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Well, hi everyone. I'm Derek Sanford and I'm here with my co-host, Danielle Hartland.

Hi.

And this is the introductory episode of a new podcast for church leaders called Reinventing Church. And I never dreamed that after serving this church for 30 years, that God would call us to transition from a successful mega church, what I would call an attractional church growth model to a multiplication disciple making model of ministry. And so this podcast is going to chronicle the journey in real time while we talk about some church leadership issues, some disciple making principles along the way and things that we're learning about and stumbling through, as well as some just practical answers to some of the most common questions that pastors get. I think that should be fun and funny at some level as we go into my email inbox and wrestle down some hot topics. This is the first episode and we're just going to give a quick overview of this journey that we're on and invite you into the journey with us. And so this should be cool. We've talked about this for a while. I know. I know.

Only have a reason to do it.

It's exciting. So this is Danielle. We've served together for a long time, many years, and she's our director of programming. She's also served in communications and marketing and worship and just about every other possible role you could think of. So Danielle, thanks for doing this with me. And how do you think this podcast can help other church leaders?

I'm excited because I know for us, as we've kind of learned on the job,

And I mean obviously people have schooling and whatever, but we've really experimented. We've kind of prided ourselves on that, and there have been several times where we've come up to a point where no one was ahead of us and we were kind of in uncharted waters. And I feel that way now for sure. Probably this is the biggest time I've ever felt that way. And I think it'll be cool for leaders to not only kind of learn from our mistakes as we're making the mistakes. Sometimes by the time you write a book, it's a little whitewashed, right? You're not really talking about we had to fire that person because you get past those things. And so I'm excited for that. I'm excited for the dialogue that could potentially come even just digitally from other leaders and what their ideas might be in the moment as they help us even build what this new reality looks like. I think it could be cool.

Yeah, that's really good. And it's funny, as we found ourselves in those uncharted waters before, oftentimes what we would do is go, oh, this would be cool. And then we kind of back away from it for a while and then somebody else does it. We're like, crap. We thought of that.

We have probably sold in our heads so many ideas and books. Yeah. Oh yeah. So

This one we're trying to get in right at the front end and going, I think we're paving a little bit of new ground. I'm sure we're not the first to do this, but maybe the first to kind of chronicle our journey along the way and let other people learn from the good, the bad, and the ugly. So yeah, I'm excited to do this. So the way we're going to format this, and we'll see how it develops, but I think right now we're thinking about each episode kind of having three parts to it. One of them, the first part is, I think we're just calling it from the pastor's inbox.

This is my favorite part, and any of you who are close to pastors are like, oh no, because man, the inbox, it's a treacherous place. It's scary in

There. So what we're going to try to do is every week pick something, and I've already got a backlog. I've been doing this for 30 years, so I've got lots of questions that have been asked along the years. I promise that we're not going to be like doxing.

No, no. Oh my gosh,

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No. It's going to be more of just like, I'm going to read you actual questions, but they're going to be more conglomerations of a few questions that all go into one, so that one person doesn't listen out there and go, oh my gosh, I emailed that last week and they're talking about it.

However, no, that's

Great. But one of the things I'm excited about, first of all, I've listened to a few podcasts along the years that have done that sort of a thing. I found it to be one of the most helpful things, like when you actually hear real pastors talk about real questions they get and how they answered

Them.

And so that's what we're going to do with that little part of it. And eventually, as we hopefully build some listenership, I would love to have other pastors contributing in

That'd be great.

Or church leaders contributing in some things from their inbox and how they responded, and we can highlight that and all learn from each other. The second part of it, the main body of the podcast is just going to be the reinventing church topic of the day. So we're going to talk at a little bit of a higher level about some of the principles that we're trying to apply as we move this mega tractional megachurch into more of a missional multiplication model. And so it'll be a little bit more principle, philosophical, topical, and this is where we'll also maybe bring in a guest or two from time to time that has some expertise in this area. It'll be fun to learn from

Them.

Then the final part of the podcast is we're just going to spend a little time at the end of every episode talking about something that happened this week. And so we want to keep it kind of just boots on the ground real. And I think by talking about a meeting that we had or decision that we made or a conflict that we went through or a tension that we felt or whatever, that that's going to be one of those ways that we can really keep it real and help people to see the real grassroots stuff that happens when churches make changes like this.

Yeah, that's going to be a cool part. I think

So too.

I'm excited about that.

So just in this introductory episode, I want to talk just for a minute about just how we got here and a little bit about our story. Grace is an old church. We were born back in the late 18 hundreds as the Swedish Baptist Church.

That's so crazy.

And so we've come a long way, baby, and one of the things that there's been a lot of iterations of our church trying to make appropriate change to stay relevant to the times. And so when I came on, and you came on shortly after I did, which was back in the mid nineties,

No,

I mean

It wasn't, no, it wasn't.

Yes, it was like five

Years ago. It feels like it.

We were running this model of church when I came on, which

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The one we running now

We're running right now, which has its roots in the seventies and eighties. This is the megachurch movement, the church growth movement. So you got the Willow Creeks and the Saddlebacks and the Bill Hybels and the Rick Warrens and Seacoast I think was in there in some of those early years with multi-site. And so some of those principles are all what we use, but right now it's kind of arresting to think that that's a 50-year-old model.

That's crazy. Especially considering our history and how even around the model, I feel like we've innovated, but the playbook is very intact, I think. Agreed. I mean, the roots of

It,

It's wild.

The thing that I often say is I imagine when I came to Grace in 1995, if they had said We're running a 1945 model of church, I would've been Peace out. I'm going to

Get Can imagine a different job. Imagine. I know. It's

So wild. So I feel like the church at large has been hanging onto this model and squeezing every bit of last juice out of it. And so we're just saying, I'm not sure. It's weird to say it because in many ways it is working.

It's been working for us this month.

Correct.

It's not broke. There's a lot about it that's not broken if we're being honest.

And really when I sit in rooms with pastors who are running this model, everybody is kind of just saying, Hey, it's never been better. It's up and to the right. All the numbers are

Grown. A lot of the reports are coming out right now saying that same thing.

Exactly.

So it's one of those weird things of just like, man, it still seems to be working, and yet there's been this thing here in me and us, I think for the last five years or so, that's like, I don't know, as we see our culture shifting away as we see the church moving from being the good guy to the bad guy in a lot of people's minds, as we see the rise of these numbers of people who are walking away from church at the same time that this kind of church seems to be growing, we're getting the great churching numbers of 40 million people have left the church in America alone, which is wild. So I don't know, there's just been this sense underneath it all that I think we have to begin to make some changes. And I always come back to the Netflix and blockbuster analogy of just Netflix came to Blockbuster and was like, Hey, we'd like to partner up. We think there's this new edge to and Blockbuster's like, no. They were sure that their model was right, and we can see where both of those places are, and I don't want to be blockbuster.

No, not to be off the topic, but one of the things I'll never forget is going into Blockbuster during that time with my friend, and they had just started their own, oh, you can get mail in DVDs, mail in, get 'em to your house. And they kept calling the Q Aqua, and I was like, somebody doesn't understand what they're even selling here. So yeah, no, for me, blockbuster, Netflix, Redbox, all that stuff. It's like a very clear, yeah.

So anyway, this podcast, we're going to be taking a look at our shift from, again, the words I would use are attractional assimilation model or church growth model or mega church model. I feel like all those things kind of go into the same bucket, and we're really trying to innovate a missional multiplication model. And it's the idea of building a church where they come to us versus building a church where we go to them. One of the centerpiece of this new thing that we're talking about is the idea of helping every

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individual believer find their calling's in the world where they live, work, learn, and play, and what would happen if we unleashed an army of people who had a crystal clear idea of what they've been called to do by God,

The world. Yeah. That's

Incredible thought in the world. And so that's the journey we're on.

Cool.

And that's what we're going to talk about during this podcast. So any final thoughts? Otherwise we'll sign off.

No, it's great. Can't wait. It's going to be awesome.

Okay, good. So there will be a series of blog posts and resources for church leaders and pastors that will kind of go along with this. There's an email list that you can get on to get constant updates about what's going on with these things. You can find all of that stuff as well as the show notes for this podcast over@dereksanford.com. And we would love to have you along for the journey. Cool. Alright. Peace.