



Strategic Disciple Making

Aubrey Malphurs

Strategic Disciple Making – A Practical Tool for Successful Ministry
Baker Books, 2009.

The Preparation for Making Mature Disciples

- Perhaps the most important questions that the church and its leadership can ask are, What does God want us to do? What is our mission?
- The Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:46-49, John 20:21, Acts 1:8)
- We can end up with the wrong mission that while good over emphasises one aspect of church life at the expense of a holistic great commission mission.
- What do you think Jesus meant when he said “make disciples”?

How are we doing?

- Could the same thing that has taken place in Western Europe happen in America in regard to the influence and mission of the Christian Church?
- Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ – Dietrich Bonhoffer.
- If someone asked you whether your church is making disciples, what would your answer be? Why are you or why are you not making disciples?
- Would you say members of your church are growing in discipleship?
- The process of making disciples involves leading unbelievers to faith in Christ so that they become disciples (Christians). Disciple making must not end with a person’s conversion, however. It’s an ongoing process that encourages the believer to follow Christ and become more like Him. When we become more like Christ, we mature as

Christians, which is the goal of making disciples (Eph 4:13-15, Col 1:28).

Whose Job Is It?

- If God is not involved in the process of making disciples it will not happen?
- Scripture clearly holds each disciple responsible for the pursuit of the discipleship process in his or her life. "I am convinced that one of the great problems facing today's churches in growing disciples is that too few disciples are taking personal responsibility for their own spiritual growth and development." p41
- It is imperative that each Christian and member of a church had a plan for personal spiritual development.
- A lot of discipleship depends on the leadership of the church and their theology of sanctification.

Elements to include in a discipleship plan:

- Bible reading
- Individual worship
- Prayer
- Serving
- Stewardship (generosity)
- Loving people
- Evangelism
- Spiritual Disciplines such as solitude, meditation and simplicity
- The church is to come alongside and help "You can do it, and we can help".
- Nowhere does the Bible encourage 'lone ranger' Christians.

How Did Jesus Make Disciples?

Jesus Circle of Disciples

- Others
- The Twelve
- An Inner Circle
- Peter

Jesus' Primary Discipleship Messages

To the Crowds

- How to become a disciple (believer)

To the Disciples

- What disciples do
- What it means to follow Christ: to serve Him
- How disciples follow Jesus.
- The marks of a true disciple: they follow Christ's teaching, love one another and bear fruit.
- The results of following Christ: they become fishers of men or disciple makers.

- He preached
- He focused on a small group
- He spend time alone with the inner circle
- He counselled individuals

- Jesus preached to the crowds but poured his life into the small group.

The Church's Methods for Making Disciples

- Preached to the crowds (Peter)
- Met in large houses (medium-sized groups_
- Met in smaller houses
- Ministered one-on-one

How Would We Know A Mature Disciple If We Saw One?

Six reasons we fail in Discipleship (Gilliam)

- The leaders don't know what a disciple looks like.
- They don't know how to make a disciple even if they can define one
- They don't know how church programs work together to make disciples
- They have no way to measure progress
- Their leaders aren't model disciples but they to reproduce after their own kind.
- They don't know how to become intentional without splitting the church.

Step 1 – Determine the Church's Mission

Step 2 – Ask the Sanctification Question

- (Worship, Fellowship, Biblical Instruction, Evangelism, Service)
- Abiding in God's word
- Loving one another
- Bearing fruit

Step 3 – Ask the Communication Question

- How will you communicate these marks?

Church Ministries

The church's ministries are its means or activities that God used to implement or incarnate its marks of maturity in the believer's life. Involves what we do, who does it (staff) and the budget

Types of Ministries

Primary

These are not ministry electives but essentials. They provide the blueprint of game plan to accomplish the church's mission and are mandatory for those who are serious about spiritual growth.

Assimilation is how a church orders or arranges its primary ministries to bring people into the life of church, keep them involved in that life and move them onto spiritual maturity.

Secondary

Secondary ministries can be very valuable but can also:

- Distract not attract – people more than programs attract people.
- Confusion not clarity
- Complexity not simplicity
- Diffusing energy instead of directing energy
- Requiring staff and funding

Designing a Unique Disciple-making Strategy

- **Step 1 – Construct a maturity matrix**
- **Step 2 – Identify your primary ministries**
- **Step 3 – Evaluation**

- Is this ministry designed to develop at least one of the characteristics of maturity in our disciples' lives?
- How is this ministry developing that characteristic?

- Do any ministries need to be tweaked or even replaced?

- Are there any ministries that do not develop any characteristics of maturity?
- Are there any characteristics of maturity that no primary ministry develops?
- Are you aware of other churches' primary ministries? While unique to their communities such knowledge can be helpful as you 'tweak' your ministries.

Factors That May Affect Primary Ministries

- Predominant Generations
- Context of Ministry – Location
- Ethnicity
- Size
- Confidence in Pastoral Leadership

Are You Making Disciples?

Evaluation:

- Evaluation is Biblical
- We must realize that evaluation of our ministries and us takes place whether we like it or not, informally. (Visitors, Parents and Children, Unbelievers)

Evaluation:

- Prioritizes ministry accomplishment
- Encourages ministry appraisal
- Fosters ministry affirmation
- Supports ministry correction
- Leads to ministry improvement
- Promotes ministry change

Staff for Discipleship

Character, Competence, Chemistry

Budget for Discipleship

Put in place a church-wide stewardship ministry including sermons, group resources, new member class, counselling to those struggling with poor stewardship, workshops and seminars.