

Navigating Transience: The Eternal Kingdom in a Changing World

“As we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4:18, ESV)

This session explores the challenges contemporary leaders face in an environment where nothing seems fixed—high mobility, economic pressures, and waves of social issues constantly reshape the cultural landscape. What was once only true of the city is now true almost everywhere. Leaders are called to build a legacy that transcends these temporal changes by raising and releasing new generations of indigenous and migrant leaders from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. We will explore how to move towards the glorious complexities of diverse multicultural and intergenerational congregations, focusing on how the eternal Kingdom provides a firm foundation amidst the continual flux of modern life.

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I. Introduction

A. Change is accelerating and this affects how we lead, disciple, and build for the future.

B. The landscape of transience:

2 Corinthians 4:18 (ESV) – “As we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”

The question for leaders: How do we build something eternal in a world where nothing stays the same?

II. Understanding the reality of transience

A. The world has changed—our approach to mission must change too

B. Challenges that transience presents for leaders

1. Discipleship is harder

2. Building deep community is difficult

3. Leadership development requires adaptability

4. Hebrews 12:28 (ESV) – *“Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe.”*

5. Our goal is not to cling to stability but to anchor people in the unshakable reality of God's Kingdom.

III. Raising and releasing leaders in a transient world

A. Instead of resisting transience, we embrace it

1. Acts 8:4 (ESV) – *“Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.”*

B. From retention to release

1. People aren't ours but His. Having a stewardship mentality.
2. Jesus' model

C. Developing a culture of leadership multiplication

1. A sending mindset, not a keeping mindset.
2. 2 Timothy 2:2 (ESV) – *“What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.”*
3. Practical takeaways for leaders:
 - a) Invest in people early and intentionally
 - b) Train people to serve, lead, and multiply wherever they go.
 - c) Shift thinking to Kingdom investment.

IV. Embracing a Thriving, Diverse Church Community

A. A church that reflects the Kingdom of God

1. Revelation 7:9 (ESV) – *“A great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne.”*
2. True unity in Christ does not erase cultural distinctives but weaves them together into something richer.

B. Diversity is not about assimilation but mutual transformation

1. The goal is not for people to conform to an existing church culture, but for the whole church to grow and change.
2. Ephesians 2:14 (ESV) – *“For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.”*

- C. Practical ways to embrace diversity
- D. Recognise and empower leaders from different backgrounds.
- E. Take time to build relationships, listen and really understand.
- F. Create space for different cultures to shape worship, discipleship, and mission.
- G. See the church as a place of shared life, not just shared services.

V. Conclusion

2 Corinthians 4:18 (ESV) – What is unseen is eternal, even when everything around us is shifting.

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Questions to Consider:

1. Are we building for temporary success or for eternal impact?
2. How can we lead in a way that embraces transience rather than resists it?

Suggested Reading:

(Please note the suggested readings here are to support the whole network, and are not just for session 5)

Christopher J. H. Wright *The Mission of God* 2006.

Lesslie Newbigin *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* 1989.

David Devenish *Fathering Leaders, Motivating Mission* 2011.

Reggie McNeal *Missional Communities* 2011.