps especially Church. The latest Pew poll shows that for the first time ever the number of people who identify as having no religious affiliation what so ever is over 50%**
- 2. Younger generations are looking for ways to connect lightly. They are less likely to show up every Sunday, but rather prefer to be connected through mission. They are drawn (as a general rule) to congregations who are social justice oriented and live out the welcome they claim.**

**How to move away from Self-preservation where the congregation is simply trying to preserve the institution and into being truly the living body of Christ.**

- 1. Listen to God**
- 2. Learn the history of the congregation**
- 3. Pay attention to the community in which you are (what is your context)**
- 4. Pray**

**Using the historical and sociological lens to read the bylaws** – Spend some time reading between the lines of your bylaws to hear the stories of the past. What was happening that inspired the congregation of the past to include certain things? Was there conflict? Was there growth? Who was being left out/excluded?

Don't be afraid to ask: Does this make sense today? How does this system or process seem to a person walking into our congregation for the first time?

What are your congregation's core values? How do they line up with the core values found in the bylaws?

**Don't put the kitchen sink in the bylaws!!!!**

Bylaws are a governance tool. To satisfy the state they only need have officers and a board.

Be mindful what you include. You want a gentle structure that will be nimble and flexible enough to transform and help the future congregation transform within whatever context they find themselves.

Statements on Sacred Ritual can be put in a covenant document rather than enshrined with in bylaws.

Are you going to hand the bylaws to a new person as a way of telling them who you are? Probably. Maybe you would rather create welcome documents that help give people some understanding.

Let the bylaws be bylaws. Seriously – God does need us to define Communion, Confession of Faith, Baptism within the structure for governance. They are important rites and rituals that need to remain part of the living body. Sticking them in the bylaws makes them austere and stagnate.

**Phase One is a congregational approach** – Historical Lens – We implanted much of the history piece within the worship setting. We did 5 -10 history teachings in the style of a children’s moment. Keeping it focused and fun. It was listed in the bulletins as DISCIPLES 101. (the same information was also included in the newsletters)

### **Phase One -Disciples 101**

#### **Week one – Who Are We?**

Disciples identity statement - A movement for Wholeness in a fragmented world

The focus of week one is to help the congregation understand our connection to the General Church. Many of our newer congregants have no history with the denomination, and many of our older members history is steeped in a traditional understanding of how the denomination functions and do not understand the changes that have occurred over the past thirty years.

This week they will be introduced to the Disciples of Christ mission statement – “A movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.”<sup>64</sup> A brief history of the denominational formation introducing the 4 founders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, Thomas Campbell and Walter Scott. The objective is to connect the current mission statement to the historical mission and vision of the movement.

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### **Week two- The General Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ):**

There are currently fifteen general ministries: Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries; Chalice Press; Christian Church Foundation; Council on Christian Unity; Disciples Church Extensions Fund; Disciples Home Missions; Disciples Women; Disciples of Christ Historical Society; Global Ministries; Helm; Hope Partnership for Missional Transformation; National Benevolent Association; National Convocation; NAPAD; Pension Fund. The goal in week two is to name each one and briefly discuss the congregation's history and connection or lack of

connection to each one. For example, Helm is the ministry for higher education. First Christian

Olympia has always placed a value on higher learning. The congregation has a scholarship

foundation that has help fund hundreds of seminary student's education throughout the years.

The commitment to education is deeply rooted in its Disciples heritage. Alexander Campbell and

Barton W. Stone both believed in the importance of education. As a result, there are seventeen

colleges, universities and seminaries in the United States affiliated with the Disciples. There are

their connection historically and presently, as well as understanding how the ministries themselves help to fulfill a vision rooted in the original formation of the movement, as well as the current vision and mission.

**Week three – History of the Chalice** – symbolizes the centrality of communion in our worship; the cross of the Disciple Andrew serves as a reminder of the “ministry of each person and the importance of evangelism.” Objective 1: connecting to identity; Objective 2: understanding the power of symbol and ritual; Objective 3: understand the theology of communion as the center of worship.

**Week four – The Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)** – read the preamble. History of the restructure. Objective 1: to understand Disciples concept of Unity; Objective 2: understand the significance of a covenantal relationship

**Week five – The Four Priorities:** 1. Becoming a Pro-reconciling/Anti-racist church 2. Formation of 1,000 new congregations by 2020 3. Transformation of 1,000 current congregations by 2020 4. Leadership development necessary to realize these new and renewed .

Look at the 20/20 impact report now that 20/20 vision is complete

**Week six – Structure** – General Church; Regional Church – How are Northern Lights Region merger –How is that consistent with our history?

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Objective 1: to recognize that adaptive change has always been a part of our denomination.

Objective 2: to locate FCC within the denominational structure.

**Week seven – General Assembly** – offer a brief history of how assemblies came into being. Describe the different types of resolutions. Tell the story of the 1992 Kansas City assembly and the impact on the denomination and the historic connection between that assembly and FCC.

Objective 1: understand the basics of Disciples polity; Objective 2: to recognize the differences in resolutions and their effects on congregations.

**Week eight – Leadership** – General Minister and President, Regional Minister, General Board, Regional Board, Regional ministries. Objective 1: to understand the roles of General and Regional Church leaders; Objective 2: to locate ourselves within the ministries.

Phase 2 followed the same format in worship and newsletter under the heading Disciples 2.0

### **Phase Two – Disciples 2.0**

**Week one** – The four founders: Barton W. Stone, Alexander Campbell, Thomas Campbell.

Objective 1: the congregation will be able to name the 4 founders of the denomination; Objective 2: the congregation will be able to name the basic beliefs that brought them together; Objective 3: the congregation will understand what Second Great Awakening means.

Objective 1: to understand the importance of the priorities; Objective 2: to recognize how FCC plays a part in the priorities and to think about ways we might more fully live them out.

**Week two** – Barton W. Stone – The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery. The Christian Messenger – “Let Unity be our Polar Star.”<sup>68</sup> Cane Ridge Revival Objective 1: to know the difference between “stoneite” and “Campbellite.” Objective 2 – Understand the risk of faith to allow something precious to die that it might live.

**Week three** -Thomas Campbell – the Declaration and Address. “The Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one.”<sup>69</sup> Objective 1: understand the historical importance of Thomas Campbell’s contribution to the movement. Objective 2: recognize the pattern of endings and beginnings within the movement

**Week four** – Walter Scot – Evangelist – Evangelism. Cane Ridge. An overview of his role in the movement. Objective 1: to understand the importance of evangelism. Objective 2: understand the importance of living our faith beyond our walls.

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**Week five** – Alexander Campbell – “Campbellites” – overview of Campbell’s contributions. Alexander Campbell is perhaps the most recognizable name of the four. Most of the Disciples congregations consider themselves “campbellites, “but what does that really mean? Campbell and creeds. “No creed but Christ”<sup>70</sup> Slavery. Education. Objective 1: to understand Campbells fundamental beliefs and how they shaped the denomination. Objective 2: recognize his influence on the shaping of FCC.

**Week six** – Cane Ridge Revival, 1801–where is it? What happened? Did people really bark like dogs? Objective 1: to understand the freedom the Spirit offers. Objective 2: to understand the connection between the Great Revival of the West and FCC.

**Week seven** -What’s in a name? – How we became The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). What the parenthesis means. Objective 1: understand the historical meaning of the name. Objective 2: to understand where FCC feels most connected.

**Week eight** – Schism – a brief history of how The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Churches of Christ split. Objective 1: to understand how theological divides hurt everyone. Objective 2: to understand more fully the importance of the congregational theology of Welcome, open and affirming.

**The Leadership study/bylaws team** – began as a 6-week commitment but the team asked for an extension as the conversation and exploration was exciting. They fully embraced the process once they realized they had permission to think beyond tradition.

### **Phase Three – Leadership Study**

The leadership study is intended to be six weeks. Each weekly session is 3 hours in length. Participants include the church board and representatives from the church elders and deacons and representatives from newer congregants for a total of 10. The first 5 sessions will be held in the church library. Each session begins with a meditation on Jesus feeding the crowd. (adapted from *And Still We Rise*) Participants are invited to consider the different hungers that are present in the story, and where they see abundance. A different Gospel version is read each week. This creates a weekly ritual and will be used as an example of ritual.

Each week will focus on a different aspect of the 5 D cycle. Week one will be an introduction to the cycle, the concept of historical and sociological new institutionalism, the 3 N’s and how we will be working over the course of the 6 weeks. A large part of the time in session one will be creating an historical timeline to be used for the bylaws deep analysis. **Week one-**

- Meditation – Matthew 14:13-21(15 minutes)
- Ritual and Tradition
- Lens’s for analysis: 1. Sociological institutionalism 2. Historical institutionalism (15 minutes)

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1. How did we get here? The history leading up to incorporation. – Creating a timeline
2. Identify early values

Closing Meditation – Exodus 14:15-16 (15 minutes) **Week two-**

- Meditation – Luke 9: 10-17 (15 minutes)

<sup>71</sup> Bohren, Jha, and Pocięcha, *And Still We Rise*, 5. 84

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- Recap – Ritual and Tradition (10 minutes)
- Recap - 1. Sociological institutionalism 2. Historical institutionalism (15 minutes)
- Bylaws – Article I Who We Are, Section A Welcoming Community, Section B Open and

Affirming (50)

a. How did we get here? Sharing our memory of these two statements. Share what they mean to you?

c. How is Welcoming and Openness consistent or inconsistent with Disciples history and values?

Bylaws – Article II – Rituals and Traditions

- Bylaws – Article II Rituals and Traditions (75)
  1. Confession of Faith – does this have value for you personally? What is your experience with?  
confession?
  2. Baptism- Share the history of baptism within the Restoration movement, the denomination, the congregation. 1. What is your personal experience with baptism?
  3. The Lord's Supper: communion or Lord's Supper? Does it make a difference? 1. Share personal experience of communion.
    1. Are these rituals an external reflection of our internal values?
    2. Are there other traditions or rituals that we practice that are missing from this?

section? How do they reflect our values?

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3. Are there rituals and traditions that we do not practice well that you believe capture our values? What's missing?

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Closing Meditation – Hebrews 13:2 (15 minutes) Closing Prayer

#### **Week three-**

- Meditation – Mark 6:30-44 (15 minutes)
- Recap of prior week (5 minutes)

Bylaws Article III Membership Covenant (80 minutes)

What is the cultural understanding of membership today? What was it historically? What does covenant mean? Does it feel different to have a covenant versus a contract?

Closing Meditation – Mark 1:9-11 (15 minutes) **Week four –**

- Meditation – John 6:1-14 (5 minutes)
- Creating a Spiritual practice through mini habits (5 minutes)
- Recap of prior week (5 minutes)
- History of membership and institution (10 minutes)
- Theology of Covenant (10 minutes)
- Bylaws – Article III Membership Covenant (80 minutes)

1. Does membership matter to you? How? Why?
2. What are the benefits of the terminology? What are the negatives?
3. What does covenant mean to you?
4. Can we imagine community without membership? What does that look like? What is it called?

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Closing Meditation – Exodus 14:15-16 (5 minutes)

#### **Week five –**

- Meditation – Matthew 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17 (15 minutes)
- Creating a Spiritual practice through mini habits (5 minutes)
- Recap prior week (15 minutes)
- What is a calling? (15 minutes)
- Bylaws The Board – A discussion on leadership (50 minutes)

1. How is the current leadership structure effective? Where are the gaps?
2. Are all leaders spiritual leaders? Should they be? Is there a place for calling in lay leadership?

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Do you feel called?

3. Can you imagine a different way to lead?

Closing Meditation – John 20:19-23 (15 minutes)

### **Week Six-**

- Meditation – Mark 6:30-44; John 6:1-14 (5 minutes)
- The importance of Voice (30 minutes)

1. Describe a time in church (worship or other activities) when you felt especially connected to

God. Can you talk about what you felt, what made it possible?

2. Describe a time when you felt unheard. What did that feel like?
3. Describe a time when you found your voice. What made it possible?
4. Describe a time when you saw someone no one else noticed. What made you notice that person?

- Lectio Divina (5 minutes)
- Identifying Core Values (30 minutes)

1. What is the most significant core value you hold?
2. How do you see it reflected in the congregation?
3. What is the most significant core value of FCC?

d. How do you see it reflected within yourself?

- Lectio Divina (5 minutes)
- What Might be? (20 minutes)

a. Name one small change within the church structure that would make it easier for you or for someone who is not seen or heard to come enter into the covenantal community.

b. c. d. e. f. g.

Name something that seems impossible, but you find exciting that the church could do. Name one small act that you might do to share your faith in the world

Name one ridiculously big act you wish you could do to share your faith in the world. What are the obstacles that prevent you? That prevent the church?

Name one small thing we could change today?

Name one big thing that seems impossible to change today?

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- Lectio Divina (5 minutes)
  - Write it! Imagine you could change the bylaws (20 Minutes)
    - a. Write three new articles (can be headings only) for FCC based on everything you have heard and everything we have said
    - b. conclusion
- Closing Prayer