



How can we become more adept at making disciples?

February 17, 2017—Vol. 11, No. 7

If you happen to pay attention to larger trends in the church world, then you know that there is a lot of attention being given to becoming better at discipleship. It's somewhat ironic. Most of the evangelical world, which lives with the conviction that our purpose is to make disciples of Jesus Christ, is experiencing a bit of a crisis in the realization that few of us seem to know how to do this effectively. We know it's our mission, we articulate as much in our mission statements and slogans; but when push comes to shove, there's not a lot of clarity around what that actually looks like or how to do it.

Every year the CGGC asks its local congregations to report via the CGGC Ministry Review. There's a statistical portion of the review that tracks nickels and noses: the finances of the local body and who is being gathered regularly. The bulk of the document is a series of questions designed to get a sense or measurement of the ministry taking place through the work of the local congregation, beyond just nickels and noses.

Here's the second statement for evaluation on that portion of the review:

We are effectively making disciples and mentoring them in Christ.

The congregation is asked to evaluate their work in disciple-making with the following options: strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strong disagree. There is also room for a narrative response to the following question: **What are you doing in this area? Please comment:**

There are wide and various responses given to this particular statement. There are many congregations that will disagree with the above statement and offer the realization that they're not making disciples nor do they have a strategy or plan to do so. I'm grateful for their honesty.

What has troubled me over the years is the response from congregations who agree or strongly agree that they are effectively making disciples and mentoring them in Christ. When asked to describe what they're doing or to give some insight as to why they've rated themselves as they have, the general sense that is often communicated is this: "our doors are open". Sometimes it's expressed in different terms, but there is a sense that as long as we're holding Sunday services then it's clear that we're making disciples.

Nothing could be further from the truth!

Jesus gathered crowds all the time, but that wasn't how he made disciples. Jesus would preach to and teach the crowds that would gather and give him an audience, but that wasn't where he made disciples. He made disciples by pouring into the twelve, investing in them and allowing them close access to Him. He'd invest in them for a while and then send them out to serve and do the things they had watched Him do, then He'd pull them back together and debrief their experiences and then repeat the process. He had moments here and there with the crowds, but he gave the better part of three years to making His disciples.

Don't get me wrong, the times that Jesus gathered crowds served a purpose. Our gatherings today should serve a purpose as well. Worship services are good, but I think we need to rethink some things if we honestly believe that holding Sunday morning services is the same as making disciples. A worship gathering serves a purpose, but it's probably not the right vehicle to make disciples. Discipleship takes a different kind of effort that's slower, more intimate and requires more time than 60 minutes every Sunday morning.

Discipleship is about helping people to take on the character and competency of Jesus. It's about learning how to follow Jesus, to be able to hear His voice and then respond in obedience. It's about learning how to relate to the Father, to your brothers and sisters in Christ and to the rest of the world around you. You know that discipleship is happening when people take what they've received and pass it on to others as a result.

If you're struggling to figure out what it looks like to make disciples, I believe we can offer some help. Brandon Kelly, the director of Transformational Ministries with the CGGC is partnering with the Chambersburg First Church of God and 3DM ministries to offer a Discipleship and Mission workshop on March 20th and 21st (hold on folks in the Midwest—there's another similar training in May in your neck of the woods). While there is no silver bullet to the discipleship crisis, there are some proven tools that help churches and leaders begin to develop the skills and practices that are necessary for effective discipleship.

You can find more information about this opportunity [here](#). There's a special 2 for 1 offer right now for CGGC congregations and leaders too!

It's our goal to see men and women be discipled and equipped to pursue Christ's mission in this world and to make disciples who are able to do the same.

Christ's Peace,

Lance

Pathway to Ministry Visit Days at WTS

We would like to extend an invitation to you, your friends, and family to join us for a glimpse inside seminary life and experience what seminary education is all about.



Our goal is to help you discern your desire for theological education and determine what program might be right for you.

Findlay, OH

March 18, 2017

9:00-12:00p (lunch included)

Winebrenner Theological Seminary

950 N. Main St.

Findlay, OH 45840

Scotland, PA

Saturday, March 25, 2017

9:00-12:00p (lunch included)

Winebrenner Theological Seminary

Education and Conference Center

3583 Scotland Road

Scotland, PA 17254

[Click here to register online!](#)

For more information,
contact Jim Smarkel at 1-800-992-4987
or admissions@winebrenner.edu.