

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on May 27, 2018:**

"TCAT Results and Plan for New Hope (Exodus 13:17-22)"

[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows the results of the Transformational Church Assessment and what our next steps will be as a local congregation.]

Notes

Introduction:

- This is what we will cover today as a result of the TCAT assessment test.
- Ted Johnston put together the results of the test and formulated a 5 page plan.
- Pastor Craig has reduced it down to one page – e-mail him to get a copy of it.
- So, today we'll be going over the results of our TCAT assessment test.
 - 3 Primary Challenges
 - 1 Primary Objective for our congregation
 - 7 Key Priorities (Initiatives)
 - 5 Steps Forward

Our 3 Primary Challenges:

1. Consensus of New Hope has not been able to connect with the community that surrounds our place of worship.
 - Because of the many churches here in Eagle Rock, we will have a challenge here in spite of what we have tried to accomplish.
 - Now, a challenge is good for us, when we take it in a positive light.
2. Small groups haven't connected with newcomers from the focused community.
3. Though the congregation understands the importance of having a focused community and has tried to find one, it hasn't yet.
 - So, if Eagle Rock isn't our focused community, then we need to identify the right one.

1 Primary Objective:

- Identify a focused community near its place of meeting where focused missional outreach will lead to unchurched residents in that community becoming part of New Hope where they then develop as disciples of Jesus.

- We've talked about that in growing churches only 11% of the members said that they had a flourishing relationship with Jesus.
- And when we're in a flourishing relationship with Jesus, by definition we will be making disciples.
- All of us here are in that discipling process.

- And when we're in a flourishing relationship with Jesus then the fruits of the Spirit – love, joy and peace flow out of us, which causes us to relate differently with others.
- So ultimately, as we grow in our relationship with Jesus, we will reach out and extend God's love into the community around us.
- And ultimately transforming that community.

- That's the path that the disciples and apostles set forth upon and we should continue on that same path.
- Now the starting point of this is to identify that community since it hasn't been Eagle Rock.

7 Key Initiatives to minimize our challenges:

1. Refresh our congregation's understanding of what mission is to encourage member involvement in outreach and help them understand the importance of NH identifying and moving into a focus community.
2. By June 5th determine criteria to be used in selecting target community and relaunch the congregation ASAP.
3. After identifying the community, determine the needs of the community and use congregation's existing prayer programs to provide intercessory prayer related to those needs.
4. Reconstitute small groups to strengthen relationships internally and to equip the congregation to reach out to the unchurched in focused community.
5. Develop a welcome plan with a hospitality team that will implement a visitor follow-up program including invitation to meals, small groups, etc.
6. Help members establish and build relationships with neighbors, friends, co-workers leading to inviting them to church services/activities/events by which they can become acquainted with congregation.
7. Encourage existing leaders to raise up future leaders by implementing a leadership apprentice program.

5 Steps Forward:

1. Determine location and nature of a focused community by June 5th and identify the criteria for community assessment.

- Pastor Craig remembered from his seminary days that Sam Butler, a pastor in the Michigan area, wrote his thesis on engaging the community and doing a community assessment.
 - So he gave Sam a call for more information and he told him about a primary source he used about how to engage the community that pastor Craig then located and studied.
 - So now the community assessment tool is in place.
2. Refine/adopt/publicize discipleship pathway – having a balanced disciple-making outwardly focused missional strategy.
- One of the objectives of our Flourishing Care Groups is to identify the discipleship pathway.
 - And more importantly, then for each of us to identify where we are in that process.
 - And that pathway is to enhance a not-yet-believer into become a believer and a new disciple of Jesus.
 - And then nurturing that new believer into a ministry worker, where they are actually serving in our church and/or our community.
 - And then ultimately going from a ministry worker into a ministry leader and then finally a leader who can multiply other leaders.
 - Now this pathway will have its ups and downs, good moments and bad moments just like our flourishing relationship with Jesus has on a day to day basis.
 - Pastor Craig was once asked, “What’s the definition of a successful church?”
 - He said, the better question would be, “What’s the definition of a faithful church?”
 - Now we know that Peter and Paul were ultimately beheaded in Rome.
 - Those in the first century who were on the Christian leading-edge didn’t always end up in what the Western world define as successful.
 - So, we aren’t called to be successful as corporate America might define it.
 - But we are called to be faithful, and as we live out that life of faith, exercising the gifts of the Spirit, our flourishing relationship with Jesus grows.
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 - Now we have 30 to 40 people interested in being a part of our Flourishing Care Groups.
 - Our goal is to get it down into groups of 8 or 9.
 - Right now we have Rod and Brenda Gula have opened up their home on Saturday night starting at 6:30 PM –the meetings will be twice a month.
 - Right now the Stevens, the Hammes and the Gulas will be meeting together, but there are still a few open spots.
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 - There will be a group meeting at the Kuhlman’s home on Wednesday evening where so far 6 will be attending.
 - And JR and Hazel Roberts home will have a meeting on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 PM where 8 people are committed.
 - And there will be a group meeting here Sunday at New Hope after services for those who live a ways from this area to come here in the evenings.
 - Pastor Craig will lead every one of these meetings so there will be the same message and objectives delivered in each group.

- Now what will be different in each group will be determined by the conversation of those involved.
 - And then as our Care Groups mature, we will then move to a missional strategy where we reach out and invite neighbors and friends to participate in our group.
3. Multiply small groups into a missional direction and develop new small group leaders and facilitators. Must embrace and incorporate new people and the multiplication of small groups.
 - Initially pastor Craig will lead all the groups.
 - But given time, leaders to take over each group will emerge through the process.
 4. Recruit and train a hospitality team or an assimilation team to implement a visitor assimilation strategy connected to new location.
 5. Implement a leader apprentice program that involves all New Hope ministries.

Focused Community:

- This past year, since coming here, pastor Craig hadn't been motivated to make a change from Eagle Rock and find a new focused community.
 - When Ted Johnston came out here three weeks ago, he recommended that Craig plot out on a map where our members live and then determine which community is centrally located.
 - Pastor Craig had already done the plotting of where our members live, but then determined the next morning where the center community was located – and it was Monrovia.
 - Pastor Craig's coach Randy Bloom was very encouraged to hear that Craig and his wife were already living in the same town that was going to become the focused community, because that's so important.
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- So pastor Craig is now in the process of transferring his membership in the Rotary Club from Pasadena to Monrovia.
 - He has been there for two meetings already and the mayor of Monrovia is a Rotarian.
 - The demographics of Monrovia match our congregation's demographics, which church planters say is very important.
 - Now pastor Craig realizes that our members who live on the west side of the area are going to have more traveling to do.
 - He is going to make sure that transportation will be provided to those who need it – we're not going to leave any behind.
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- This Tuesday at the Monrovia Rotary club, pastor Craig sat between two gentlemen at the table and one of them wanted to know some key things about the church he is pastoring.
 - Pastor Craig told him our missional statement: "Loving God and loving others without any fear, shame, guilt or doubt."
 - He got a big grin on his face and said, "That sounds appealing."
 - He and his wife haven't found a church to attend in Monrovia since moving there about 2 years ago, and said that he would have some interest in our church.

- So pastor Craig gave him his New Hope card and thought he and his wife might be a potential invite to join a Care Group.
- Pastor Craig intends to get involved in the Monrovia community and to reach out to civic leaders and others. He's done this in the past as a part of his work in the financial field.
- And also every Friday night they shut down the main street in Monrovia and throw a carnival.
- Monrovia all seems to be coming together for us.
- But it's not going to happen immediately – it's going to take time and our patience for this move to occur.

Summary of what we just covered:

- 3 Primary Challenges:
 1. Unable to connect w/community
 2. Small G's haven't connected newcomers
 3. Haven't identified focus community
- 1 Primary Objective:

Identify a focus community to develop disciples of Jesus
- 7 Key Initiatives:
 1. Member outreach
 2. Focus assessment/relaunch
 3. Determine/pray for focus needs
 4. Small Groups
 5. Hospitality (assimilation) team
 6. Help members build relationships
 7. Start leader mentor (apprentice) program
- 5 Steps Forward:
 1. Identify and assess focus community
 2. Adopt discipleship pathway
 3. Multiply small groups and leaders
 4. Recruit and train hospitality team
 5. Implement leader apprentice program

So, what can I do, as a New hope member?

1. Become part of the Grace Communion-Monrovia Community Assessment Team (join Pastor Craig in doing those interviews with community leaders)
 - Hopefully as a result of this, we will be able to identify and locate a meeting place for our church there.
 - Pastor Craig is hoping that we can meet as a church in some public venue like a school or YMCA or fire hall, etc.

- And we're going to realign our church name with our denomination name when we move.
 - We will call ourselves Grace Communion of Monrovia.
2. Join a Flourishing Care Group.
 - We now have 4 groups of 10 people each for a total of 40 people.
 - By including friends and neighbors, we'd like to expand it to 8 groups of 10 each for a total of 80 people.
 3. Are you gifted at being a part of a welcoming/hospitality team to participate with new people attending our church? (Discuss/e-mail Pastor Craig)
 4. As a ministry leader – who can I develop as an /apprentice to replace or multiply me?
 5. As a ministry worker – am I sensing a call or gift to be developed as a ministry leader? (Discuss/email Pastor Craig)

Exodus 13:17-22 – God leads the people with cloud by day, fire by night after parting the Red Sea to lead Israel out of Egypt to the Promised Land.

17) Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, “The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.” 18) Hence God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea; and the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land of Egypt.

19) Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, “God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones from here with you.” 20) Then they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness. 21) The Lord was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. 22) He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

Closing comments:

- So the point is – God is always leading.
- Now, there's a real distinction between their story and our story.
- Today, we don't see a pillar of cloud or a pillar of fire.
- As Ted Johnston said, “The Holy Spirit isn't going to send you a postcard telling us where we should go.
- So in this day and age we have to discern, we have to make educated choices, we have to pray, we have to stay in relationship with God and then live out His commission.
- And if we're doing those things, Jesus said that He will always be with us.
- And since we know that He is always with us, there is no reason to fear or to be concerned.

- That's why pastor Craig has shared with us some of those markers this past years that has led him to believe that a change for us is important.
- Also he has gone back to 1997 and read each monthly report concerning New Hope up to April of this year which shows that we've been in membership decline.
- We've had more funerals than weddings, we've had more funerals than baptisms, we've had more people moving away than moving in.
- Going back just 5 years, our average attendance and our average giving has dropped by about 65%.
- Now, pastor Craig doesn't want to be the pastor that turns the lights out on our former Headquarters church.

- So he is going to invite all of us to join in that transforming process to move forward and glorify God.
- So pastor Craig is inviting us to participate, to be involved, and to pray so that we will move forward and invite others into that flourish relationship we have with Jesus.
- And in this process, we will transform our community. Amen.

Closing prayer