

The Ailbe Seminary

The Fellowship of Ailbe



Realizing the presence, promise, and power of the Kingdom of God.

One in Twelve: Introduction to Christian Worldview

Laddership Propaedeutic

Seminar Guide

T. M. Moore, Principal

One in Twelve: Introduction to Christian Worldview
Laddership Propaedeutic 2018

One in Twelve: Introduction to Christian Worldview
Syllabus
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The Fellowship of Ailbe

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The Laddership Curriculum: Introduction

*She was a marvelous ladder whereby the tribes
could reach the kingdom of the Son of Mary.*

- Broccán, *Hymn to Saint Brigit* (Irish, 7th century)

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

- 2 Timothy 2.1, 2

The image of Christian leaders as ladders occurs twice in the literature of the Celtic Christian period. It is a powerful way of thinking about those who are charged with seeking the Kingdom of God and leading others to seek and attain to it as well.

Dallán Forgaill was the first to use this image; late in the 6th century he employed it to describe the men trained by Colum Cille, the founder of the Iona monastic community. Under his tutelage many young men became ladders laid against the heavenly city (in Gaelic, *frí arthu ar chathír*). It's a simple but beautiful image, at once poetic and profound, and it should inspire each of us in our calling to make disciples.

Brigit is one of the three great early saints of Ireland, along with Patrick and Colum Cille. She flourished near the beginning of the sixth century and was renowned for her exemplary life of piety and compassion.

Many from the pagan tribes of Ireland found their way to the Kingdom of God through her ministrations, as she served as a ladder to the Kingdom. Consider what this requires.

First, she had to have her own life and vision – the top of the ladder – *firmly fixed in the Kingdom of Christ*. Brigit was described by a later biographer as disciplined in meditation and prayer, so much so that, even while driving her chariot on some mission of witness or mercy she could “practice the life of heaven on earth through meditation and prayer.”

If we would be ladders to the City of God we must have our own vision parked above the walls of the Kingdom, so that we are ever gazing within that unseen, sacred landscape.

Second, Brigit had to have the foot of her ladder *firmly set among the people* she sought to serve. She had to be among them, understanding their struggles, earthy and real and caring. Brigit maintained her own community of the followers of Christ, caring for them and instructing them continuously, and she served regularly among believers throughout her district. Moreover, like Peter, following Jesus' instruction to push out into the deep water for a catch (Lk. 5), Brigit traveled frequently among the pagan peoples for whose sakes she ministered the grace of the Lord. She went to them, knew them, and cared for them, and she sought to meet their needs as best she could, whether by words or deeds.

We who are called to make disciples must likewise go among the people who need to know the grace of Jesus, discovering their needs and seeking ways of giving them a *leg up* toward a fuller experience of the Kingdom of God.

Finally, for Brigit and other Celtic Christian leaders to be ladders to the Kingdom, they had to *lay down their own lives for others*, setting a good example, showing the right way, creating opportunities for growth and progress in the Kingdom, and being willing to be spent for others that they might find their way through them to the grace of the Lord.

Through their teaching and other ministries, Brigid and Colum Cille offered many *rungs* whereby the people they served could rise above their mundane circumstances and lives and make steady progress toward the Kingdom of God.

Every believer is called to the task of making disciples. This calling is especially incumbent upon those who, serving as leaders in the communities of faith, are called to lead the way into the righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit which abound in the Kingdom of God (Rom. 14.17, 18).

Late in the Celtic period, as the Norsemen began to savage the ancient monasteries, Celtic leaders built high towers as places of refuge against the wrath of an unbelieving age. When the enemies of God attacked, the shepherds would send their flocks up the ladder, through the elevated door, and into the safety of the high tower, where they would pull up the ladder behind them, join in prayer and singing, waiting on the Lord and growing stronger together through their trials, better equipped to serve their King. The leaders would remain on the ground, securing the ladder as others climbed to safety, and then return to the chapel to sing and pray for their community. Many did not survive the savage attacks of their enemies.

In our day, as the enemies of the Gospel are becoming bolder, and both more subtle and more determined, the Kingdom of God remains a fortress of safety, sheltering the people of God against the ravages of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and fortifying them for revival, renewal, and awakening. But like the high tower at Glendalough, the Kingdom of God, the Holy City of our Lord, needs ladders – men and women like Brigid and Colum Cille who will shepherd the flocks of God into His Kingdom and lead them forth from it into greater strength and service in the Lord.

The Church today has had many leaders, and the effect of their leadership, over the past generation, has been to position the Church squarely on the margin of society, where it is having minimum effect for the Kingdom of God. If more of our contemporary Church *leaders* were like those *ladders* of the Celtic Revival, we might find the Church more powerful and effective in advancing the rule of King Jesus on earth as it is in heaven.

Of course, the metaphor of the ladder as God's way into the Kingdom predates the Celtic period. Our Lord Jesus referred to Himself as the ladder seen by Jacob in his dream (Gen. 28; cf. Jn. 1.51). Jesus is the only true Ladder into the Kingdom. All our ladders – both we ourselves and our teaching – depend on Him, lean on His strength, and seek to participate with Him in His work, so that we might become His ladders to help others know the righteousness, peace, and joy of the Kingdom of God.

Our *Laddership* curriculum is committed to helping you become precisely that.

Our prayer is that you might become just such a ladder, laid against the parapets and towers of God's City, offering passage to all who seek the Kingdom with you. To that end, we offer our ladders to you, in the hope that these rungs might strengthen your own vision, discipleship, and witness for the Lord, and prove a resource for helping you become a ladder for others against the sacred walls of the City of God.

T. M. Moore
Principal

Seminar Introduction

Welcome

You may be asking yourself, What is a *propaedeutic*?

A *propaedeutic* is an instructional exercise (*paedeutic*) one submits to before (*pro*) entering a formal course of study. The purpose of a *propaedeutic* is to introduce the course of study in terms of content, objectives, and instructional format.

Thus, *One in Twelve: Introduction to Christian Worldview* is the *propaedeutic* for the Laddership Curriculum of The Ailbe Seminary and The Fellowship of Ailbe. It is required for completion of all Certificate programs.

Seminar Purpose

The purpose of *One in Twelve: Introduction to Christian Worldview* is to introduce you to studying at The Ailbe Seminary. This brief seminar will give you an overview of the contents, primary themes, and flow of our curriculum, which focuses on living the Christian worldview within the framework of the Kingdom of God. The course will also introduce you to our instructional format, which includes a varied approach to instruction, and encourages students to work individually or in groups together. Finally, you'll begin to gain a better sense of the overall objectives of The Ailbe Seminary, which we summarize under the following heading.

Seminar Goals

Our objectives for this seminar, and for all the courses in our Laddership Curriculum, are simple: We want to help you grow in love for God and your neighbors, by introducing you to the vast sweep, primary themes, and overall integrity of the divine economy, and by helping you to find your place within that economy for living and proclaiming the Kingdom of God.

How to Proceed

Register here for this free seminar. This Seminar Syllabus includes all the information you will need to work through the video presentations for each Lesson. Once you have registered for the Seminar, you will be given access to the videos for each Lesson. You may proceed at your own pace. This is a self-directed Seminar, so you may work through the Lessons at your own pace.

Each Lesson includes a video presentation and outline, questions for reflection or discussion, and perhaps another brief assignment. We strongly encourage you to write out your answers to the questions at the end of each Lesson. This will help you in clarifying, internalizing, and applying the Lesson to your life.

When you have finished the Seminar, please provide us a few words of feedback, to help us improve our teaching (see p. 32).

If you have any questions or problems with the course, please contact us at via the Contact tab at The Ailbe Seminary.

Lesson 1: Worldview and the Christian Worldview

Diagram 1: Worldview Triangle

Assignments

After you have watched Presentation 1, go to the website, www.ailbe.org, and watch the video on Personal Discipleship Inventory (you may [click here](#)). Download the Personal Discipleship Inventory (listed below the video) and complete this exercise before going to Lesson 2. This exercise will give you a general sense of the state of your Christian worldview at this time.

You do not need to submit anything from this exercise, but we strongly urge you to complete it. This will give a better understanding of the state of your Christian worldview and show you areas for improvement in your Kingdom vision, disciplines, and outcomes.

Presentation Outline

What is a *worldview*? Just what it says – a way of *viewing* or *making sense* of the world, and everything in it, that enables us to *find our place* and *make our way* in the world.

All worldviews share certain things in common, including:

- A vision of the good life: What the world at its best should be
- A belief in how to attain that good life: How to use our time and resources to realize our vision
- A description of desirable outcomes: To let us know whether we're on course toward our vision

Many competing worldviews are at work in the world today. Our goal in this Seminar is to provide an overview of the Christian worldview, in order to help prepare believers for taking their place in, and making their contribution to, this grand, Kingdom-seeking enterprise.

The Christian worldview

Every worldview has a center. At the center of the Christian worldview is Jesus Christ. He is:

- The beginning and end of all things, Revelation 1.8
- The radiance of God's glory, Hebrews 1.3
- The treasury of all wisdom and knowledge, Colossians 2.2, 3
- Filling all things in all things, Ephesians 1.22, 23
- The Logos, Source, Reason, and Explanation for all things, John 1.14, 18

As *followers* of Christ, Christians are being *conformed to His image*, both here, and ultimately in the presence of God and His glory (2 Cor. 3.12-18; Col. 1.28, 29; 1 Jn. 3.2).

What does realizing this conformity involve?

- The *pursuit* of Christ
- According to the *vision* of Christ

- Unto the *life* of Christ in all things.

The Christian worldview takes shape within a specific environment, the *Kingdom of God*. Life in the Kingdom of God consists of:

- The vision of Christ and His Kingdom
- The disciplines of the Kingdom
- Becoming citizens and ambassadors in the Kingdom

Our *vision* of the Kingdom determines the *disciplines* by which we organize our time. By those *disciplines* we pursue our *vision* of the good life in the Kingdom. That *vision* and those *disciplines* shape our lives as Kingdom *citizens and ambassadors*. And the state of our lives in the Kingdom at any given moment helps to enlarge, clarify, or refine our vision and disciplines.

For reflection or discussion

We provide these questions for your use only. You do not need to submit written answers. But we encourage you to be thorough in your answers.

1. What is a worldview, and why is it important that Christians should be paying attention to the question of worldviews?
2. What role does *vision* fulfill in a worldview?
3. Explain the relationship between *time* and *disciplines*, and between these and worldview *vision*.
4. What primary *outcomes* should we be seeking to encourage within the Christian worldview?
5. What's the most important point or lesson you have gained from this lesson? How do you expect this to affect your outlook and daily life?

Additional Resources

At the Ailbe bookstore, the following resources can help you in fleshing out this introduction to Christian living in the Kingdom of God:

[Be Thou My Vision](#)

28 days of devotional readings focusing on Jesus Christ exalted in glory, using resources from Scripture and the Celtic Christian tradition.

[The Landscape of Unseen Things](#)

This workbook provides a *tour de force* of the unseen realm, in order to provide a framework for faith, which is the assurance of *things hoped for*, and the evidence of *things not seen* (Heb. 11.1).

[The Kingship of Jesus](#)

This brief textbook seeks to answer the question, "What in heaven is Jesus doing on earth?" Learn what it means that Jesus is not merely *Savior* but also *Lord* and *King*.

[The Kingdom Turn](#)

What does it mean to enter and dwell in the Kingdom of God? How does seeing Jesus in glory and getting in stride with His work as King help to enlarge and enrich our lives? This study gives us a better understanding of what it means to have been called to the Kingdom and glory of God.

Lesson 2: Scripture and the Divine Economy

Diagram 2: God's Covenant: The Narrative Arc of Scripture

Assignment

Watch Presentation 2 at the website.

Presentation Outline

Before we get too far into our discussion of Christian worldview, we need to be clear about the *source* of our convictions. This is a basic question to ask of every worldview: How do you know this? Who or what are your authorities? Why do you consider these to be reliable?

For the Christian, the Word of God in Scripture provides the foundation and touchstone for all aspects of worldview thinking and living. So we need to be clear about *what* the Scriptures are and *why* we find them to be so reliable in helping us to think about the world and our lives in it.

The Narrative Arc of Scripture

The Bible is an altogether unique Book. Prepared by many different writers, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; written in a variety of literary genre; and considering themes and subjects representing all aspects of human life, the Bible has proven to be a reliable guide to people from all walks of life, every culture and language group, and for all manner of individual calling. Why is this so?

First, the Bible tells a single story: the story of the divine economy.

1. This story covers all of time, from the beginning to eternity.
2. As Scripture unfolds from Genesis to Revelation, we discover certain recurring themes. Three stand out as primary and are repeated in a cyclical and cumulative manner throughout the course of Scripture.

Creation:

Fall:

Redemption:

This story is held together by a single, overarching structure: God's covenant, a structure which holds true throughout all the centuries during which God was giving His written revelation to men. God's covenant with His people can be summarized in the oft-repeated declaration, "I will be your God, and you will be My people."

The covenant unfolds like the spans of a bridge, each stage unfolding within and developing the covenant structure of the Bible:

Old and New:

Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, New:

The books of the Bible appear within, and develop and support this overarching structure:

At the same time, we find certain consistencies running throughout the Bible:

In the *structure* of God's covenant:

In the *themes* of God's covenant:

Central to all of Scripture, and evidenced *throughout* all of Scripture, is our Lord Jesus Christ and the Kingdom and worldview He brings to human experience. The Old Testament looks forward to Him, and He looks back to it to validate His claims and calling. And the New Testament looks back to Him, and forward to His soon return.

For reflection or discussion

1. Why is it important that we try to understand the *authorities* or *sources* that lie behind the worldviews people hold today?
2. What do we mean by saying that the Bible is our *primary* source and authority for our Christian worldview? Does this mean it is the *only* source or authority? Explain.
3. What do we mean by *the divine economy*? What is an "economy", and what other kinds of economies exist in contrast to the divine economy?
4. What is God's covenant, and why is important that we understand the role of this covenant in holding Scripture together and moving its narrative along?
5. What's the most important point or lesson you've learned from this lesson, and how do you expect this to affect your approach to reading and learning the Bible?

Additional Resources

These resources from the Ailbe Bookstore can help in providing an overview of the Scriptures and what's required in order to understand and teach them:

[*I Will Be Your God*](#)

This book treats God's covenant in more specific detail, with a view to unpacking the practical implications of living in God's covenant toward His promises day by day.

[*God's Covenant*](#)

This workbook/study guide examines the Biblical idea of covenant, the uniqueness of God's covenant, and the unfolding of God's covenant through the various stages of its development in the Old and New Testaments.

[*Kingdom Documents*](#)

This brief handbook provides a concise overview of the theme of God's covenant throughout the various sections of Scripture, and concludes by leading readers into the history of Scripture interpretation by examining great creeds of the early Church.

[*Text to Transformation*](#)

Here is an outline guide to Biblical interpretation and preaching, taking readers step-by-step from selecting a passage to applying it their lives.

Lesson 3: Worldviews in Perspective

Diagram 3: Worldviews in Conflict

Assignment

Watch Presentation 3 at the website.

Presentation Outline

We return to our theme of Christian worldview, and immediately we must recognize the fact that the Christian worldview is not the *only* worldview operating in the world today. This is where we as Christians stand, but we need to make sure we understand our worldview in relation to other worldviews with which we are in varying degrees of conflict.

The Christian Worldview

The Christian worldview is the worldview home of all those who are *In Christ*. We may identify those who inhabit this worldview as:

1. Redeemed by grace
2. Know the Lord
3. Hope in His glory
4. Gather to worship
5. On a mission

Let's assign them a number 1 on a scale.

Contemporary worldviews

At the opposite end of the worldview spectrum is the worldview of those we may describe as being *In Flight* from God. Of them we may observe:

1. Dead in their trespasses and sins
2. Enemies of God
3. Hope in idols
4. Gather for themselves
5. On a mission

We will assign them a number 5 on our worldview scale.

In between the Christian worldview and that of those who are consciously *In Flight* from God is a variety of worldviews which are more or less distinct. We may describe these as being *In Between*. A solid line separates these from those who are *In Christ*, while the border between those who are *In Between* and those who are *In Flight* is rather more porous. We may note of those who inhabit these worldviews:

1. Dead in trespasses and sins

2. Neither/nor, but... (they fit at various points along our worldview scale)
3. Hope in idols
4. Gather for themselves
5. Open to a mission

The Challenge

The challenge facing adherents of the Christian worldview today is that those who are *In Flight* have gained a measure of influence out of all proportion to their numbers. They have captured the various bully pulpits of the land, from which they pour forth a stream of propaganda into the rest of the world, consisting of four basic messages:

1. Naturalism
2. Rationalism
3. Pragmatism (utilitarianism)
4. Individualism (narcissism)

How has the Church responded to this situation?

1. Hedge ourselves off from the world
2. Get organized, try to keep people happy
3. Maintain a measure of openness in outreach

And what is the effect of this? A generation growing increasingly distant from Christ and the Good News of His Kingdom, growing antipathy to the faith, and the looming threat of persecution.

Worldviews in Perspective

This can seem like a gloomy prospect. The world appears to be shattering under the weight of unbelief. But the situation needs to be put in proper perspective.

We need to make four clarifying observations as we consider the Christian response to contemporary worldviews:

1. The largest worldview group is those who are *In Between*. They are *open to a mission* and make up the bulk of the people we see every day.
2. Those who are *In Flight* constitute the smallest group, even though they are presently the most dominant. Christians must understand how to confront the lies of unbelief and to encourage those who are trapped in the Lie to consider the claims of Christ.
3. However, the Kingdom of God, the domain of those who are *In Christ*, provides the backdrop for all of human life, culture, and history. It is the great dragnet by which King Jesus is drawing the world to

Himself. It is growing like a great stone, and of the increase of its righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, there will be no end!

4. The Kingdom of God advances through the lives of individual believers, as they identify and work their Personal Mission Fields day by day.

Thus we must be encouraged, bold, and faithful in our calling as followers of Jesus Christ, identifying and working our Personal Mission Fields as the point of attack in advancing the Kingdom of our Lord.

For reflection or discussion

1. In what ways have you observed the conflict of worldviews described in this lesson? Why does this conflict make it important that Christians understand their worldview as fully as possible?
2. What do we mean by saying that certain people are *In Flight* from God? Do you agree with this idea? Explain.
3. What are some reasons Christians should be hopeful and active in the face of the conflict of worldviews?
4. Concerning the Kingdom of God, which is the framework for our Christian worldview, we may say that it has come, is coming, and is yet to come. Explain.
5. What's the most important point or lesson you've gained from this lesson? How does this help to encourage you amid the conflict of worldviews?

Additional Resources

Here are some resources available in the Ailbe Bookstore to help you in understanding the Christian worldview in perspective:

[*Satan Bound*](#)

The great enemy of Christ is Satan, and while he works with guile and skill, he cannot prevail against the Lord who has bound him and holds him in check. This unique look at the work of the devil is designed to equip readers to recognize and withstand his attacks, and to press on in serving the Lord boldly.

[*The Legacy of Patrick*](#)

This book provides an overview of the Celtic Revival, showing how, against all odds, the Kingdom of God became established, grew, matured, and expanded under the impetus created by the ministry of Patrick in Ireland.

[*The Ground for Christian Ethics*](#)

This lively dialog introduces the role of the Law of God in the life of the believer and in helping to shape the Christian worldview as a lifestyle of liberty and love.

Lesson 4: Personal Mission Field

Diagram 4: Personal Mission Field

Assignments

1. For this session, watch the video on Personal Mission Field which you may access by [clicking here](#).
2. Download and complete the worksheet mapping out your Personal Mission Field. **You do not need to submit any of your work on this exercise, but we urge you to be thorough in mapping your Personal Mission Field.**

Presentation Outline

The world is a *wheat* field, waiting to be cultivated and harvested.

God has established His Kingdom in this wheat-field-world, and He has sent His people as citizens and ambassadors in that Kingdom in the world (Jn. 20.21). Our calling is to “bring near” and to “make real” the Kingdom of God in this world.

How can we do this? Make disciples! (Matt. 28.18-20)

Where shall we make disciples? “As you are going...”

John 4.35: “Lift up your eyes.” Your calling is all around you in the Kingdom of God, in your sphere of influence, or your Personal Mission Field (2 Cor. 10.13-16).

Identifying your Personal Mission Field: Where do we go?

Objectives for your Personal Mission Field: What should we be trying to accomplish?

Disciplines to master in working your Personal Mission Field: What must we do?

Mapping your Personal Mission Field:

For reflection or discussion

1. Why is it important that each believer identify and begin working his or her Personal Mission Field?
2. In what sense or senses might we say that Personal Mission Field is worldview “on the ground”?
3. As you begin working your Personal Mission Field, what are the most important disciplines you need to master and employ?
4. How should you be able to tell when you are making progress in working your Personal Mission Field?
5. What’s the most important point or lesson you’ve gained from this lesson, and how do you expect this to help you in working your Personal Mission Field?

Additional Resources

You may find these resources, available in the Ailbe Bookstore, helpful in beginning to work your Personal Mission Field:

[*The Poetry of Prayer*](#)

Prayer is the starting-point and sustaining strength of the Kingdom of God and the Christian worldview. Our lack of prayer, or weakness in it, is the primary reason why we see so little evidence of the Kingdom in our day. This book can walk you through learning to pray in new, deeper, and more enriching and fruitful ways.

[*If Men Will Pray*](#)

This booklet is a call to men to take up the work of prayer more consistently and with greater focus and effects. It is designed to be used in a one-on-one relationship, over a period of one month, during which two men work together to improve in this most important aspect of preparing to work our Personal Mission Fields. For an overview of this book, and of our Men's Prayer Movement, watch the video available by [clicking here](#).

[*Restore Us!*](#)

God calls His people to seek Him for revival, renewal, and awakening, so that the Kingdom of God and the Christian worldview can increase and expand. This booklet guides you in how to pray for revival, and provides instructions and resources for you to put together a group of people to join you in this important work.

[*Men of the Church: A Solemn Warning, a Serious Call, and an Amazing Hope*](#)

Download this free PDF in order to see how God views prayer, and why He is seeking men who will seek Him in prayer ([click here](#)).

Lesson 5: The Nature and Nurture of the Soul

Diagram 5: The Anatomy of the Soul

Assignment

Watch the video for Presentation 5 at the website.

Presentation Outline

The Kingdom of God is within us, embedded in the soul of every believer in the person of the Holy Spirit. Progress in the Kingdom, and in the Christian worldview, therefore begins within each believer, as the Spirit works with the glory of God to transform us increasingly into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3.12-18). It is therefore most important that we understand the nature of the soul, so as to be able to exercise good stewardship in disciplining the soul for ongoing growth in the Lord.

The Components of the Soul

The human soul bears the image of God and is comprised of three overlapping, intercommunicating, spiritual components: the heart, the mind, and the conscience. It is our duty to understand each of these components and to nurture them for fuller realization of the image of God.

The heart is the seat of affections:

The mind is the thought center of the soul:

The conscience houses the values and priorities of the soul, and is the locus of the will:

The Dialog of the Soul

It is important that we maintain a healthy and ongoing dialog within the soul between the heart, the mind, and the conscience. As each of these is nurtured into Christlikeness, Jesus will fill us with Himself, and will spill over by the power of the Spirit into the arenas and relationships of our Personal Mission Fields (Eph. 4.10).

We can know that we are growing in our souls as we continue to experience increase in:

- Love for God:
- Love for our neighbors:

A healthy, growing soul is properly nurtured within the context of a healthy, growing church.

For reflection or discussion

1. What are the components of the soul, and why is it important that we understand these?
2. What do we mean by a “dialog of the soul”, and how can we tell when that dialog is working as the Lord intends?
3. What are the primary means whereby God works to grow us in our souls? How would you describe the state of each of these means in your life at this time?
4. Where do you need to improve focus and effort in nurturing your soul?

5. What's the most important point or lesson you've learned from this lesson, and how do you intend to put that to work for the nurture of your soul?

Additional Resources

You may find the following helpful in beginning to focus more pointedly on the nurture of your soul:

[God's Prayer Program](#)

Praying the psalms is a long-standing tradition within the Christian movement. By learning to pray the psalms we engage all the components of our soul in seeking the Lord for His agenda, which He spells out for us in the book of Psalms. *God's Prayer Program* teaches you why and how to begin using the psalms as your daily guide in prayer.

[The Ailbe Psalter](#)

Singing engages the soul in ways designed to strengthen and grow us heart, mind, and conscience. Singing the psalms can be an especially helpful means to nurturing our souls. *The Ailbe Psalter* offers all 150 of the psalms set to familiar hymn tunes, so that you can begin singing them right away.

Lesson 6: The Church in the Christian Worldview

Diagram 6: Healthy, Growing Churches

Assignment

Watch the video for Presentation 6.

Presentation Outline

Healthy, growing churches are necessary for the equipping of God's people, soul and body, to carry out their Kingdom callings in their Personal Mission Fields.

The local church is the *sign* and *outpost* of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus is building His Church

Jesus is building His Church, and, through the Apostle Paul, He has shown us the pattern the Spirit of God uses to build the local church as a sign and outpost of the Kingdom of God.

The *vision* of a healthy, growing church:

- Unity:
- Maturity:

The *disciplines* of a healthy, growing church:

- Pastors and teachers:
- The equipping of the saints:

The *outcomes* of a healthy, growing church: the work of ministry

Three primary arenas of church life provide the context and format for nurturing healthy, growing churches and healthy, growing believers:

- Worship:
- Shepherding:
- Mission:

The process: Ephesians 4.11-16

Church grow in unity and maturity as pastors and teachers equip the saints, soul and life, for works of ministry in their Personal Mission Fields.

For reflection or discussion

1. How does your church assess the state of its overall health and growth?
2. Do you think Paul's model (Eph. 4.11-16) lines up pretty well with how your church thinks about itself and its ministry? Explain.
3. Can you see how worship, shepherding, and mission line up with vision, disciplines, and outcomes in the Christian worldview? Explain.

4. What do we mean by saying that the local church is a *sign* and an *outpost* of the Kingdom of God?
5. What's the most important point or lesson you've learned from this lesson? How do plan to implement this as a member in your local church?

Additional Resources

Here are some resources available in the Ailbe Bookstore to help you in thinking about a healthy, growing church:

[*Preparing Your Church for Revival*](#)

God brings revival, renewal, and awakening to the world through local churches. But if we want to see these come to pass, we'll need to prepare carefully. In this book we show what is required to set a local church on a course for revival, renewal, and awakening.

Lesson 7: Worship

Diagram 7: The Pattern of Sound Worship

Assignment

1. Watch the video for Presentation 7.
2. As you worship in your church this week, meditate on the pattern of sound worship presented in this lesson. Where is your church strong in holding to this pattern? Where does it seem to fall short? See what you can find out about your church's philosophy of worship, and how worship services are prepared.

Presentation Outline

Those who are In Christ are a people who gather to worship. Worship is the most important work of the local church. In worship the people of God join together in His presence to celebrate Him and His work, and to be revived and renewed in His mercy and grace. In worship our vision of the Kingdom is renewed, enlarged, more squarely focused in Jesus, and more firmly embedded in the souls of God's people.

Envisioning worship

I wonder if you have a favorite image that comes to mind when you're worshipping? Mine is suggested in Psalm 116:12-14: Raising a glass to the Lord!

What does this image suggest?

- Someone to honor:
- Something to bring:
- Something to share:
- Something to quaff:

True worship

True worship follows a pattern revealed by God in His Word (Ex. 25.9, 40; 26.30), a pattern outlined by four complementary organizing principles and six guiding precepts. The four complementary ideas make for a well-rounded service of worship:

- Objective/Subjective:
- Spirit/Truth:
- Dialog/Offering:
- Decent/Orderly:

Within the circle of these complementary organizing principles, six precepts must guide our worship of the Lord:

- Function:
- Focus:
- Forms:

- Flow:
- Freedom:
- Fruit:

We are worshiping God truly when we follow the pattern of worship He has revealed to us in His Word.

For reflection or discussion

1. What do we mean by a *pattern of sound worship*? Do you agree that such a pattern can be discerned from Scripture?
2. Who plans and who leads worship in your church? What philosophy or approach to worship guides the planning and conduct of worship? Whom could you ask in order to find out about this?
3. Reflect on the pattern of sound worship introduced in this lesson. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is the best rating you could give, how does your church rate against this pattern? Why did you choose the number you did?
4. What is the purpose of worship? How can we know when that purpose has been realized in any given service of worship?
5. What's the most important point or lesson you've gained from this lesson? How do you think this will affect your approach to worship?

Additional Resources

[*The Highest Thing*](#)

Worship is the local church's most important work. But we must understand the *pattern* of worship God intends for His church. This workbook will help you to discern that pattern, as it is revealed throughout the Word of God, and to begin thinking about how to realize more of the joy and power of worship.

Lesson 8: Making Disciples

Diagram 8: The Disciplines of Shepherding

Assignment

Watch the video for Presentation 8.

Presentation Outline

Worship is the primary work of the local church, because worship provides the framework for the work of making disciples. Discipleship flows *out of* worship, *through* mission, *unto* worship, which is the end of all Christian experience.

God's people must be *prepared* to worship Him, and they must know what *fruit* their worship of God should produce. The work of making disciples addresses these concerns. In making disciples, pastors and teachers equip the saints for the work of ministry, unique to each one's calling in the Lord.

Following the example and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, the work of disciple-making is best pursued according to a shepherding template (Jn. 10).

The disciplines of shepherding

We may think of the work of shepherding like the spokes of a wheel. Although only one may be bearing the weight at any given time, all must be in place and strong, ready to carry their part of the load. According to Jesus, the Good Shepherd, six disciplines define the work of shepherding:

- The shepherd knows the sheep:

- The shepherd leads the sheep:

- The shepherd lays down his life for the sheep:

- The shepherd defends the sheep:

- The shepherd gives eternal life to the sheep:

- The shepherd brings other sheep:

The shepherd's tool kit

The work of shepherding requires the mastering and consistent use of three primary tools:

- Prayer:

- The Word of God:

- Personal example:

If we intend to make disciples who worship God truly, and whose worship increases the fruit of discipleship in their lives, then we must shepherd them after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles.

For reflection or discussion

1. Why is *shepherding* such an excellent model for doing the work of making disciples?
2. How many “one another” passages can you discover in the New Testament? Do these suggest that we have a responsibility to shepherd one another, as a work of mutual disciple-making? Explain.
3. As you see it, what are some of the differences between making disciples through shepherding and trying to make disciples through classes, study groups, events, and so forth? Does pursuing the work of shepherding mean we should have these other activities? How should shepherding and other kinds of programs work together?
4. Should we expect the Lord to bless our efforts at making disciples if we *refuse* to take up the work of shepherding as Jesus outlined it? Explain.
5. What’s the most important point or lesson you’ve learned from this lesson? How should you be working to shepherd the believers in your Personal Mission Field?

Additional resources

[*Fan into Flame*](#)

Here is a handbook to guide pastors and church leaders in taking up Paul’s model for healthy, growing churches. This book includes various assessment tools to allow church leaders to evaluate their needs and plan for growth in building Christ’s church.

Lesson 9: Mission

Diagram 9: The Mission of the Church

Assignment

Watch the video for Presentation 9.

Presentation Outline

We're considering the elements that describe and contribute to healthy, growing churches.

So far, we have examined the local church's work of worship and shepherding. It remains for us to consider the *mission* of the local church.

Evangelism

The mission of the local church is to bring the Good News of the Kingdom to its community and the world. This is the work of evangelism, and it involves both *being* witnesses for Christ and *proclaiming* the Good News.

The work of evangelism is a *process*, not an *event*: 1 Corinthians 3.5-9. That process involves:

- The *event* of salvation:
- The *work* which leads to that event:
- The *sovereignty of God* over the process:
- The *role of God's servants* in the work of evangelism:

Following the Apostle Paul, we may think of the work of evangelism like that of working a field, the wheat field of the world. Paul mentions certain aspects of that process, but from other Scripture we may further flesh out the model of the work of evangelism suggested in his trope (you might like to sketch out the diagram in the presentation):

The Process of Evangelism

How does this model translate into the life and work of a local church?

Let's consider the *specific kinds of work* that go into the mission of the local church, thus allowing it to fulfill its calling as both sign and outpost of the Kingdom of God (sketch out the diagram in the presentation):

For reflection or discussion

1. Why is it important that *every* believer see himself or herself as called to the mission of the church? Does that mean we'll all be doing the same thing? Explain.
2. Meditate on Acts 1.8. Explain the relationship between *being* a witness and *doing* the work of witnessing for Christ. How does this apply to a local church?
3. What is the mission of your church? How does your church pursue that mission?
4. What is your role in the mission of your church?
5. What's the most important point or lesson you've gained from this lesson? How will this help you to become more consistently and fruitfully involved in the mission of your church?

Additional resources

[The Gospel of the Kingdom](#)

The mission of the local church is to equip believers for living and proclaiming the Kingdom of God. This little booklet explains the Good News of the Kingdom and can be helpful in learning how to share this Good News with the people in your Personal Mission Field.

Lesson 10: The Question of Culture

Diagram 10: Culture and Cultures

Assignment

Watch the video for Presentation 10.

Presentation Overview

All local churches exist within a particular cultural space and time. Every person's Personal Mission Field is comprised of cultural arenas, as well as people. We will not be able to fulfill our mission as citizens and ambassadors, and a sign and outpost of the Kingdom, without understanding the nature and demands of culture on our callings as believers and churches.

What is culture, and how can we begin to make sense of it in ways that will maximize our experience and expression of the Christian worldview in our own cultural moment?

What is culture?

Culture consists of three things:

- Artefacts:
- Institutions:
- Conventions:

Human beings create culture for three primary reasons:

- To define ourselves:
- To sustain ourselves:
- To enrich our lives:

Our cultural milieu

In the Kingdom of God, we engage culture in a varied context:

- Common culture:
- Sub-cultures:
- Pop culture

The *kudzu* of pop culture overgrows all other cultures, imposing a sameness on everything, and threatening to topple and supplant all other cultures, including the redeemed culture of the Kingdom community.

In this cultural milieu, the local church and its members must adopt an *approach* to culture that will enable them to bring the presence, promise, and power of the Kingdom to light in the culture in which they are engaged.

For reflection or discussion

1. Is it possible to *escape* or *avoid* culture? Is that even desirable? Why or why not?

2. Meditate on 1 Corinthians 10.31-11.1. What do these verses recommend about doing *everything* – including using and making culture – the glory of God?
3. In what specific ways does your church equip its members for Kingdom living within their cultural arenas?
4. What would you expect the consequences to be if Christians refuse to take culture seriously or to bring culture within the purview of our Christian worldview?
5. What's the most important point or lesson you've gained from this lesson? How do you plan to use this to help you glorify God in your cultural life?

Additional resource

Here are two resources in the Ailbe Bookstore to help you understand and make the best use of culture:

[*Christians on the Front Lines of the Culture Wars*](#)

This booklet shows us how to make the most of everyday cultural situations for proclaiming and advancing the Kingdom of God.

[*Redeeming Pop Culture*](#)

This book is a study of pop culture with a view to understanding, appreciating, and transforming pop culture according to our Kingdom-and-glory calling in the Lord.

Lesson 11: Kingdom, Church, and Culture

Diagram 11: Redeeming Culture

Assignments

Watch the video for Presentation 11.

Presentation Outline

Culture is suffocating under a kudzu blanket of pop, which threatens to topple and supplant all other cultures.

But the Christian is called to use and make culture from within the framework of the Kingdom and the Christian worldview. What does this require?

Culture and Kingdom

In the Kingdom of God, from within our souls and into our Personal Mission Fields, believers are called to do all things to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10.31). This includes the use we make of culture.

Our Christian worldview requires a distinct approach to culture, the goal of which is that, through our lives, in all the cultural arenas of our lives, Jesus might fill the world with Himself (Eph. 4.10). Our approach to culture thus requires:

- First, we must *engage* culture:

We engage culture from a particular *platform* – not a *throne*, to pontificate, or a *couch*, merely to observe and criticize, but a *stool*, as a working platform for culture-making. This stool consists of:

Three legs:

Three braces:

- Next, we must be prepared to *repudiate* culture:
- Our calling within culture also requires that we *appreciate* culture:
- And that we know how to *redirect* culture to Kingdom ends:
- And to *transform* culture where needed:
- Christians must also take the lead to *innovate* in culture, as our forebears in the past:

Looking to Jesus

At present, as the writer of Hebrews acknowledged (Heb. 2.5-9), though all aspects of life and culture have been put under our feet, for the progress of the Kingdom and the glory of God, we do not yet *see* all things in such a condition. But we see *Jesus!*

Keeping our eyes on Jesus, we need to equip ourselves as transformative cultural agents (5 Cs):

- Critics:
- Consumers:
- Curators:
- Conservators:
- Conversationalists:

Thus we may hope, increasingly, to bring the culture of our Personal Mission Fields, and our communities, under the feet and rule of King Jesus, to the praise of the glory of His grace!

For reflection or discussion

1. Why is it important that Christians engage culture from a conscientiously Kingdom perspective?
2. What does T. M. mean by calling us to approach culture from upon a workman's stool?
3. How can Christians encourage and assist one another in engaging culture from the perspective of our Kingdom worldview (Heb. 10.24)?
4. Review the 5 Cs T. M. indicated our Christian communities need to provide. Which of these seems most relevant for you? Why?
5. What's the most important point or lesson you've learned from this lesson? How are you working to make this lesson a more vital part of your cultural life?

Additional Resources

Three *ReVision* studies are available for download to help you explore more fully your involvement with culture. You can download these by clicking on each of the following:

[*The Purpose of Culture*](#)
[*Engaging Culture*](#)
[*Redeeming Culture*](#)

Lesson 12: Looking to Jesus

Diagram 12: Windows of Glory

Assignments

Watch the video for Presentation 12.

Presentation Outline

The Christian worldview – the Kingdom worldview of our Lord Jesus Christ – is that view of life and the world which emerges from the Scriptures to show the way into the divine economy and eternal plan of God. We take our stand on the Word of God, within that Kingdom framework, as we work to grow from the inside-out, and to fulfill our Kingdom-and-glory callings in our Personal Mission Fields. Thus we pursue our daily lives in the world, as Kingdom citizens and ambassadors, true followers of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Looking to Jesus

We do not yet see all things – all of life and culture and the world – brought under the dominion of Christ and into His service. But we look to Jesus, that we may be filled with Him, transformed into His image, and may show and proclaim Him to the whole world.

We are commanded to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to do this, we need to seek Him where He may be found, and by all the best means of finding and engaging with Him.

This is the work of theology, which is the disciplined pursue of the knowledge of God and His glory.

Windows of Glory

Theology can be thought of as a pane of windows, windows through which we may encounter the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. The more and better we use each of the windows, the more we will grow in our Lord and in the Christian worldview.

Six windows, six disciplines:

- Biblical Theology:
- Creational Theology:
- Historical Theology:
- Systematic Theology:
- Practical Theology:
- Spiritual Theology:

The Laddership Curriculum

As the introduction to this syllabus explains, our purpose is to equip men and women as ladders into the Kingdom of God – people with a clear vision of the King and His Kingdom, whose feet are firmly planted in their own Personal Mission Fields, and who will make themselves available as ladders and rungs to help others make the Kingdom turn into a richer, fuller, and more fruitful life in Jesus Christ.

For reflection or discussion

1. What has been your experience thus far using the “windows” of theological study? Do any of these interest you more than others?

2. Why do you think people tend to be put off by theology? What do we mean by saying that theology is only the *disciplined* pursuit of the *knowledge of God and His glory*?
3. Why is it important that *all* Christians have at least *some* exposure to theological studies?
4. What sorts of things get in the way of our making time for a more disciplined pursuit of the knowledge of God and His glory?
5. What's the most important point or lesson you've learned from this lesson? How will that help you in seeking more of the knowledge of God and His glory?

Additional Resources

At The Ailbe Seminary website, click on the About then the Certificates tabs to see the programs currently available. Then go to the homepage to view Course Previews.

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Please take a few moments to give us your response to this course. Was it helpful? Can you give us any specifics about how this course is helping you in your walk with and work for the Lord? How could we improve this course?

Please send us an email with your suggestions, responses, or other comments, to tmmoore@ailbe.org.

Thank you.

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Thank you.