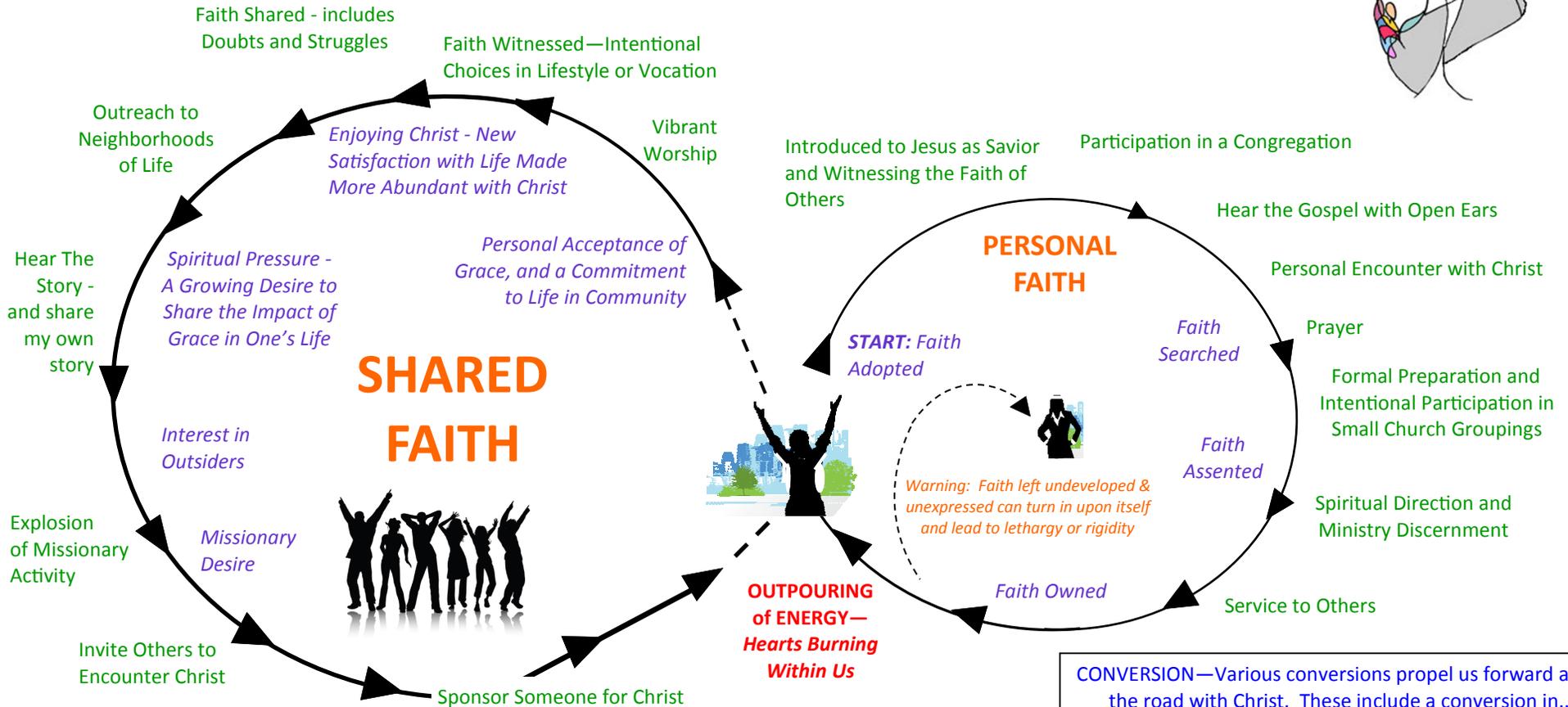
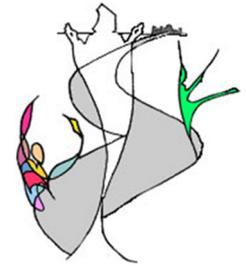


The Dynamics of Discipleship Along the Road

A path of encountering, enjoying, following, and sharing Christ

- by Dennis Mahaney 2015



From a faith adopted... to faith: searched, appreciated, owned, lived, witnessed and shared

Most people start out life with the “adopted” faith of parents and community (diagram center and moving around this cycle to the left). This happened with the disciples who encountered Jesus along the road to Emmaus and this dynamic of discipleship continues along the road of life today. Experiences and encounters cause a variety of conversions in life (see chart to right). These conversion events repeat in life, causing ever deeper reflection and response. While the order of such milestones may vary, as a person recognizes the action of God in one’s life, faith grows and generates energy. This energy—a certain enjoyment or gratitude, causes inner spiritual pressure. And just as with all pressure, faith must be expressed somehow. There are many ways to express the joy or gratitude that accompanies faith: study, service, piety, lifestyle, speech, avocation, and explicit acts of witness or choices on behalf of justice in the world. Without a constructive outlet spiritual pressure can turn inward upon itself with less productive consequences. Faith turned inward, either unexpressed or unexercised, can cause indifference, doctrinal rigidity, lethargy, relativism, excessive or mechanistic piety, and intolerance of frailties in self or others. Vital parishes call disciples to encounter, follow, enjoy and share their faith in Jesus Christ. This dynamic perpetuates faith through generations and across demographics and cultures.

CONVERSION—Various conversions propel us forward along the road with Christ. These include a conversion in...

God:	from a distant force to a close, caring person
Church:	from speaking of “it”... to speaking of “us”
Faith:	from knowing about Jesus... to knowing Jesus
Self:	from self-rule... to self surrender
Life:	from a series of events and problems... to a journey into purpose, meaning and mystery. Even suffering becomes a source of life more abundant.
Truth:	from acceptance... to appreciation, to full and grateful assent of mind and will
Mission:	from personal satisfaction or salvation... to a life of compassionate service and reliance upon God for satisfaction

(Conversions—adapted from *Sharing the Faith That You Love* by John & Therese Boucher, 2013—www.wau.org)