

# Outreach Priority Strategic Overview:

Building Gospel Bridges to Reach Houston and the World

*Session Presentation on March 22, 2022*



# Building Gospel Bridges to Reach Houston and the World

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## Outreach Session Mandate

*Here, at 5300 Main, we are in a cultural, scientific, medical, academic, financial, economically-diverse hub in the fourth largest city in the nation. In order to truly “live out” Here to Serve, we must make a cultural shift as a church to focus our attention and actions outward.*

### Executive Summary - Outreach Priority

As pastors, leaders, and staff of FPC, we accept as both our mission and our priority the call to carry the Gospel to Houston and the world. While we have been faithful to this mission for more than 185 years, our methods and strategies have changed and evolved. As we assess our present landscape—the needs, challenges, and culture surrounding those we are called to reach, we recognize that we need to create new avenues for the Gospel to reach Houston and the World.

#### The Challenge and The Opportunity

Transformation of our Outreach strategy faces two major challenges:

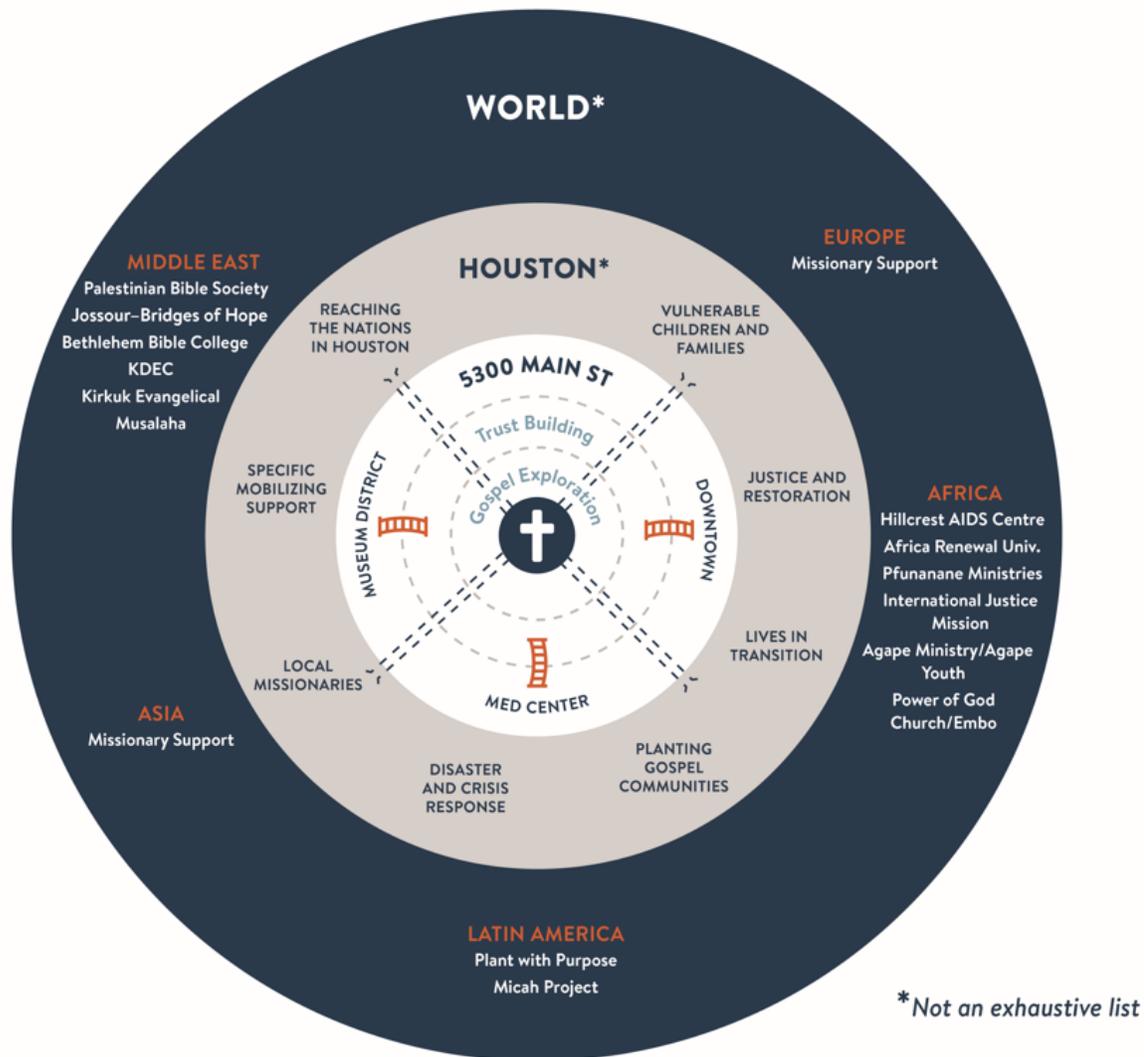
1. The FPC ministry teams function primarily in silos, creating lack of alignment between outreach initiatives and other ministry priorities and activities.
2. Second, those we are trying to reach increasingly view the Church as irrelevant to their lives.

Despite these challenges, we are uniquely positioned to reach non-Christians and those outside of a Christian community:

- God has provided us with a great location, a campus in the center of art, education, commerce, medicine, and innovation—and surrounded by people facing loneliness, loss, isolation, unemployment, poverty, and all the other elements of a broken world, leaving us with immeasurable opportunities to show why the Gospel is the solution to our brokenness.
- We are blessed with a faithful community poised to create a culture that continually looks outward—outside this church, outside our small group, outside our circle of friends and loved ones who believe as we do, to reach those living, working, interacting *adjacent* to us
- We possess the elements—a strong ministry infrastructure (internal) with deep missional contacts and partnerships (external) to build a (unique) outreach ecosystem.

## Constructing A New Model: Building Gospel Bridges

In light of these things, we seek to implement a new outreach model, Building Gospel Bridges, that utilizes our unique attributes to create outreach connections from FPC to adjacent neighborhoods/communities, our city, and globally. These Gospel Bridges will include expansion of existing relationship as well as the “construction” of new bridges with institutions and communities in and around our 5300 Main Street location.



Building Gospel Bridges channels our passion towards addressing needs in the community with Gospel-based solutions using the resources God has given to FPC ultimately for the good of the city and for the sake of the Gospel. Outreach will collaborate Formation, Community and Worship to create an outward-facing ecosystem at FPC, through trainings and sharing of best practices, so that Building Gospel Bridges creates more opportunities for sharing faith and increasing FPC’s Gospel footprint in Houston and the World.

## Building Gospel Bridges: Outreach Strategies for a New Ecosystem

### Strategy 1: Safe Invitational Gospel Spaces

In a world where people increasingly see the Church as irrelevant to their personal lives, or are hostile to the Church, Safe Invitational Gospel Spaces (SIGS) use common interests and passions to build bridges of trust for non-Christians to experience the Gospel in new ways.

### Strategy 2: Online Outreach

With day-to-day activities shifting more and more online, we will provide opportunities to engage with the Gospel in non-threatening ways. Through the creation of online content that speaks to common interests, questions, and life issues, those engaging will be exposed to a glimpse of the Gospel and offered next steps towards starting a journey of faith.

### Strategy 3: Leverage Our Location

Build bridges with the culture-shaping institutions around 5300 Main Street, to seek the good of the city, make Gospel connections, and create opportunities for sharing of faith.

### Strategy 4: Ministry Partners

Support ministry partners with human and monetary resources and build bridges to leverage untapped synergy in ministry work to deepen the engagement between FPC and ministry partners in Houston and the World.

### Strategy 5: Church Planting

Expand outreach impact by facilitating the outreach efforts of ECO church plants and other Gospel communities, both locally and globally.

### Next Steps:

- **Develop collaborative onramps and offramps.** Create alignment between FPC ministry areas, Community, Formation and Worship, so that we can leverage the untapped synergies.
- **Create Med Center Pilot Bridge Team.** This pilot Bridge Team will be aimed towards building Gospel focused bridges to the Med Center.
- **Develop Bridge Teams for Priority Ministry Partner Engagement.** Create pilot Bridge Teams which focus on Priority Ministry Partnerships to create more covenant partner engagement.
- **Develop a plan for the online seeker friendly eco-system.** Evaluate the options available to build an online eco-system and finalize a strategy that aligns with our outreach goals.
- **Initiative Feasibility Study for Coffeeshop Outreach.** Bring a team together with diverse experience to create a Risk-Opportunity profile and recommendations on how to proceed with a coffeeshop space adjacent to FPC's current campus.

## What does Building Gospel Bridges mean?

Building Gospel Bridges is channeling our passion towards addressing need(s) in the community for the good of the city and for the sake of the Gospel. It works in the following 4 step model provides the overarching unifying principle of how outreach works.

- i. **Identify** a need/common interest in the community (We call this exegesis of the culture.)
- ii. **Discern** how the Gospel addresses this need.
- iii. **Prototype** a Gospel based solution to address this need.
- iv. **Invite** people to participate in this mission of God in this community.

In the Bible we often find this 4 step model for outreach. Much of Jesus healing ministry also followed this model – when he encountered sickness, Jesus healed them, then invited the disciples to do the same. In fact, our Ministry Partners follow this model in their own outreach. They start by *identifying* a need in the community that are in: homelessness, lack of education, poverty etc. Then they *discern* how the Gospel calls them to attend to the physical, mental and spiritual needs of their community. They *prototype* a solution that works in their community. Then they *invite* other churches to participate in the mission of God in their community. The churches which are invited participate in the mission by giving funds, providing volunteers and raising awareness. Identifying a common need and addressing it often builds trust with the community, providing more opportunities for exploration of the Gospel and sharing of Faith.

This 4-step model of Gospel Bridge Building also applies to FPC Covenant Partners (CP) in their own neighborhoods. If a CP *Identifies* a neighbor who has a need, e.g. they are lonely and need community, then the CP *Discerns* that God is nudging them to invite their neighbor to dinner. At dinner perhaps God provides an opportunity to talk about faith, giving the neighbor a taste of the Christian community (this is the *Prototype* stage). Then the CP *Invites* other FPC families for a potluck at their home and invites the neighbor as well. Key is to equip and train people in this 4-step model to build Gospel bridges in their neighborhood.

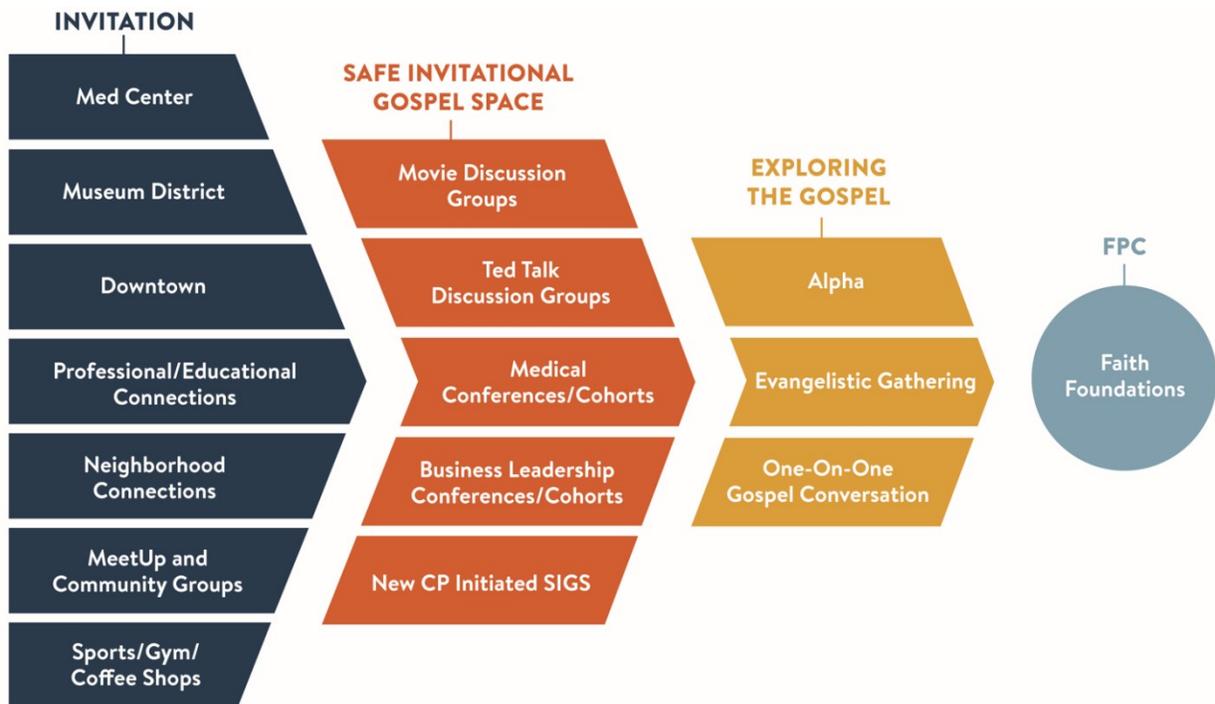
Similarly, the Evangelism work, Project Flourish and Church Planting initiatives can be mapped on to the Gospel Bridge Building 4 step model as this document below would show. We will train FPC Covenant Partners in this model of outreach to facilitate Building Gospel Bridges.

To build an outwards-facing Ecosystem based on this model of Building Gospel Bridge it needs to be undergirded by 3 spiritual and organizational values listed in the Appendix 1. We will need to create training programs, in collaboration with Formation, Community and Worship, for covenant partners to understand this model so they can apply it to their neighborhood, work and church context. Below are the different ways in which the principle of building gospel bridges translates to different FPC outreach strategies.

# Building Gospel Bridges: Outreach Strategies for a New Ecosystem

## Strategy 1: Safe Invitational Gospel Spaces

Create safe spaces for non-Christians to build trust and foster curiosity with the Gospel which will take them on a journey towards exploration of the Gospel and faith in Jesus. We call this a Safe Invitational Gospel Space (SIGS). The SIGS are structured to take people through a journey of faith (See appendix 2 for details on the importance of SIGS and how it works.) When we identify needs/common interest in the culture/neighborhood around us, we can design SIGS is where we are address the needs/common interests around us in a gospel-based way. We want to leverage the common interests of the Covenant partners to create more SIGS so that they can invite their non-Christians and searching Christians to come build trust with the community and to get a glimpse of the Gospel.



Below is a list of current SIGS serving as bridges for non-Christians and searching Christians to become open to exploring the Gospel.

- a. Movie Group
- b. Taco Socials
- c. Ted Talk Discussion Group
- d. Book Group
- e. Alpha

Below are a list of initiatives we need to help our evangelism efforts at FPC.

- **Develop collaborative onramps and offramps.** Create alignment between the ministry areas, Community, Formation, Worship so that we can leverage the untapped synergies. For example, if a small group decides they want to reach out their neighbors to come to Alpha, we could align the rhythms of the small group to onramp into the events at SIGS/Alpha, and then off ramp back to the small groups. It is important to have SIGS to which Covenant Partners can invite their non-Christian and searching Christian friends to potentially start a journey of faith. Effectiveness of SIGS will depend on having easy onramps and offramps from SIGS to the different communities at FPC.
- **3rd Space Coffee Shop and Community Center.** We propose a two-story building as a Seeker friendly space that is outside of but adjacent to the current FPC campus to serve as a coffee shop and also to host seeker-friendly events. This will serve as a bridge for people who think of the Church as being irrelevant to have an opportunity to connect with the FPC community/Alpha (See appendix 3 for more details.) A feasibility study needs to be conducted to determine the cost, complexities and the risks associated with this.
- **Evangelistic Gathering - Alpha+.** Will create an Evangelistic gathering that servers as a landing spot for people coming out of Alpha who may not yet be fully ready to engage with the rhythms of FPC faith family. This will follow a format similar to Alpha – start with dinner, have a short live/video presentation, then have a discussion. The new element will be to add a question and answer time followed by a listening prayer time leading to contemplative worship. Matt Lee will serve as a consultant to creating this experience.
- **CP initiated SIGS.** Outreach will collaborate with Formation and Community Life to identify and equip FPC members to create SIGS around their own recreational and professional interests. For example, FPC has multiple basketball courts. CPs who feel called to use the basketball space as a SIGS will be equipped and coached to do so. We will start a training program for Covenant Partners to start their own SIGS using FPC facilities or their own homes.

## Strategy 2: Online Outreach

Create a seeker friendly online ecosystem with content that draws non-Christians in using common interests, passions and questions and then gives people a glimpse of the Gospel, with next steps towards starting on a journey of faith.

Create an online eco-system which will draw people who are interested in work related topics like Business, Cultural artifacts (art, movies, books etc.) and then point that back to the Gospel. The goal is to connect people to communities where they can start a journey of faith. The online world is broad and ever changing, offering a whole range of

eco-systems from a Podcast to Metaverse. The first step is to develop a plan of what kind of online eco-system would align with our broader Outreach strategy at FPC.

### **Strategy 3: Leverage our Location - 5300 Main St Centric Outreach**

God in His providence has given FPC 5300 Main Street as our home base, a great location which is the confluence of multiple culture making institutions of Houston—the Med Center, Museum District, Downtown, Education Centers etc. God has also given FPC diverse resources and assets: generosity of our congregation; an entrepreneurial DNA; extensive ministry partnerships. We want to leverage our gifts to seek the good of the city, build bridges with the institutions around the 5300 Main Street and proclaim the Gospel in Houston and the World.

Create Initiatives which help to build bridges to the institutions and the communities around the 500 Main Street address in a ways that collaborate to find Gospel opportunities to serve, partner and seek the good of the city. This bridge building will increase FPC's Gospel footprint with the institutions and the communities around the 77004 neighborhood.

- **Create Med Center Pilot Bridge Team.** God has blessed FPC with a large number of highly talented Medical Professionals who have large circles of influence in the Med Center. The pilot Bridge Teams will be aimed towards building Gospel bridges to the Med Center. We expect to learn lessons from our experience with this pilot team and replicate creation of bridge teams in other institutions around the 5300 Mains Street location. A bridge team to Downtown would be enormously beneficial to help covenant partners engage with their peers at work for the good of the city and the sake of the Gospel. (see appendix 4 for more details.)
- **Project Flourish.** Project Flourish has the scope to build bridges across Houston and the World in terms of the impact of the beneficiaries of Project Flourish contestants. At the same time Project Flourish also has enormous potential to galvanize FPC Covenant partners to build bridges with their colleagues at work whether at Med Center or Downtown or other Institutions around 5300 Main St. We want to position Project Flourish not just as a mechanism to offer grants for the good of the city, but also position Project Flourish as a mechanism to build synergies between the bridge teams we build with The Med Center, Downtown etc. (See prior point for details on the Med Center bridge team.) This way Project Flourish is creating a culture of social entrepreneurship across Houston while simultaneously leveraging the latent talents of FPC covenant partners to build bridges with their work peers and the corporations they work at.
- **Create Bridge Team to reach 77004 Zip Code Apartments.** 77004 has a number of apartment complexes with people working in and around Downtown. This is an opportunity at FPC's doorstep. In collaboration with the NextGen Pastor and team, develop a bridge team to reach out to the 77004 apartment complexes.

## Strategy 4: Ministry Partnership as Bridge Building Initiatives

In a world that is hurting, broken and in need of the Gospel healing, we want to support ministry partners with human and monetary resources and build bridges of synergy in ministry work deepening the engagement between FPC and ministry partners. We want to build bridges with Ministry Partnerships in a way that more FPC Covenant partners engage with the Church communities both in Houston and the World.

- **Global & Local Engagement:** Strengthen the bridges with our Global and Local partners. Learn best practices from our Ministry Partners which may be applicable to our own Gospel bridge building efforts. Share our own best practices with our Ministry Partners. Empower our covenant partners to engage with Ministry Partnerships.
- **Create Bridge Team to Reach the Nations Locally:** Open FPC's hospitality, both facilities and covenant partners, to international students and refugees in Houston, building relationships and through them reaching out to the Nations.
- **Build Bridges with Alpha and other Bridge Teams:** Non-Christians, especially the younger generation, appreciate work that helps under-served neighborhoods. In collaboration with Alpha and other Bridge Team, we want to provide non-church members with opportunities for service projects and engagement with local mission partners. Serving together builds meaningful relationships and helps one to discover God's abundance.
- **Collaborative SIGS:** work with Mission Partners to find ways to create collaborative SIGS both within the FPC campus and/or outside of it.
- **Local Mission Partner Visit:** We want to have regular FPC priority partner site visit on a monthly basis, departing from FPC or meeting at the ministry site.

## Strategy 5: Church Planting as Initiatives to Plant Gospel Communities

Expand outreach impact by facilitating the outreach efforts of ECO church plants and other Gospel communities, both locally and globally.

- **Planting Gospel Communities in Houston:** FPC continue to partner through the Houston Church Planting Network Residency to plant Gospel communities around Houston. We can play a significant role in the planting 8-10 per year throughout the Houston area by financially "sponsoring" HCPN's Finishing Residents.
- **Church plants in Texas/World:** We want to support and sponsor ECO church plants in Texas and the US. We also want to build bridges with the Church plants of our ministry partnerships around the world in collaboration with our Ministry Partnership Team.

## **Appendix 1: Spiritual and Organizational Values for Outward-facing Gospel Bridge Building Ecosystem**

For us to have an outward-facing Gospel Bridge Building Ecosystem at FPC we need the following spiritual and organizational values. Spiritual values are for the staff and congregation. Organization values are meant for the staff in order to help leverage the latent synergies, learn from each other and solve problems at the root cause.

### **Spiritual Value 1: Prayerful Listening**

In all that we do, we will prayerfully listen to what God is already doing out there in the world around us. We ask God to open our eyes to the needs out in the community. We ask God to show which needs He is calling us to address. In Ministry Partner work this means that the MIT is prayerfully listening to which Ministry Partners we want to prioritize. The Covenant partner prayerfully asks which Ministry Partner God is calling them to partners with. In Evangelism this means prayerfully listening to who God is calling us to engage with (like Phillip listens to the Holy Spirit's promptings in Acts 8).

### **Spiritual Value 2: Christlike Hospitality**

Christlike hospitality is the act of extending unconditional hospitality in a Christlike way to the world around us for the good of the City and the sake of the Gospel. To have Christlike Hospitality is to extend agenda-less hospitality without ever treating people like projects. Whether it is persons we encounter while volunteering with Ministry Partnerships or a colleague we are trying to share our faith with. We also take on the posture of Christlike Hospitality when we open our facilities to be a space of hospitality for Ministry Partners and non-Christians, when a FPC covenant member opens up their house to host a gathering space for Evangelism, or when our covenant partners engage with the hospitality space our ministry partners have created in their own neighborhood.

### **Spiritual Value 3: Contextualized Conviction-Filled Conversation**

Our conviction is that following Jesus is the best way to live life for the good of the city, for peace in the world, and for eternal life. But we want to communicate this conviction with care. We see in the scriptures that the way Peter speaks with conviction to Jewish context in Act 2 is different from the way Paul speaks with conviction to the Athenian context in Act 17. We want to equip our covenant partners to communicate our convictions in ways which are caring and contextualized to the needs of the community they are ministering to.

### **Organizational Value 1: Sum of the Whole is Greater than the Sum of the Parts**

Outreach has multiple ministries under it – Ministry Partnerships, Evangelism, Project Flourish, Church Planting. If each ministry operates in silos from each other, we lose some important synergies and points of leverage. To operate according to the value of the sum of the whole being greater than the sum of parts, is to leverage the synergies between the ministries. For example, when we do Alpha we could promote a Ministry

Partner, this way the non-Christians get a more wholistic view of how the Gospel addresses societal problems. This principle of leveraging synergies also applies to the work between the 4 priorities. For example, a small group could decide that a key part of their spiritual rhythm would be to invest in the work of a local Ministry Partner and to create an Alpha experience focused on that context.

### **Organizational Value 2: Cross-Pollination**

Cross-pollination is a horticultural term where different strains of species of plant are pollinated to create more resilient fruit. In an organizational context to cross-pollinate is to look at lessons learned and best practices from other ministry areas and apply it to ones own. For example, in Evangelism we emphasis a lot on listening skills, aspects of this could apply to Formation, Community and Worship too. Our ministry partner Attack Poverty does on-the-ground listening well, we could learn from them.

### **Organizational Value 3: Upstream Problem Solving**

Often in organizations, we are tempted to live in the tyranny of the present moment and we attempt to address problems as they occur. This means that the symptoms are treated, but the deeper root cause is often left unattended. Upstream problems solving is to not just address the problem, but go deeper to look at the root cause and address the root cause so the problem does not occur. For example, if getting volunteers is a problem, the symptomatic way of addressing the problem is to make more announcements and phone calls to get people here. The upstream problem solving solution is to bake volunteering into the Formation and Worship rhythms, so people understand that a part of our Formation in Christ is to volunteer with Ministry Partners, at FPC, in their neighborhoods. This upstream problems solving needs to be applied to ministry areas within Outreach and also in the engagement with other priorities.

## **Appendix 2: What are People’s Hurdles to Faith? How to Overcome them?**

### **Hurdles to Faith:**

Skeptics, Nones, De-Churched and Non-Christians. These people typically fall into one, or more, of the following categories.

1. Church as irrelevant: these people usually believe the church does not speak to things they care about in life. It is irrelevant to their day-to-day existence.
2. Church as hurtful: these people have usually been hurt by the church or church community in the past.
3. Church as a negative: these people have as negative emotional bias (“triggered”) toward the church. Generally, this bias is fueled by misunderstandings about the church which culture fosters.

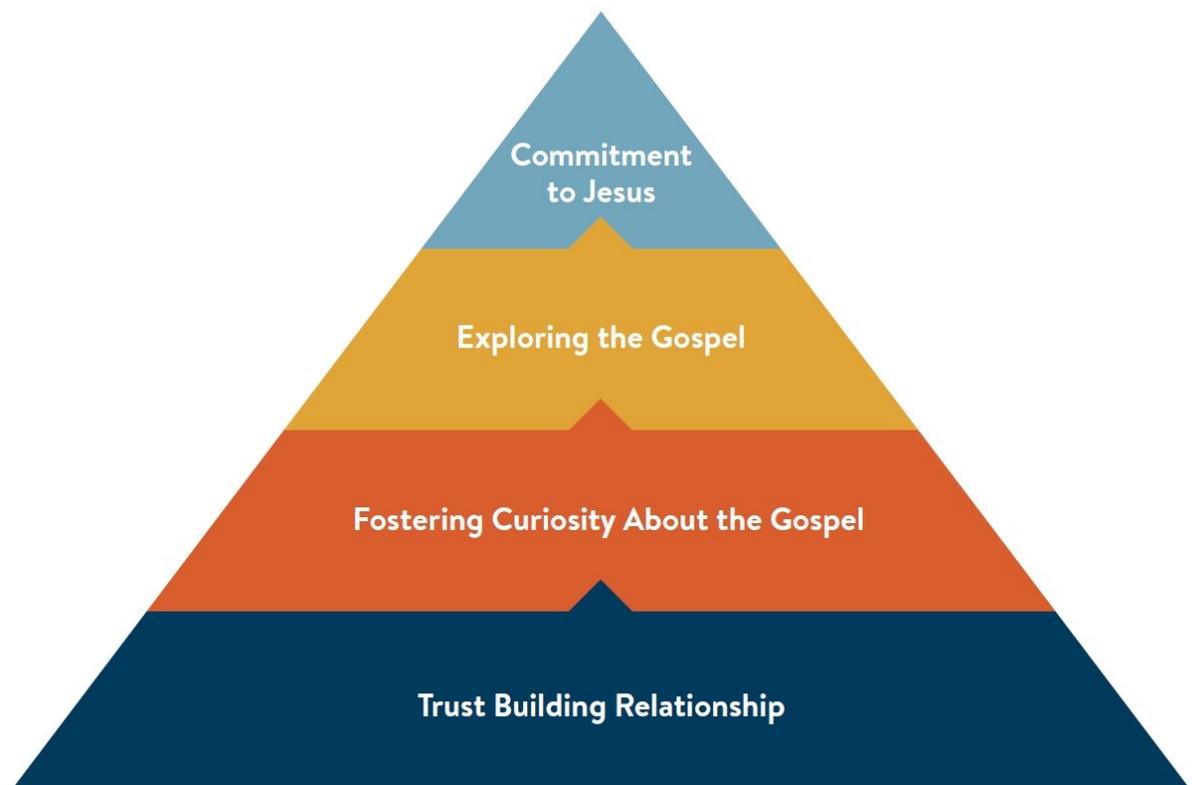
Sociological researchers have a whole range of names for each of these categories of people outside the Church. For ease of discussion the document will refer to people in all of these categories as ‘**Church-Negative**’ persons. So this frames the question, “how does someone who is Church-negative become Church-positive?”

### **How does one who is “Church-negative” become “Church-positive” and come to faith?**

From Tim Keller to Barna Research to practitioners of Evangelism at InterVarsity there is broad consensus that the first step in someone’s journey to faith is for them to develop trust with a Church community. Then their journey to faith progresses through multiple stages. This section will detail these stages in the journey of faith. Below are the stages people typically go through in their journey to faith.

#### **Journey Approach to Coming to Faith**

Journey to faith often goes through multiple stages of developing trust, fostering curiosity and exploration of the Gospel.



- 1. Developing Trust:** Trust is a crucial step in one’s journey to faith. If someone does not trust the messenger, they will not listen to the message. The first stage of Gospel sharing is developing trust. Not treating people as projects but being genuinely interested in what they care about and connecting over common interests, concerns, and passions. Trust building engagements start the process of turning someone from a “Church-negative” to at the very least “Church-

neutral.” John’s gospel, ch. 13:34-35 is the foundation of Leslie Newbigins statement that “the church is the hermeneutic of the Gospel.” When someone trusts the community of Christians it sets them on an on-ramp towards trusting in Jesus.

2. **Fostering Curiosity/Openness:** Having developed trust with the church community, typically there is a something that piques their curiosity towards the Gospel. Often it tends to be questions like, “How does this person have so much joy and peace? I want this!” They want this joy and peace and are curious about its source. This is where individual Christians sharing how faith in Jesus helps them solve problems in their life by giving them love, joy and peace is crucial. This is relational evangelism. This is where the person who is Church-Negative becomes a seeker and is ready to truly explore the Gospel.
3. **Exploration of the Gospel:** A seeker may now be open to an invitation to a space like Alpha to explore faith in a way that is non-coercive and values and respects their choice. This is where they truly start to consider coming to a place of commitment to faith.

The approach outlined above is a contextualized application of the biblical multi-stage evangelism model we see in 1 Cor 3:6 (where Paul plants, Apollos waters and God creates growth). Helping FPC Covenant Partners (CPs) understand the stages people go through in coming to faith is important. Outreach will collaborate with Formation and Community Life to equip to be on mission in their circles of influence using the following model and values.

### **Gospel Values in this Journey Approach**

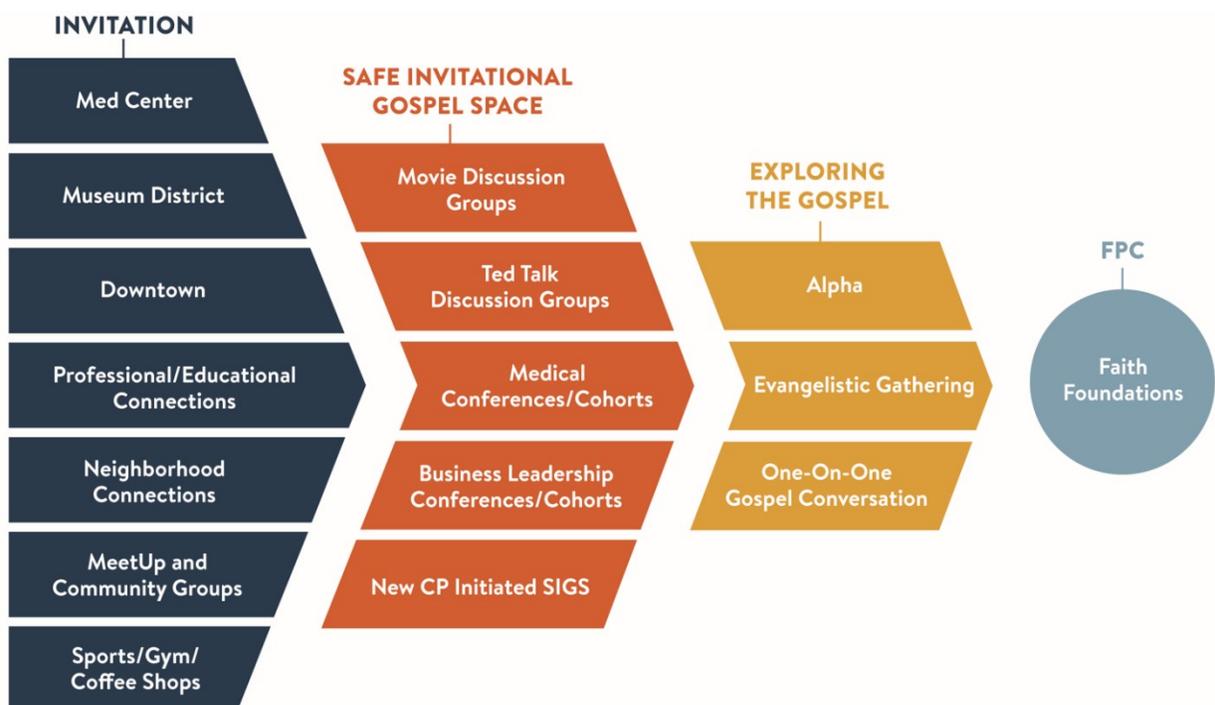
Below are the values that will guide us as we journey with people towards faith.

1. **Listening:** to the people and culture around us is important to gain trust. This listening is also about listening to what God is up to in the world and the lives of the people around us.
2. **Prayer:** the fuel for all outreach work. Prayer filled engagements are where we are partnering with God’s work in the world around us.
3. **Caring, Conviction Filled Gospel Conversations and Actions:** crucial because we want to share with conviction about how our relationship with Jesus has made all the difference in the world for us. However, we want to share our convictions in a way that is caring towards the person we are building a trusting relationship with. Our actions are a crucial part of our outreach which reflect our caring conviction, pointing back to the love of God whether it is giving of our time or our monetary resources.

## How do Safe Invitational Gospel Space (SIGS) work?:

**Safe Invitational Gospel Space:** a Safe Invitational Gospel Space (SIGS) is a place of trust building. Safe Invitational Gospel Space is a community built around a common interest(s). Common interests could be recreational like movies, books, Ted Talks, Sports. Or it could be professional development related topics—business leadership, medical career etc.

1. The goal is to build communities of trust around common interests which then leads to conversations about the Gospel which could lead to curiosity and openness to the Gospel. This is where if someone has a -50 Negative Emotional Bias towards the Church community, positive engagement in this safe space hopefully takes them to a -40 or a -30 by giving them a different vision for what a trust building church community could look like.
2. Say a 100 people come to these events, but only 10 people may respond positively to the next invitation (to Alpha). This is a win. Of the 90 that did not respond to taking the next step to Alpha, they at the very least had a reduction in the negativity bias (from -50 to -40!). That still is a win because God may bring another person/community to take them to the next stage (1 Cor 3:6).
3. At FPC we have multiple stories of people turning from Church-negative to Church-positive and engaging at FPC. Below is a pictorial representation of what this model looks like.



- a. **Current SIGS:** Barna suggested in its 2021 Evangelism report that having a safe space for people to get familiar with the Gospel is critical for evangelism. FPC has been doing this since 2017, so we have a number of best practices on how to make safe spaces work.
  - i. The SIGS we have tried so far are the Movie Group, Ted Talk Group, Taco Socials etc.
  - ii. We have used MeetUp extensively to promote our events and create a sense of community.
  - iii. For the past 4 Alpha classes the majority of our non-Christians have come from these SIGS/MeetUp engagements.
- b. **Synergy with FPC's Strengths & Mission:** a successful journey to faith rarely begins with an "apologetics argument" for Christianity. For the reasons described in Section 1, many of the Church-Negative persons, if not most, will be hostile to the idea of a religious or church event. Thus, the need for the SIGS. How can CPs be equipped to engage Church Negative friends? The following are examples how FPC can leverage its strengths to further its mission.
  - i. A movie night or leadership conference allows a CP to invite friends who might be Church Negative in a non-threatening way and makes use of the FPC campus and/or human capital.
  - ii. Many CPs struggle with evangelism because their social circles are frequently made up of church members. SIGS give CPs a space in which to know and understand non-Christian and build relationships with people outside their church circles.
  - iii. FPC has a great location and many resources within its physical space. These can be leveraged to create SIGS.

### Appendix 3 – Coffee Shop and Community Center model

Because we live in a culture where people do not come to Church, taking the Church to the people is the key. A crucial part of this is the creation of a "third space" i.e., a coffeeshop & community center. For example, Churches like Ecclesia, even when they were at Taft Street, have always used their coffee shop as a way of generating foot traffic and creating interest from non-church members. (We see this model even with Glassell and Kinder).

**Synergy with FPC's Strengths and Mission:** increasing FPC's footprint in this neighborhood requires that FPC be seen as a community that invests in its neighbors. As Montrose/Mid-Town real estate is becoming more expensive, having a coffee shop with good parking will be a great option for community outreach in the neighborhood especially given the high concentration of young and single people who reside here.

- i. By having the coffee shop outside of the main FPC building, but close to it, we are creating some bridges for the Church-negatives to engage with the events in the coffee shop and hopefully turn Church-positive as they get to know more people from the Church community
- ii. A community center is a great way for evangelistic outreach. We can utilize it for Alpha, movie groups and any other seeker friendly event.
- iii. A church affiliated coffee shop can make FPC more attractive and less intimidating to younger generations and would hopefully provide a pathway for them to join FPC.
- iv. The community center space could also serve as a space to have an Outreach Service with an evangelistic focus.

## Appendix 4: Why is 5300 Centric Outreach important? How will Bridge Teams Work?

God has providentially given us 5300 Main Street as an our 'habitus' for us to engage in mission around us. We want to build bridges to the culture creating institutions right in our neighborhood – Art, Education, Med Center, Ion Innovation etc. To be on mission is to go out into the world in the name of Jesus and seek the good of the City in our immediate neighborhood. Sometimes we associate the word mission to refer to ministering to the socio-economically disenfranchised but, biblically speaking, missions is a broad term. When Paul went to Athens on mission (Acts 17), he was speaking to the cultural and intellectual elite in the city. At the 5300 location God has placed us in a neighborhood that is the nexus of the art, education, medicine, business and innovation centers of Houston. We are uniquely positioned to engage in mission to these culture creating institutions. As Presbyterians, we see human ability for innovation and creativity in art, science, business etc., as part of God's blessing for humanity. As a denomination, we see value in collaboration and seeking the good of the city for the glory of God.

**Current engagement and gaps:** FPC's current engagement around 5300 Main Street location is with Main Street Ministries and Nehemiah Center. We need to continue to invest and engage in those ministries. However, we also need to engage with the cultural centers (Museum, Med Center, Education etc.) which are a part of being in the 5300 Main Street area.

### **How will the bridge teams work?**

- a. Purpose of Bridge Teams is to identify ways to engage with the different centers of culture creation (Med Center, Downtown, Museum, Education etc.) around the 5300 Main Street location. We would need separate task forces for each engagement. Some of these engagements may look like mission outreach, others may look like a SIGS. The Task Force will do the following to identify outreach engagements.
  - v. Identify a need/common ground in the culture (exegesis of the culture)
  - vi. Discern/Determine how the Gospel address the need
  - vii. Prototype a Gospel based solution to address this need (including figuring out a funding model)
  - viii. Test the solution and get feedback
    1. Not all engagements will achieve the hoped-for goals and will need to be re-envisioned or retired based on this feedback.