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Outreach Concept Sheet Two Degree Rule

Brief Description:

The needle of the church compass, by default, tends to point true north. In other words, the focus of our ministry tends to be on those who are **already in God's family**. Our time, resources, energy, and focus is most often on ourselves, those who are already connected in the life of the church. This makes sense, because it is the people who already have faith in Jesus that often cry out for more attention and resources to be invested in them.

The Two Degree Rule is the concept that we can intentionally push the needle of the church a couple of degrees off dead north and vector some of our resources, time, care, energy and love toward those who are in the community and still far from God. This happens as we identify how we can take what we are already doing and extend it to those who are spiritual seekers.

Biblical Foundation:

Therefore **go** and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the **ends of the earth**." (Acts 1:7-8)

Do you get the feeling that Jesus is pushing us out? Like parents help their adult children get ready to go out and face the world, God also helps us get out of the comfort of the church and Christian community and go to the world. Many people won't first come to us. They will stay where they are, and we must go! This is why Jesus is emphatic, we must "GO" make disciples. We can start in a familiar place (Jerusalem), but if we follow Jesus, we will find ourselves pressing to the ends of the earth! The Two Degree Rule is the simple concept that we can take most of what we already do in the church, and begin thinking a new way. We ask the question, how can we redirect the focus of this ministry to include those who are spiritually disconnected?

Extended Description:

For one-hundred and four years, the church had a meals ministry. From the start of the history of this small country congregation there was always a commitment to bring meals to those who were in a time of need or struggle. For instance, if a woman had a baby or someone had surgery, people in the church would bring meals for about a week. This was simply a way to express love, help people in a time of need, and be the body of Christ to each other. It was a great ministry, a valuable ministry. It was about caring for the people in the church family.

Then, the leaders of the church outreach team began to talk about the Two Degree Rule. They started thinking about how they might take some of the existing ministries where the needle was pointing directly at those who were already in the church family, and push these toward the community. One person brought up the meals ministry with a great deal of excitement. "What if we continued having volunteers take meals to church members (the connected), but we also make this service available to people in our community who don't know Jesus (the disconnected)?"

Excitement filled the room. People were amazed they had never thought of it before. They realized that they could vector an existing ministry out of the church and into the community. There was already a successful track record for the ministry, there were volunteers, there were leaders, all the systems were in place. All that changed was that the leaders began to think of the community and how they could serve. An existing ministry was moved a couple of degrees off dead north, and outreach began to happen.

This same thing happened when an influential church began inviting people in their community to a financial planning course. For years it had

been an “In house program for Christians.” But, when they used the Two Degree Rule, they began promoting the course in the community and encouraging church members to bring friends. The course is based on biblical principals, so the spiritual seekers who began coming learned how to handle their finances, but also discovered that there is a God who cares about every area of their lives. Two Degrees made all the difference.

One of the great values of the Two Degree Rule is that you are not looking at starting new ministries with new volunteers and additional resources. You are simply taking what you are already doing and extending it past your “Jerusalem” and into your community.

Application Suggestions:

Evaluate Existing Ministries– Take time to look at every ministry in your church and ask, “Could we connect people in our community to this ministry?” If you take some time, and you can’t find a way to vector this ministry outward, take a little more time and try harder. You will be amazed at how many existing ministries can be effective to reach the spiritual seekers around your church.

Commit to a Big Circle of Promotion– Most of our promotion is in house. We let the people in the church know what is happening (Sometimes we are not even very good at this). It is time to draw a bigger circle. When you are promoting an existing or new ministry, always ask, how can we let the people in our community know about this? If you can vector the ministry outward, be sure to promote as widely as possible. Many communities have free local papers you can use. Make your web site friendly and be clear that everyone is welcome. Let community people know, “We are here for you!”

Discussion and Reflection Questions (To be used with your ministry team, family, and friends):

- What are we doing in our area of ministry that we can easily and naturally push a couple of degrees toward our community? What steps can we take to start this process?
- What are things we are doing that could fit the community if we adjusted them or developed them? What steps can we take to adjust this ministry so it will draw and impact the disconnected?
- How can we widen the circle of our communication and promotion to include the local community?

