



Faith Journeys

A simple framework to measure steps of engagement following an Introduction to Jesus.

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1. Background

What happens when an individual has been introduced to Jesus through one of CV's evangelistic initiatives, and indicates that they are interested in engaging with the gospel in a more meaningful way?

Given the wide range of contexts within which CV's evangelistic work is done, the way in which a transformative journey of this kind is to be conducted and measured has been a source of ongoing discussion. Several factors contribute to this complexity:

- The diverse cultural contexts within which CV's evangelistic work is pursued.
- The multiplicity and complexity of faith backgrounds of the audiences being reached.
- The diverse nature of the digital platforms utilised for CV's evangelistic work, and the range of opportunities and modes for onward engagement that these platforms offer.
- The varied composition of on-the-ground teams engaged in or linked to CV's evangelistic efforts.

In CV's evangelistic work, the journey of engagement that follows an Introduction to Jesus is often framed in two overlapping ways:

Response

Typically refers to unstructured text communication following an introduction to Jesus, or to the consumption of text or video content along a

structured consideration pathway around a gospel-themed message.

Discipleship

Classically conceived as the provision of faith-based content in text or video format aimed at bolstering the spiritual maturity of an individual who has positively responded to the gospel.

Given the complexities noted above, these two broad concepts often strain to capture the realities and nuance of conducting and measuring evangelistic work in CV. Problems that may result from this include the following:

- "Response" may not be measured uniformly across initiatives, and may be subject to varied interpretations.
- The nature and scope of "discipleship" activities and materials can be misunderstood, causing confusion about its role in relation to our mission.

2. Towards a Simplified Framework

In response to these challenges, we propose a single, simplified framework to underpin CV's approach in this area. This framework should honour both the universality of the gospel and the diversity of its recipients.

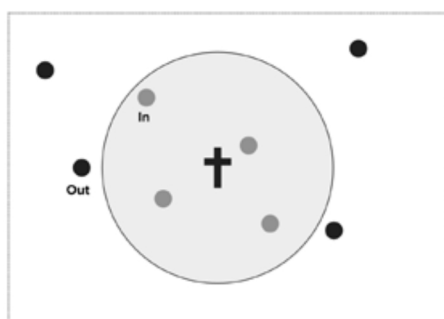
The foundations for such a framework can be found in the widely cited work of Hiebert (1978:24-29), who



invokes Set Theory (Bounded and Centred Sets) to highlight different ways of thinking about how people respond to the gospel.

2.1 What is a Bounded Set?

One way to conceive of the Body of Christ is to think about it as a bounded set. A bounded set is defined by a boundary, and the relation of individuals to that boundary. Some people are in, and some are out. You can cross the boundary by satisfying specific criteria.



Consider, for example, the likely faith journey of an individual who comes to Christ as a result of CV's evangelistic work in a reached context where the gospel is generally known and the culture is heavily influenced by Christian values:

An individual who is outside of the boundary becomes part of the Christian community when they cross that boundary. The boundary, for the purposes of this illustration, could be a sinners' prayer – the moment of salvation; the moment a person expresses that they have accepted Christ as their Lord. Once that boundary is crossed (once the sinners' prayer is prayed and the individual accepts Christ), the person is in – they have become part of the community.

In the bounded model, the faith journey takes a simple, binary form: An individual is out; they cross the boundary in an instant; and are then in.

In a bounded model, it is simple to draw a distinction between "response" and "discipleship". Interactions

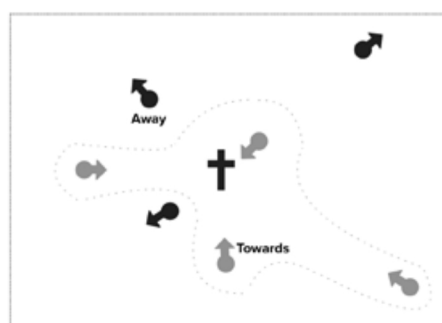
with those outside the boundary constitute "response" – an ongoing conversation aimed at convincing an individual to cross the boundary. As soon as an individual crosses the boundary, the priority shifts to "discipleship," which is aimed at bolstering the individual's spiritual maturity so that they do not cross back over the boundary to the outside.

This model is particularly relevant when an individual comes to faith in a reached context, where cultural Christianity may be the norm. In a reached context, an individual may initially resist the gospel for various reasons; however, once they accept Christ, they cross over into a world that is not entirely foreign to them. The basic tenets of Christianity, even if they did not accept them in the past, are roughly familiar, and there are no impediments to spiritual development apart from the individual's own willingness and enthusiasm.

Amongst largely unreached audiences, however, the binary nature of the bounded model often breaks down, as it fails to account for the complex implications of faith decisions.

2.2 What is a Centred Set?

Centred sets are defined by a centre and the direction of movement relative to that centre. In a centred set, an individual is either advancing towards the centre or moving away from the centre. In some contexts – particularly the unreached contexts where CV tends to do its evangelistic work – the journey of individuals towards Christ more closely resembles this model.





The following concepts are relevant in relation to a centred set:

- The centre: In a centred set, the centre may be represented by Christ. Individuals are either oriented towards Christ, or away from Him. For example, a Muslim in Pakistan, who has no knowledge of the gospel, is oriented away from Christ. When such a person is introduced to Jesus, and they respond positively to this opportunity, their orientation changes: rather than being oriented away from Christ, the centre, they are now moving towards Him. They may not have a clear grasp of all the tenets of the faith yet, and they may not yet be fully aware of all of its implications for their life, but their fundamental orientation has changed: they now recognise Christ as Lord, and is on a journey closer to Him.
- Proximity to centre: In a centred model, an individual's journey may begin quite far away from the centre: In an Islamic context, for example, an individual's entire cultural identity and frame of reference may be tied up in a Muslim worldview, with profound implications for their understanding of virtually every facet of life. The individual may have to work through many different blockers and hurdles on their journey towards Christ, including a reframing of their entire worldview in the light of their decision to follow Jesus. In that sense, even though an individual has recognised Christ as Lord, they may be very far from the centre.
- Non-binary: Since the binary, in-out nature of a bounded set does not apply, the distinction between response and discipleship blurs in this context. For instance, the Pakistani Muslim referenced above, who has absolutely no conception of the Christian faith, may well pray a sinners' prayer in response to an Introduction to Jesus; however, their view of the Jesus they

are accepting may, to an extent, be disconnected from scripture. In a centred model, it is possible to account for the complexity of this journey, since the primary focus is the individual's orientation to Christ: the object of any journey of engagement is progressive movement towards the centre, no matter how far from the centre the journey starts.

We propose the centred model as a helpful foundation for a framework that captures both the simplicity and nuance of the directional movement of seekers to Christ, while resolving the potential confusion associated with a response-discipleship binary. It is with this simplification in mind that we propose the concept of a Faith Journey.

3. Introducing Faith Journeys

A Faith Journey is a modular, contextually configurable, measurable framework that aims to track an individual's directional movement to Christ following an Introduction to Jesus. It consists of milestones and markers in the form of events, experiences, or actions that represent a progression or maturation in an individual's faith.

- A Faith Journey is modular in the sense that it consists of distinct, interchangeable components that form part of the larger framework.
- It is contextually configurable in the sense that the sequence and number of components can be tailored or adjusted to cater to specific ministry contexts. This adaptability makes it relevant and applicable to people of diverse cultural and faith backgrounds. The Faith Journey concept is not an attempt to identify a single, ideal sequence of steps that apply across the board; rather, it recognises that the sequence, number, and duration of steps can differ depending on the ministry context. Understanding and accounting for this variance offers an opportunity to tailor evangelistic approaches to specific audiences.





- It is measurable in the sense that it provides a mechanism by which an individual's progress can be assessed by tracking specific markers or milestones.

3.1 Components of a Faith Journey

A Faith Journey typically consists of the following components:

3.1.1 Introduction to Jesus

A Faith Journey is initiated when an individual responds positively to a recognised Introduction to Jesus (ITJ), indicating that they are now directionally oriented towards Christ.

An ITJ is any validated, measurable method recognised by CV that is designed to share the gospel with an audience. (For example, CV currently recognises a 95%-video view as an ITJ).

3.1.2 Milestones and Markers

Once an ITJ has been achieved, an individual progresses through a series of milestones and markers – that is, distinct and measurable events, experiences, or actions that represent a progression or maturation in an individual's Faith Journey.

Milestones

Milestones are self-reported physical events. The following milestones could form part of a Faith Journey:

- Salvation Prayer: A seeker prays (or indicates that they have prayed) a prayer to accept Jesus as Lord.
- Baptism: An individual is baptised in water as a public declaration of their faith.
- Prayer: An individual indicates that they have prayed or are praying about a specific aspect of their faith; indicates that they have prayed or are praying for someone else; or requests prayer for themselves or someone else.
- Holy Spirit empowerment: An individual exhibits

evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in their life. This may be evidenced in the form of Fruit of the Spirit or Gifts of the Spirit.

- Community connection: An individual joins a Christian faith community, regardless of size, whether formal or informal in nature.
- Bible engagement: An individual indicates that they have read or are reading the Bible in an effort to further their spiritual walk.
- Faith-sharing: An individual shares their faith with someone else.
- Evangelistic leader: An individual leads others in an evangelistic initiative of any nature or scale, and there are no impediments to spiritual development apart from the individual's own willingness and enthusiasm.

Markers

Markers are tracked digital events. The following markers could form part of a Faith Journey:

- Initiate response: The moment an individual enters into written communication with CV following an Introduction to Jesus.
- Enter consideration pathway: The moment an individual begins a single content consumption journey aimed at progressing their understanding of the faith.
- Complete consideration pathway: The moment an individual concludes a single content consumption journey aimed at progressing their understanding of the faith.
- Bible engagement: An individual engages with scripture in digital form.
- Connection request: The moment an individual expresses the desire to connect with a real person, either digitally or in-person.
- Connection point: The moment an individual is connected with a real person, either digitally or in-person, to further their faith journey in the context of a formal or informal faith community or personal relationship.

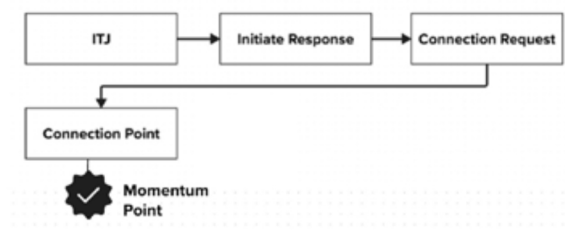


3.1.3 Momentum Point

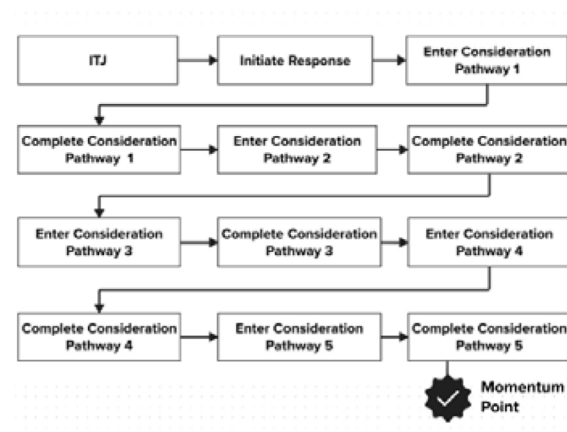
The Momentum Point is a moment in an individual's directional movement to Christ where there is a reasonable expectation that that person will be able to continue their journey without CV's continued involvement. The goal of every Faith Journey is to reach the Momentum Point.

The Momentum Point is set when a Faith Journey is modelled for a particular audience. It is a variable point, and is informed by an audience's religious and cultural context, its security profile, and any other relevant factors.

For example, in Country A, security risk may be minimal and CV may have access to a highly trusted partner with a small network of house churches. Given this context, there is a high degree of certainty that connecting an individual to a partner as soon as possible will result in a positive outcome that will see the seeker's Faith Journey continue in a meaningful way. In this scenario, the appropriate Momentum Point may be set as the moment a seeker is connected to the partner.



In Country B, the security risk may be extremely high. CV may have no access to any partners or other Christians whatsoever. In this case, the only option might be to help the seeker work through a body of text and video resources in the form of a consideration pathway, to the point where there is confidence that the individual will be able to continue this journey on their own. In this case, the appropriate set of text and



video resources for that particular audience may be identified, and the Momentum Point may be set as the point at which the individual has consumed all those resources.

3.2 Active and Inactive Faith Journeys

A Faith Journey is active if an individual has responded positively to an Introduction to Jesus, or reached a Marker or Milestone, within the last (rolling) 30 days.

A Faith Journey becomes inactive when an individual hasn't reached a Marker or Milestone in the last (rolling) 30 days.

A Faith Journey that has been inactive for any period of time can be reactivated when the individual in question reaches a new Marker or Milestone. There is no limit on the amount of time within which a Faith Journey may be reactivated.

Source

Hiebert, P. G. (1978). Conversion, Culture, and Cognitive Categories. Gospel in Context, 1(4), 24-29.