**Learning Experience Paper (2 pages only):**

**Instructions for the ATS learning experience paper:**

**1st Page:** Abstract Summary**:**

This is a one page **“General Summary”** of the course.Simply summarize the content of the course in your own words. There should be NO personal commentary or attempt to evaluate the content of the course in this one page abstract summary. Simply summarize what the teacher or teachers said. Include as many of the key concepts and ideas as you can. Do you best to be comprehensive, concise and clear. This abstract summary should be one single-spaced page in length.

**2nd Page:** Will consist of the following three areas:

**CONCRETE STORIES and MEMORIES EVOKED BY READING**: Get Vulnerable!Describe one or two personal experiences about which this material reminded you. Here is your chance to be a storyteller. Tell it here in “first person,” describing action, quoting exact words you remember hearing or saying. Be as specific and concrete as you can, including who, what, when, where details. Make sure, however, that your personal stories are clearly connected in the concepts of the teaching in this course and be sure to show the connection between your stories and the course. This “Concrete Section” should be a half of one page. If you can connect what you heard in the course with what you have previously lived or observed, you will be profoundly changed by the course. If you cannot connect the concepts with past and present personal realities, you will never be able to teach or use what you are learning with any conviction and effectiveness.

**REFLECTION EXPRESSED IN QUESTIONS**: **What questions popped up** **as you listened to this course?** Keep a rough note sheet at hand as you listen to the lectures so you can write them down. Then simply list two or three of your questions. Make sure your questions relate directly to the **course content**. This section should take up about one fourth to a third of a page.

**ACTION:** **WHAT I MUST DO WITH WHAT I LEARNED**. **So what are you going to do about it? Be specific!!** All true learning leads to some change in what and how you do things—whether through transformation of your inner person or you’re acquiring of useful knowledge or skills. Here describe what **you will** **do** if you keep faith with what you have now discovered as a result of this course. For example, after hearing a teacher talk about Incarnational ministry, you might commit yourself as follows: “The next time I go to eat this week with my family, I will treat the server at our table as Christ would by getting to know their name, praying for them when we pray before our meal, and doing whatever follow-up is necessary.” This section should take up one fourth to one third of a page.

**See sample or example on next page:**

**Sample – Learning Experience Paper**

**(This is an "A" paper, and it will help you to see a well-written example)**

Written by: John Doe 3/8/16

# General Summary

Frost and Hirsch suggest, as Clapp does, that the church is in need of an overhaul in the 21st Century. After 1700 years of Christendom (i.e. Constantinianism), it has been *becoming* time to redo church. According to the writers of the Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP) “Globalization and the Gospel,” the church is in jeopardy of losing this window of time, this opportunity to shift from the old model of Christendom to the new/old mode of (in Frost and Hirsch’s language) incarnational, messianic, and apostolic community life. These last three adjectives are the central characteristics of the missional church. It is incarnational, as opposed to attractional, in that it moves *out* toward the other, and dwells with the other, and loves the other locally and graciously. It is messianic, as opposed to dualistic, in that it does not respect the firm line, drawn by Christendom, between the sacred and the profane. Indeed, the missional church sees all of life as waiting to be redeemed, and Frost and Hirsch emphasize this reality by referring to “not-yet-Christians” rather than “*non*believers” or “*un*believers,” etc. The missional church is apostolic, as opposed to hierarchical, in that it respects the biblical reality of the priesthood of all believers. Thus, leadership within the missional church, according to Frost, Hirsch, and the writers of the LOP “The Local Church in Mission,” is spread out, lateral, and egalitarian. In this way, the missional church is comprised of missionaries, not only in word, but always/already in deed.

The need for this new/old church is best understood through the lens of globalization. The writers of “Globalization and the Gospel” differentiate between globalization, globalism, globality, and glocalization. Through these four terms, they seek to reinforce the complexity of our globalized/globalizing world by reminding the reader of the action of globalization; the impulses feeding that action; the realties experienced everyday as a result of that action; and the shifting, contingent natures of these realities and actions over the lifespan of the globalization process. This is to say that the world is more connected than it has ever been before, and the church is in need of a mode of being that responds to this interconnectedness in a meaningful way. The missional church is this meaningful way, according to the Lausanne writers, Frost and Hirsch, and Snyder.

Snyder does the necessary work of identifying just *why* the message carried by the missional church is necessary for a globalized world. In his article “The Gospel as Global Good News,” Snyder reminds the church that “the Gospel of Jesus Christ is, in fact, good news – not only for individual persons, but also for the whole cosmos; not only for North Americans, but for everyone; not only for the past or present, but also for the future”. In light of the Gospel reality, the church is to remember that it does not own the Gospel, but that the Gospel owns it, and it must exist in light of this ownership. This will mean overhauling the church in order to eliminate Christendom’s assumptions and to turn the church squarely toward the unique postmodern opportunity (not threat). Snyder suggests that this new/old position will be Trinitarian, Christocentric, incarnational, ecclesial, and ecological, as a truly historico-global entity ought to be. Snyder seems to speak for all the authors when he says, “We are called to an authentic, faithful sharing of the Good News of Jesus Christ. And share it we will, if in fact God is at work in us, making us the church we are called to be”.

# Concrete Stories and Memories Evoked by Reading

My father told me last night that he has been getting ready this weekend for the church picnic, where the church will serve itself pulled pork sandwiches, potato salad, corn on the cob, root beer, etc. After the meal, there will be a contest for best pie. A $25 prize will be given to the winners of each category: fruit, cream, most interesting, and best pie overall. While this is going on, the children will enjoy horse and pony rides. There will be music. ETC. All of this will take place on the church lawn, in between the front doors and the street.

I find nothing wrong with picnics. Further, I find nothing wrong with picnics offered by churches for church members. However, that image of a country church picnic, on display on the front lawn, strikes a chord with me when I think of Frost and Hirsch’s suggestion that the church has become too attractional in its old age. What could be more “come-to-us” than ponies, pork sandwiches, and pie baking contests held on a front lawn? Again, it is not wrong or harmful to offer picnics. In fact, it is a good and wonderful thing to eat and be together. But what does the image say about where the church is? So far as I know, there are no smaller picnics held simply and normally in local parks. And the last bit I heard from the pulpit of this church, concerning picnicking, was a sermon about inviting neighbors over for burgers in order to pray in front of them before the meal, and ostensibly, to demonstrate just how different and wonderful Christians are. This is the same church I’ve written about before – the one that is building a sports hall on the back end. I see little to no incarnation here.

**Reflection Expressed in Questions**

1. What are we saying to older Christians who may not relate to what Frost and Hirsch are speaking about? What are we calling their faith?
2. What problems are there with Frost and Hirsch’s conception of the 21st Century church? What might we do, in light of the church’s missions history, to address potential blind spots in this mode of evangelism/mission/commission?
3. How can we keep from joining into the competitive (for lack of a better word) nature of church growth? And, if we attempt to give the culture what it yearns for in terms of worship (“experiential, participatory, image-driven and communal”—Leonard Sweet) how do we keep from falling into the “attractional” trap?

**Action: What I must do with what I learned?**

Today I talked to a leader in one of our churches about what I was reading in Frost and Hirsch. We began a discussion about the possibility of buying a downtown building as an outpost for ministry. While we may not actually end up doing that, I plan to continue to raise ideas that are far outside the outreach “box” (the same old VBS, food pantry, caroling, etc.) in which our church people are caught. I will be praying about what our churches can do and will continue these types of conversations over the next two months, so that by the time our charge conference is held in October, each church will have considered and may have at least **one** concrete plan to reach beyond the strictures and structures of the past to impact our communities for Christ.