



How Christ is Building His Church

Churches all across North America as well as Western Europe aren't doing well these days. The majority are struggling with decline and dwindling interest in spiritual matters. In the midst of all this the Savior says in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church. . . ." Thus, I can say with the authority of Christ that this is taking place regardless the condition of the North American Church. Whenever you or I hear such a statement, however, the leadership part of us naturally asks- how is Christ building his church? Based on my research into and study of many of today's spiritually strong, biblically balanced churches, I believe that I have an answer to this question. And I want to share that answer in this quarter's Leadership Connection.

It's a Process, Not a Product

The fact that so many churches are struggling is important because wherever there's a struggling church, there's a struggling pastor. And these pastors respond to their situations in several ways. Most question their call to ministry. Some quietly drop out of ministry and do something else. And a number will attend a large mega-church pastor's conference, looking for answers for their churches. The problem with the latter is that they learn a model which works for the pastor of the megachurch in his part of the country, but may not work for the struggling pastor where he ministers. I believe the answer lies in learning the process that I believe Christ is using to build his church and not aping or mimicking a particular model or product that's endemic to a part of the country. Your following **Christ's "church building" process** should lead to your own unique ministry model that's native to who you are as a leader and to your ministry community. The process consists of the following vital steps.

Step 1: Values Discovery. Your core values drive your ministry. They explain why it does what it does. They are at the very core of your identity and make up your ministry DNA. Your core values are so mission critical, that it's imperative that you discover and evaluate and, if necessary, correct them in light of a biblically functioning, spiritually healthy church.

Step 2: Mission Development. A vital question is: Where is your ministry going? What's it supposed to be doing according to the Scriptures? The answer is your ministry mission. You must answer this question by developing a clear, biblical mission statement that your congregation will never forget.

Step 3: Vision Development. The term *vision* is a key buzzword in today's ministry world. We believe that vision is vital to your people seeing what could be-what our great God can accomplish through them (Eph. 3:20). Consequently, you need to develop a vision that provides a clear, compelling picture of your ministry's future.

Step 4: Strategy Development. Your strategy helps you accomplish several things. First, you explore your ministry community and identify your focus group as well as determine the size of your vision. Second, you design a process that will mold them into Christ's disciples. We recommend that you use a tool we've developed called the "Maturity Matrix." Third, you align and develop your staff to maximize disciple making. Fourth, you evaluate your location and facilities in terms of reaching your focus group. Finally, you address raising the necessary finances to support this strategy. This involves developing a biblical ministry of stewardship that discovers new streams of income.

Want to Know More?

The Malphurs Group will be offering training in Christ's church building process this fall. Those who have been trained say this is leadership at its finest and is a must for all pastors. We will meet for five sessions that will take place once a month on Fridays from noon to 6:00 p.m. and Saturday mornings from 8:00 a.m. to noon. This will happen at the Best Western, D/FW Airport. Those who attend may receive seminary credit toward a masters or doctor of ministries degree. If you would like to know more, contact the Malphurs Group ASAP as we begin the first weekend in August (Aubrey@malphursgroup.com).

For more information on strategic planning see Aubrey Malphurs *Advanced Strategic Planning, 2nd ed.* (Baker Book House) or Aubrey Malphurs *Ministry Nuts and Bolts* (Kregel Publications). Also, check out the author's Web site www.malphursgroup.com.

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