

Think Tank 2018: Learning Together

When we spent several hours reading and meditating on Acts 16, it was clear that Paul's traveling team was testing actions, reflecting on those experiences, talking together about experiences, considering a vision, and learning from the women they met in Philippi. Because they sought to be engaged by God's Spirit, they worked to be alert, experimental, and attentive to any way that God's initiatives were around them and ahead of them. I also wonder if the diversity of the team made a difference – that when Luke joins them in Troas, they became more capable of exploring and learning as they met Lydia, who was a Gentile businesswoman, an immigrant to Philippi, and the head of a household.

My years in church leadership, teaching, and consulting, along with a degree in education, have always focused on *how we learn*. There have been times when I was inspired by a compelling theory or new data, and I have seen others who also showed interest and voiced intent around new possibilities, but two things stand out to me. Almost without exception, real learning, the kind that gets embedded in our behaviors, imaginations, and habits, requires three elements: actions that allow the learning to be tested and expanded in real life, personal reflection that prayerfully considers the connections between ideas and actions, and conversations with others.

All of this contributed to our continuing work to reimagine how JMP, as a participative, exploratory initiative in learning, can nurture local groups who seek to be attentive to and participants in God's gospel initiatives. The ongoing mix of on-the-ground stories, substantive reflections, online conversations, and testimonies of continual learning give me hope regarding what is possible at the interface of local gospel communities and reflective experiments with online collaborative media.