

WHY TEACH CONTEMPLATIVE DISCIPLINES IN THE LOCAL CHURCH?

THE PROBLEM

Current discipleship methods are not serving the church well. This failure is evident from the growing number of people rejecting or leaving the church as well as the visible moral and relational failure within the church.



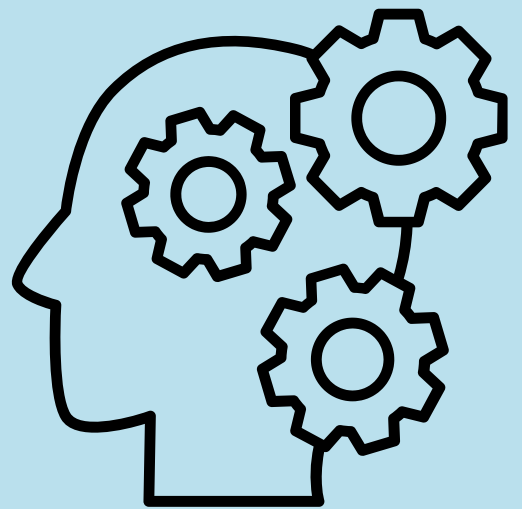
LOSS OF TRANSCENDENCE

In the last 500 years society has undergone a shift toward a deepening secularity resulting in the loss of a sense of transcendence. Human beings increasingly see the world as something physical and tangible with no true reality beyond what we can apprehend rationally.



HUMANS SEEN AS "THINKING THINGS"

The enlightenment's focus on reason, while beneficial and important, has also cultivated a shallow philosophical anthropology, understanding human beings primarily as "thinking things".



KNOWLEDGE AS INFORMATION

Knowledge for "thinking things" is now seen as pieces of information: facts, statements, propositions, or cognitive content. This minimizes or even discounts other forms of knowing which may be more intuitive, relational, or embodied.



These three shifts have elevated the role of teaching in discipleship, primarily cognitive-based propositional models, while minimizing the use of spiritual practices in the context of community with a focus on the experience of the presence of God. A return to the use of contemplative spiritual practices will help to counter this imbalance and allow for more transformative discipleship.

BEST PRACTICES FOR TEACHING CONTEMPLATIVE DISCIPLINES IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

WHAT'S CURRENTLY WORKING



1) AUTHENTIC MODELS IN VISIBLE LEADERSHIP

You teach what you know, but you will reproduce who you are. Authentic, visible modelling is crucial.

2) A FOCUS ON INVITATION OVER IMPLEMENTATION

Cultivating a church ethos of invitation into spiritual practices is more effective than developing and implementing large scale programs.

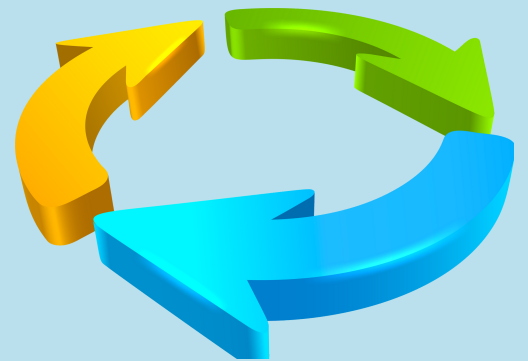


3) FLEXIBILITY AND DISCERNMENT IN CHURCH LEADERSHIP

There is no one correct method. Church leaders must be discerning, flexible, and creative as they seek the Spirit's direction.

4) BLENDING OPPORTUNITY FOR PRACTICE WITH INTENTIONAL TEACHING

People learn and incorporate spiritual practices into their lives by a cycle of teaching, doing, and reflecting.



5) A HIGH VALUE ON PRACTICE IN COMMUNITY

As a reflection of the Trinity, we are relational beings. Transformative practices happen best in the context of communal relationships.

6) THE POWER OF RHYTHMS, STRUCTURES, AND FORMS

The medium is the message. How we do things communicates volumes, for good or bad. The church must take this seriously.



7) THE NEED FOR TIME TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE

The slow work of spiritual formation stands in stark contrast to today's cultural focus on speed and efficiency.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Check out the full project [HERE](#)

Watch the presentation [HERE](#)

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