

# MissionNorthwest

Resourcing and developing churches that connect people with Jesus Christ

## Leadership Learning Communities 2024 Resource List

### INTRODUCTION

During 2024 there are three resources that every LLC is being requested to examine. The first is Tyler Staton's book on prayer, an emphasis we believe is imperative for the renewal of the church in America.

The second one is Gary Comer's practical guidance for engaging in effective relational evangelism in our current post-Christendom era. A follow-up book, written by Dr. Comer, advocates for the Re-missioning of the church by elevating evangelism as the church's pre-eminent purpose coupled with equipping every Christ-follower to effectively share his, or her, faith. These two resources (or, their equivalent YouTube lessons) form a solid curriculum for strengthening a church's efforts in evangelism and discipleship.

The third resource focuses on the continuing dechurched taking place in the U.S. This work, *The Great Dechurched*, moves beyond raising awareness about this disturbing trend. It offers practical wisdom for how the church may reach each of the various types of dechurched population groups.

Mentor Pastors will encourage their respective LLCs to fill out the remainder of the schedule with a resource or study that the LLC discerns to be helpful in their ministries. The following proposed schedule may be altered as the LLC determines.

A reminder that these resources are encouraged for equipping pastors to lead their churches well.

Additional study recommendations are listed at the end of the schedule.

### JANUARY

***Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools: An Invitation to the Wonder and Mystery of Prayer*** by Tyler Staton

**Amazon Description:** Staton addresses common roadblocks to prayer and gives you the confidence to come to God just as you are. Through timely biblical teaching, powerful storytelling, and insights on historic Christian practices, Staton gives you the tools you need to:

- Express your doubts and disappointments about prayer

- Discover and practice multiple postures of prayer, including silence, persistence, confession, and more
- Understand and embrace the wonder and mystery of prayer in everyday life
- Open or reopen the line of communication with your Creator and experience afresh his divine power on earth

## FEBRUARY

**Praying Like Monks** Part Two of Tyler Staton  
Or, choose a resource to review and discuss.

## MARCH

No resource selection for March due to Easter preparation. Use this month to catch up with each other, pray for Holy Week & Resurrection Sunday preparation. Discussing a short leadership article, a chapter in a book or a podcast is an option.

## APRIL

**Soul Whisperer: Why the Church Must Change the Way It Views Evangelism** by Gary Comer  
**Amazon Description:** Soul Whisperer shifts the emphasis from “telling” to a “drawing” paradigm. It develops biblically the pattern of Jesus (the ultimate “Soul Whisperer”), who did not give static presentations but rather customized his words to each hearer. By learning his ways, our words, too, can have pinpointed impact! Christians will discover how to draw out first, in order to read their friends and discern the relevant appeal of the gospel. In this way, the style is far more dynamic. It adapts! Understanding the non-believer’s unique starting point will determine a distinct path. By creating a conversation about spiritual influence and what is involved in faith formation, this book charts ways for Christians to go deeper in evangelistic relationships. Most importantly, *Soul Whisperer* infuses skills that will shape a more Christ-likened missional disciple.

– OR –

**Soul Whisperer Concept Series** YouTube training vides. Consists of 11 sessions, approximately 7 minutes each. No cost.  
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgvDTarVIkItMqNGSkFGfOwGQSIOMA79>

## MAY

**Soul Whisperer, Part Two**

Optional follow-up study.

**ReMission: Rethinking How Church Leaders Create Movement** by Gary Comer  
**Amazon Description:** If the church is to be healthy and thriving, its members must gain the needed know-how and skill sets to meaningfully engage with their increasingly difficult-to-reach unsaved neighbors, communities, and cultures in productive conversations about the good news of Jesus Christ. In other words, there must be a re-missioning of the body of Christ. ReMission practically

equips leaders with tried-and-tested solutions that can outwardly mobilize a congregation, small group, or nonprofit ministry, and substantially increase the spiritual vitality of the body of Christ, both locally and globally.

– OR –

**ReMission – A podcast interview of Gary Comer by David Joannes**

<https://davidjoannes.com/058garycomer/>

Or, choose a resource to review and discuss.

## SEPTEMBER

LLC Chooses the Resource to Study Together

## OCTOBER

***The Great Dechurching: Who's Leaving, Why Are They Going, and What Will It Take to Bring Them Back?*** By Jim Davis, Michael Gorman and Ryan Burge

**Amazon Description:** Jim Davis and Michael Graham have commissioned the largest and most comprehensive study of dechurching in America by renowned sociologists Dr. Ryan Burge and Dr. Paul Djupe. *The Great Dechurching* takes the insights gleaned from this study to drill down on how exactly people are dechurching with respect to beliefs, behavior, and belonging. This book gives the church in America its first ever deep dive into the dechurched phenomenon. You'll learn about the dechurched through a detailed sketch of demographics, size, core concerns, church off-ramps, historical roots, and the gravity of what is at stake. Then you'll explore what can be done to slow the bleed, engage the pertinent issues winsomely and wisely, and hopefully re-church some of the dechurched.

– OR –

***The Great De-Churching*** Carey Nieuwhof YouTube interview | Jim Davis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Slk8njY1oM&t=238s>

## NOVEMBER

***The Great Dechurching*** Part Two

Or, choose a resource to review and discuss.

## DECEMBER

**No resource selection for December.** Use this month to complete a book that took longer to read than expected, or catch up with one another and reflect back on the previous months.

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR 2024

***Anatomy of a Revived Church: Seven Findings of How Congregations Avoided Death*** by Thom Rainer Very practical and easy read.

***The Solo Pastor: Understanding and Overcoming the Challenges of Leading a Church Alone*** by Gary McIntosh

**Amazon Description:** Being a pastor is a complex and demanding role, especially for someone leading alone. The majority of pastors find themselves in this position, leading their smaller church with no additional professional assistance. The challenges are many, including loneliness, isolation, self-doubt, overwhelm, feelings of inadequacy, and a constant search for additional resources and volunteers. Where does a solo pastor turn for help and encouragement? In this book he helps the solo pastor:

- understand the strengths and challenges of the solo-pastor church
- develop effective leadership skills
- build and maintain vital relationships
- manage expectations
- spot and neutralize "bullies" who seek to control the church
- communicate clearly
- make the most of limited resources
- establish healthy priorities and boundaries
- and more

***The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry: How to Stay Emotionally Healthy and Spiritually Alive in the Chaos of the Modern World*** by John Mark Comer

**Amazon Description:** Too often we treat the symptoms of toxicity in our modern world instead of trying to pinpoint the cause. A growing number of voices are pointing at hurry, or busyness, as a root of much evil. Within the pages of this book, you'll find a fascinating roadmap to staying emotionally healthy and spiritually alive in the chaos of the modern world.

***When Everything's On Fire: Faith Forged From the Ashes*** by Brian Zahnd

**Amazon Description:** Intellectual certainty has long been a cornerstone of the Christian faith. But in an age of secularism, skepticism, and cynicism, our worldviews have been shaken. Various solutions exist—some double down on certainty, while others deconstruct their faith until there is nothing left at all. Zahnd offers a third way: what is needed is not a *demolition* but instead a *renovation* of faith. Written with personal and pastoral experience, Zahnd extends an invitation to move beyond the crisis of faith toward the journey of reconstruction. A stronger, more confident faith is possible when it is grounded in the beauty and truth of Christ. Zahnd permits us to risk the journey of deconstruction so that God can forge something more beautiful in its place.

***The Mind of a Missionary: What Global Kingdom Workers Tell Us About Thriving on Mission Today*** by David Joannes

**Amazon Description:** Each chapter of this book highlights missionary heroes—historical and modern-day Christians—who challenge us to join God's redemptive mission. You'll be inspired by the lives of Jim & Elisabeth Elliot, C. T. Studd, Nikolaus Zinzendorf, Robert Moffat, Jackie Pullinger, David Eubank, Nik & Ruth Ripken, William Carey, Hudson Taylor, Amy Carmichael, Don Richardson, and Heidi Baker. The author draws upon history, psychology, life experience, and powerful storytelling to

reshape your perception of God's unique plan for your life. He says, "If you really want to thrive on mission, you must allow God to redefine your definition of the normal Christian life."

***Unchanging Witness: The Consistent Christian Teaching on Homosexuality in Scripture and Tradition*** by S. Donald Fortson and Rollin G Grams

**Amazon Description:** The church is going through a time of severe fracture over the issue of homosexuality. This book addresses the arguments from the gay Christian movement and revisionist theologians and exegetes on a single point: Can they withstand the evidence of the primary sources? In *Unchanging Witness*, Donald Fortson and Rollin Grams articulate the consistent orthodox view on homosexuality by presenting primary sources throughout Christian history and by interpreting the biblical texts in their cultural contexts. The first part of the book examines church history from the patristic period to the present day, and the second part engages biblical texts in light of Ancient Near Eastern, Jewish, Greek, and Roman primary sources.

Throughout, the authors survey the conflicting and changing arguments of revisionist readings and contend that, in light of the overwhelming evidence of the relevant texts, the real issue is not one of interpretation but of biblical authority and Christian orthodoxy.

***Pivot: The Priorities, Practices, and Powers That Can Transform Your Church into a Tov Culture*** by Scot McKnight and Laura Barringer

**Amazon Description:** In *Pivot*, Scot and Laura help churches to implement practices, establish priorities, and cultivate the Kingdom Gospel-centered qualities that form goodness cultures. Readers will find answers to the four most common questions people have about culture transformation:

1. How can I transform the culture in my church or organization to make it tov?
2. I believe my workplace has unhealthy values. How do I initiate change?
3. How do I unleash a culture of goodness in my ministry?
4. I'm not in a position of church leadership. What are some red flags that indicate a toxic culture, and what can I do if I see them?

*Pivot* also includes the following practical features:

- The "Tov tool," a survey to help you discern your organization's culture and to promote spiritual conversations
- A "getting to work" section at the end of each chapter with questions and next steps for application

***Telling a Better Story: How to Talk About God in a Skeptical Age*** by Joshua Chatraw

**Amazon Description:** *Telling a Better Story* clears a path to a more effective, empathetic apologetics for today—both for experienced apologists and those new to sharing their faith with others. The book presents a new and refreshing way to engage in apologetics that will help you tell the story of Christ in a holistic, culturally-contextual manner that—while being respectful—helps unbelievers imagine a more complete happiness and a better meaning to life.

***Subterranean: Why the Future of the Church is Rootedness*** by Dan White, Jr.

**Amazon Description:** The landscape of Christian spirituality in the West is no longer lush with green grass and wildflowers blooming. Instead, across the country we find dry terrain where churches no longer can expect interested seekers—yet most of our solutions for addressing this predicament link to anxiety around our performance and personality. Rather than going back to the boardroom to cook up new techniques for a trendier church, let's ask more meaningfully rooted questions. Do we know how to be present in our neighborhoods? Do we know how to be present in community? Do

we know how to be present to the in-breaking kingdom of God? There is a growing groundswell discovering that we have become uprooted and detached from each other in the way we express being the church. We need a subterranean movement that plunges below the surface into a way of being the people of God that carries an unwavering incarnational creed. Dan White Jr. uses crisp criticism, narrative theology, and tangible practices to uncover a hopeful pathway for being radically rooted in God's world.