

Communion, Community and Sustainable Mission

Flourishing in the 2nd Half of Life

By **JAMEY LEWIS**

Jamey Lewis is a facilitator with the 2nd Half Collaborative or 2HC (2hc.life), an initiative of Frontier Ventures. 2HC is a 10-month cohort to provide encouragement and friendship for global workers in the second half of life.

“It was the first time I said in prayer, ‘I don’t know how long I can do this.’” One of our “2nd Half Collaborative” (2HC) Campfire small group members was talking about a time of depletion and exhaustion in ministry. Another Campfire member talked of his “original dreams being pulled apart.” He had wanted to be all things to all people at all times. Now he is drawn to the potency of being patient and unhurried, with emerging rhythms and ministry contributions very different from that original version of himself.

The depth and honesty of sharing from mission workers that day during our opening 2HC retreat were refreshing. We averaged 19–20 years of experience in mission. But we were brought together not around a common task—such as many of us have experienced on a ministry team—but a common longing, a longing for honesty with God and authentic friendship with others. We also had a common commitment, expressed in a written document, to “listen with reverence for God’s actions in our lives and an openness to each other’s stories.”

The 2nd Half Collaborative—or 2HC for short—is a 10-month online cohort journey for mission workers in the 2nd half of life. Navigating disruption, loss, and the changing needs of family can bring unexpected disorientation for some mission workers in the second half of life. Some long for a simplifying and a deepening of relationship with Jesus. Others need increased capacity for discernment in a time of life and ministry transition, and almost all have expressed how refreshing it is to be alongside others in their 2HC cohort in honest friendship.

Although sponsored by Frontier Ventures, 2HC is open to mission workers from different organizations. 2HC reflects the commitment of Frontier Ventures to be a supportive come-alongside presence to mission workers who are living out fullness of life in Jesus in various places, including hard places and among the least reached. 2HC is not technically a “member-care”



initiative but an initiative fostering and modeling a way to be in mission with:

- a rich inner life of union with God
- an experience of honest and authentic community
- a regula (or rhythms) of sustainable mission.

2HC seeks to encourage the connection in con-temporary mission to ancient, enduring practices of monastic life. This accords with the fact that Frontier Ventures (formerly the US Center for World Mission) was founded by Ralph Winter as a missional order. In many ways, 2HC nurtures a long view in mission resonant with the life of early communities of Christians deeply committed to the “patient ferment” of the gospel.¹

Distinctives of 2HC include a commitment to safe and honest sharing, monthly “stations” of learning, three virtual retreats, one-on-one spiritual direction, one-on-one coaching, and formation through regular spiritual practices. Content for the 10 monthly stations is hosted on an online platform that can be accessed by 2HC members at any time. These 10 stations are formed around three different areas of focus: practices of interiority, practices of authentic community, and practices of sustainable mission. Retreats focus on the sharing of spiritual autobiographies, practices for discernment, and practices of gratitude and blessing.

Some of our monthly stations of learning are: Identity (Beloved), Unhurrying,² Seasons of Life and Grieving Losses, Collaboration, and Developing a Rule of Life.³ Content is kept to a minimum to encourage a four-week learning cycle that presents “bite-sized” chunks of new material, engagement with that material in some practical way, reflection on that engagement, and sharing in a small group. Over the 10 months, we have offered several additional online informal “2HC Café” experiences. One 2HC facilitator has begun to offer occasional 30-minute online times of centering prayer (a way simply to be present—patiently and quietly—to the Lord). In addition, 2HC just hosted its first webinar for 2HC alumni and facilitators: “Shadow Work and Authentic Community.” It is not our intent at 2HC to offer a lot of different programs; instead, we desire to offer relational experiences that foster a consistent, unhurried way of being in mission that often runs counter to activities that pull us toward speed, efficiency, and productivity.

Jesus calls us to bear fruit, fruit that remains ... that lasts. We know from Jesus’ words that lasting fruit comes from our connection as branches to the Vine, who is Jesus. But consider the trellis as well—the trellis that supports the growth of branches connected to the Vine. That trellis consists of those practices that nurture our inner life, connect us authentically to community, and help us keep a sustainable and life-giving pace in mission.

As you have been reading this article, what longings have been stirring in your heart? What do you need to release right now? Who will support you? With whom do you want to be with? What changes do you need to make to experience authentic, supportive community?

Receive all that is good and life-giving, dear friend. You are loved. 📧

¹ See for example our 2HC blog: 2hc.life/blog/ancient-monastic-advice-for-modern-cross-cultural-workers. The term “patient ferment” comes from Alan Kreider’s book, *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church* (Baker Academic, 2016).

² See for example our 2HC blog 2hc.life/blog/unhurrying.

³ For further explanation, see 2hc.life/blog/a-rule-of-life-to-honor-limits-and-longings-of-the-2nd-half-of-life.

