

MPD Syllabus

I tell you that unless a grain of wheat that falls to the ground dies, it stays just a grain; but if it dies, it produces a big harvest — *Jesus, John 12:24*

May he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness — *Paul, 2 Corinthians 9:10*

Maize Plant Metaphor

In the gospel of John, Jesus refers to his own mission using the metaphor of a seed that enters the ground and dies, in order to produce a large harvest. Grown throughout sub-Saharan Africa, the maize plant provides a similar, highly recognisable metaphor.

Maize represents the "daily bread" of millions of African people. The messianic community is called, like the Messiah, to become a kind of "life-giving bread" to the peoples of the world—see John 6 & 20:21.

The Maize Plant Discipleship Syllabus is structured to symbolically reflect the metaphor of a maize plant. There are three main components to the metaphor.

1. **Soil and roots**

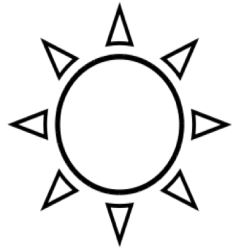
Representing the biblical, covenantal community, context and vocation of Israel.

2. **Maize plant**

Representing the dynamic spiritual growth and multiplication of messianic community.

3. **Sunlight and rainfall**

Representing essential spiritual disciplines that stimulate and sustain the growth of messianic community.



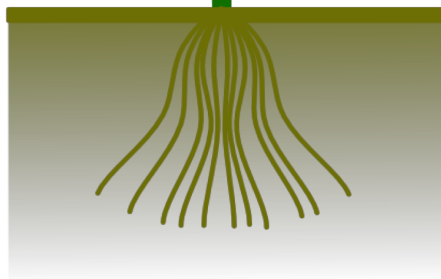
SUNLIGHT
feeding plant



RAINFALL
feeding plant



**DYNAMIC
GROWTH**
of plant



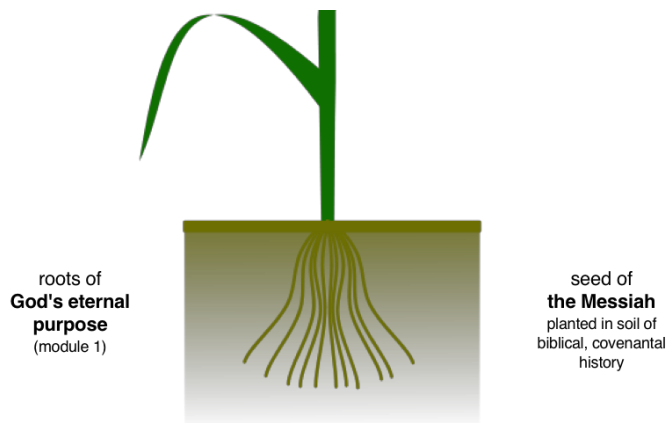
SOIL
holding,
feeding roots

ROOTS
sustaining,
anchoring plant

SEED
sown into soil

Soil and Roots

Only seed sown into good soil produces a good harvest. Discipleship communities also need to be rooted in good soil. This allows us to draw on essential, spiritual nutrients and the living water of the Messiah's Spirit, anchoring us against winds of false teaching and sustaining us amidst the heat of trials, temptations and vocational responsibility.



MPD-M1-Eternal Purpose

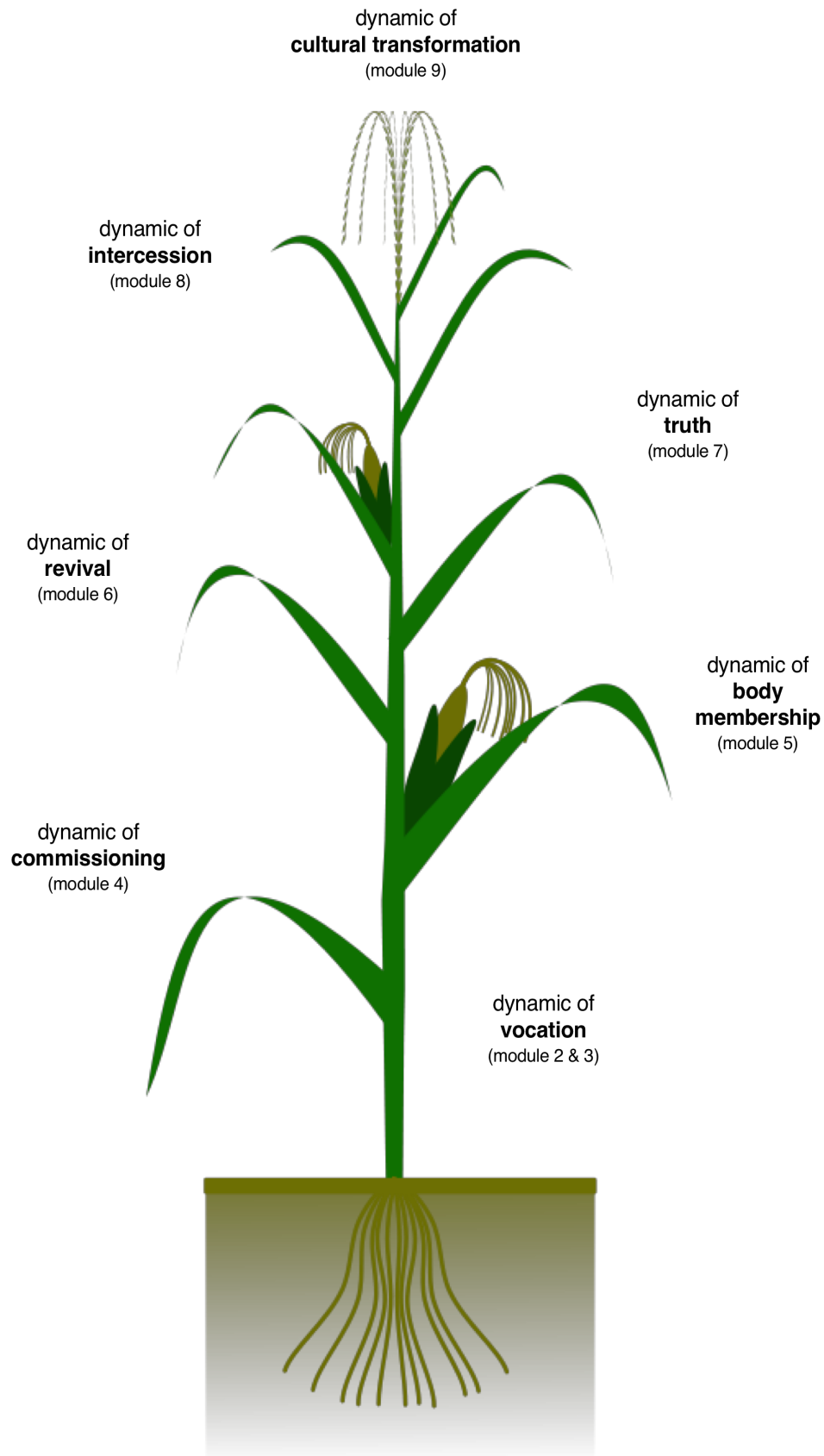
Module 1 of Maize Plant Discipleship—MPD-M1—provides a study of the biblical, Hebraic soil and messianic roots of new-covenant faith. It does this by gradually unfolding a panoramic overview of the whole story of scripture, representing God's unchanging, eternal purpose.

Within this foundational illustration, the Messiah represent *the Seed* which enters the soil (of the biblical, covenantal history of the people of Israel) in order to die and to ultimately produce a rich harvest of people—a messianic covenant community—from amongst all the peoples of the earth.

Maize Plant

Modules MPD-M2 to MPD-M9 explore eight characteristic *dynamics* of messianic community.

In the metaphor of the maize plant, the growth and multiplication of maize represents the growth and multiplication of messianic community. MPD refers to characteristic processes of growth and multiplication as *dynamics* (forces stimulating change or progress within a system or process). Hence, the *dynamics of messianic community* refer to the unique, spiritual forces stimulating its characteristic development, growth, structure, shape and fruit.



MPD-M2-Dynamics of Vocation-The Nations

Examines the historical development the Messianic Community's vocational mission to bless the nations of the world.

MPD-M3-Dynamics of Vocation-The Jews

Examines biblical Israel, in order to demonstrate the significant responsibilities of the Messianic Community with regard to the Jewish people.

MPD-M4-Dynamics of Commissioning

Explores the dynamic of messianic commissioning, including a focus upon strategy, structures and modes of expansion.

MPD-M5-Dynamics of Body Membership

Explores basic patterns of membership, commitment and spiritual maturity within the body of the Messiah.

MPD-M6-Dynamics of Revival

Reveals a cycle of spiritual activities representing the dynamics of revival, leading to a spiritual harvest.

MPD-M7-Dynamics of Truth

Explores our encounter with truth, as we learn to walk in practical, covenantal faithfulness towards God's revelation, wisdom and direction.

MPD-M8-Dynamics of Intercession

Explores the priestly vocation of the Messianic Community to be *a house of prayer for all nations*.

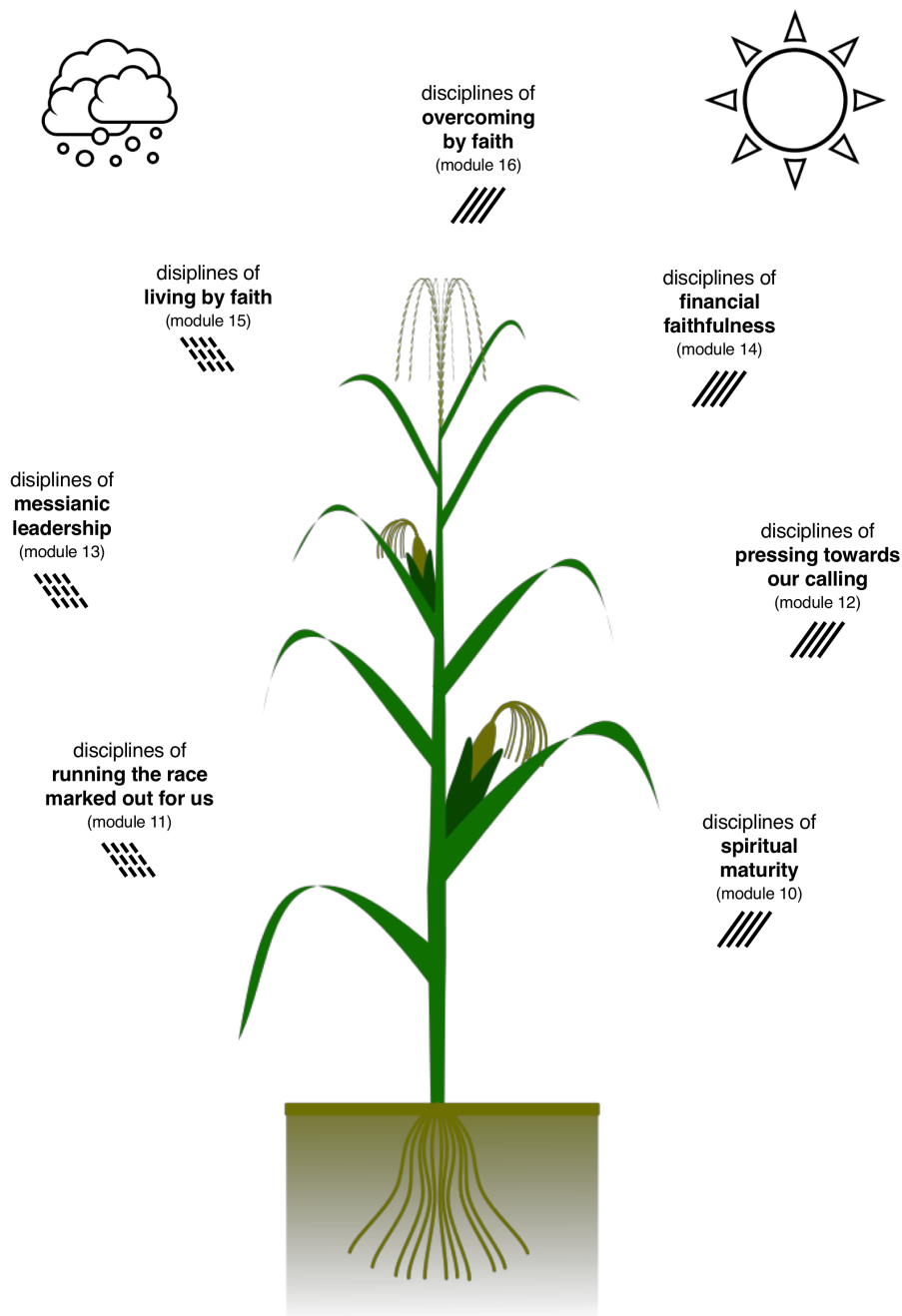
MPD-M9-Dynamics of Cultural Transformation

Examines our call to work, amongst and on behalf of the nations, towards cultural transformations that signal the presence of God's kingdom.

Sunlight and Rainfall

Modules MPD-M10 to MPD-M16 examine seven characteristic *disciplines* of messianic community.

In the metaphor of the maize plant, sunlight and rainfall are representative of messianic *disciplines*, which open us to receive the revelatory Light and sustaining Living Water of God's Spirit, without which we become spiritually weak and unable to produce good fruit or a plentiful harvest.



MPD-M10-Disciplines of Spiritual Maturity

Explores three stages of encounter, discovery and growth in spiritual maturity and discipleship: (i) pastoral, devotional; (ii) missional, vocational and (iii) apostolic, intercessory.

MPD-M11-Disciplines of Running the Race

Uses the metaphor of an athlete to examine the qualifications, disciplines and inner motivations necessary for living an enduring life of service and completing *the race marked out for us*.

MPD-M12-Disciplines of Pressing Toward Our Vocation

Explores how we can be sustained in our personal vocations through a deepening of our relationship with the Messiah, including *prayer without ceasing*.

MPD-M13-Disciplines of Financial Faithfulness

Study explores financial faithfulness in the context of covenant relationship and messianic community, highlighting biblical perspectives of wealth and poverty that are radically different to those of the world.

MPD-M14-Disciplines of Messianic Leadership

Examines the qualifications, motivations and characteristics of faithful messianic leadership, proposing a leadership model that balances *achieving* tasks, *building* teams and *developing* individuals.

MPD-M15-Disciplines of Living by Faith

Explores how messianic faith is tested and purified through trials, until we learn to see with eyes of faith, after which major challenges no longer represent threats from which to retreat, but instead opportunities to experience God's covenant-faithfulness.

MPD-M16-Disciplines of Overcoming

Employs the analogy of a sporting arena to represent the reality of spiritual confrontation and conflict with cultural idols and strongholds. In these contexts, we need to discern strategies that make room for a transformative encounter with God's overcoming power.

Format

Each MPD module contains four interrelated *Studies*, each of which incorporates:

- A Précis
- Scripture Readings
- Topical Sections
- A Summary
- Questions for Group Discussion.

The format is designed to facilitate reflective group learning—so that Maize Plant Discipleship resources rely not upon the presence of a qualified leader, teacher or theologian, but upon facilitators willing to co-ordinate learning groups and discussions.

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