



## How to Make Disciples in Your Church

I was invited by a fellow seminary professor to be part of a panel that would discuss disciple making in his class. There were several other people on the panel. One was the wife of a pastor and another was a layman who worked with a known parachurch ministry. I went first and presented what I'm learning is a whole new paradigm on disciple making. My argument is that disciple making is the mission of the *entire* church. Christ's Great Commission for all churches is found in Matthew 28:19-20 which says "make disciples!" In other words, every person in our churches is to work toward becoming a mature disciple.

When I finished my presentation and sat down, I noticed that the pastor's wife and the layman were unusually quiet and stared at the floor. Several students asked me questions. Then the wife and layman did their presentations in which they covered what I believe is the standard, traditional paradigm for disciple making-especially in parachurch ministries. In their approach, they looked for several Christians who wanted to pursue Christ more in depth, and they would pour their lives into these individuals. While I'm not opposed to doing this, I believe this view has missed the Great Commission! Disciple making isn't just for a few believers who're serious about their faith, it's for everyone in the church!

I'm convinced that the traditional paradigm has missed this entirely. However, this being the case, how might we accomplish the commission in our churches? How can we at least attempt to make disciples of all our people? I'm convinced after working with numerous churches that the following is how Christ can accomplish this in your church. It's what I refer to as a "maturity matrix." Don't let the term *matrix* trip you up. My matrix consists of two lines-one horizontal and the other vertical. Here's how it works.

### The Horizontal Line

On the horizontal line that runs across the top of the page I list what I believe are the characteristics of a spiritually mature believer. When practiced all together, these characteristics add up to a mature believer. They are the following: biblical instruction, fellowship, worship, evangelism, and service. To make them more memorable for a congregation, I encourage leaders to turn these characteristics into an acrostic. For example, here's an acrostic that uses a C for each of them: cultivation, community, celebration, contribution, and conversion. These are the ends, that is, they are what the Holy Spirit will produce in the life of the believer as they pursue spiritual maturity.

### The Vertical Line

On the vertical line I place all of a church's primary ministries or activities. The primary activities are the means to the ends. They are the ministries that a congregant must be involved in if they are to become spiritually mature believers. In older, traditional churches they are such ministries as the Sunday morning worship service, Sunday morning Sunday school, and Wednesday evening prayer meeting. All other ministries such as a men's or women's Bible study are secondary activities that help but are optional. So what are your church's primary ministries? What would you place on the vertical line of the maturity matrix? More important-are they working?

### **Use of the Maturity Matrix**

The primary use for the matrix is to help you understand how your church goes about accomplishing the Great Commission or "making disciples." By using the matrix, you may discover that some of the primary ministries aren't accomplishing the ends they're supposed to such as the traditional model cited above. In other words, they're not working very well to help people to move toward maturity. This means you need to rethink what you're doing or even to redesign these activities. The matrix will also help you with staffing and budgeting. Look at your primary activities and ask if they're properly staffed and well budgeted for or are your staff and funds going mostly toward secondary-less important-ministries?

### **Want to Know More?**

The Malphurs Group will be offering training in Christ's church building process this spring. It covers such issues at the maturity matrix and how to use it in your church. 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 a hotel near the Dallas/Fort Worth 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 January ([Aubrey@malphursgroup.com](mailto:Aubrey@malphursgroup.com)). Also, you can learn more from my book *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Ed. (Baker Books) and my Web site ([www.malphursgroup.com](http://www.malphursgroup.com)).

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