"Building a Discipling Culture"
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If you make disciples, you always get the church, but if you make a church, you rarely get disciples. Have we shifted our criteria for a good disciple as someone who shows up to our stuff, gives money and occasionally feeds poor people?

The problem is that we don't have a "missional" problem or a leadership problem in the Western church. We have a discipleship problem.

What we have found, over and over again, is that if you disciple people it will always lead to mission.

So if you're counting converts, budget or buildings first and foremost, you're not counting the things that Jesus counted, and you're not counting the thing that will change the world: Disciples.

Jesus created a highly inviting but highly challenging culture for his disciples to function and grow within. If we are going to build a culture of discipleship, we will have to learn to balance invitation and challenge appropriately.

Fundamentally, effective leadership is based upon an invitation to relationship and a challenge to change.

We use the following matrix to help leaders understand the reality of the types of cultures we create in our churches:

As we know it today, discipleship is mostly about that first kind of learning: the classroom experience. And really, that's about it. We learn from the pastor's teaching on Sunday. We learn from Bible studies. We go to Sunday School. We learn from small group discussion guides and DVDs. We learn from reading books. We learn from taking classes at church.

Notice that all of this is completely information driven, in some sort of classroom-esque experience. There is virtually no apprenticing happening in our churches.

The way most churches have structured the discipleship process, it is as if we are saying, "If I can just get the right information into their heads, if they can just think about it the right way, then they will become more like Jesus."

Almost all churches have built a whole discipleship process on that first style: classroom teaching. Hear the sermon. Join the small group. Go to the membership class. Read your Bible (hopefully you figure out how to do it). Go to class 201 or 301, and "yes, we have classes for that."

the way in which Jesus allocated his time gives us an important insight. Jesus had what many scholars call his "Retreat Ministry," a period of time that was dedicated completely to the disciples, when he retreated to places the crowds would never follow, when the disciples could be immersed in relationship and have complete access to him. Here's the interesting thing: Most people think that at least eighteen months of Jesus' public ministry was this time. That means at least half of his time was spent with these twelve guys.

From our experience doing this, if you want make disciples, if you want to build a discipling culture in your community, you are going to need three things:
1) A discipleship vehicle (we call it a Huddle)
2) People need access to your life. Discipleship can't be done at a distance
3) A discipling language (our discipling language is called LifeShapes)

A Huddle is the group of four to ten people you feel God has called you to specifically invest in, and you will meet with them regularly (at least every other week) to intentionally disciple them in a group setting.

Prayer was as fundamental an element in the life of Jesus as breathing. He inhaled his Father's presence so he could exhale his Father's will.

We are a society of disconnected people longing for connections.

Studies suggest that more than a thousand pastors quit their churches every month. If this is not evidence of an epidemic of vocational burnout, we don't know what is.

Studies estimate that forty-three percent of adults suffer adverse health effects from stress, and stress-related ailments account for seventy-five to ninety percent of all doctor's visits.

If you stop all productive activity in your life, you are pulling away from your God-designed calling.

Leaders must always be looking to give away their jobs to people who can do it as well or better than they.

Church leadership based on high control is not at all attractive to the emerging generation.

If you strive and struggle in a particular area of ministry and find it produces more stress than fruit, perhaps it's time to step back and examine your gifts. It becomes clear that the gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4 are roles or functions given to each believer, and that the gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians and Romans are tools to enable every believer to function more effectively in his or her role.

A Teacher's authority doesn't come from how smart he or she is but from the Word of God and the power of a transformed life. An immature Teacher often forgets this.

"How do I know what my base gift is?" We have included a tool in the Appendix—the Fivefold Ministries Questionnaire—to help determine your gift. You can also download a PDF version at the 3DM website www.weare3dm.com or go to www.fivefoldsurvey.com to take the survey online. Feel free to use this as you like; it is but one way to determine one's ministry role.

The vast majority of Prophets are introverts, and more Pastors and Teachers have a natural preference for introversion.

Are you a pioneer or a developer?

Developers are invariably committed to continuity, stability, and conservation. They prefer to grow and develop plans rather than scrap what they have and start over with something brand new. They are great at implementation and processing; they like to see things through to the end. Developers are the steady, solid backbone of most communities. They like to know what to expect, and they feel most comfortable when things are moving smoothly according to plan. Instability can cause great discomfort for developers.

In church terms (generally speaking), the pioneers would be the Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists. Pastors and Teachers tend to be of the developer nature.

Many churches split, not because of theology, but because they don't understand the interplay between pioneers and developers.