

Discipleship “Engines”

In the book, *Simple Church*, Thom Rainer described a process to get back on mission with what God has called the church to be. The four words he used for this process can be applied to the discipling process as well:

Clarity. To “make disciples” we have to understand what one looks like. 1 John 2:6 tells us to “walk as Jesus walked.” Clarity is defining what a disciple needs to know (*Head*), the attitudes of a disciple (*Heart*), and what a disciple is to do (*Hands*). Ultimately it is obeying everything Jesus commanded.

How are we doing? The church, that is. And how are we doing it? Congregations have long measured success by "bodies, budget, and buildings" - a certain record of attendance, the offering plate, and square footage. But the scorecard can't stop there. When it does, the deeper emphasis on accountability, discipleship, and spiritual maturity is lost. Ignoring those details, we see fewer lives transformed, Christian influence wane, and churches thin out - a situation that is all too familiar across North America today.

Ed Stetzer & Thom Rainer. ***Transformational Church***

Movement. As we work with people in the church we will find four groups: pre-Christians (*those who have not accepted Jesus yet*), new believers, growing believers and multipliers (*able to make disciples who make disciples*). Our goal is to move everyone towards obeying Jesus to be a multiplier. Movement is defining the linkages to help people mature to become a multiplier.

Too often Christians focus rightly on the gospel message of the Cross but forget about the discipleship process Jesus revealed and modeled. Discipleship is so much more than just sharing the news about Jesus; it is also about teaching people to obey the commands Jesus gave us. Unfortunately, many churches have not taken this charge seriously, and they are experiencing significant problems. This whole issue of discipleship is critical if we want to save the church from the Sunday-morning show and make it a place where real relationship and real change takes place.

Jim Putnam. ***Real-Life Discipleship***.

Alignment. Often, church programs are a confusing collection of differing visions, purposes, and values. The result is often stunted growth as momentum is lost moving from one program to another. Alignment is ensuring that everything done in and through the church is designed to help make disciples and move people towards being a multiplier.

Focus. There are many seminars and books available to pastors all calling for the church to use their program or approach. When clarity, movement and alignment are present the challenge is to say no to those programs and approaches that do not help the church move forward. Focus helps the church stay on mission.

Many practitioners tried to accomplish the basic elements of a church planting movement plan through an assortment of means. We all had a method for evangelism, a different method for discipleship, a different one for planting churches, a different one for leadership development, etc. We often tried to piece them all together, but new believers didn't naturally know how to flow from one stage to the next...What T4T has done is to tie together all the basic parts and enable believers to naturally progress from one stage to the next as they are trained: evangelism, discipleship, church planting, leadership development—repeating the process generation by generation.

Steve Smith. ***T4T: A Discipleship ReRevolution.***

The key is picking an approach that is comprehensive for providing clarity and movement with the results of disciples making disciples. Each of the approaches below provides such a comprehensive system that is reproducible. The bonus is that these approaches also produce leaders along with missional communities and churches that multiply.

Our advice is to pick one, adapt to fit your situation and go with it.

- ***T4T: A Discipleship ReRevolution.*** Steve Smith & Ying Kai. (*T4T means training for trainers*).
- ***Real-Life Discipleship: Building Churches that Make Disciples.*** Jim Putman.
- ***Building a Discipling Culture.*** Mike Breen & Steve Cockram.

A less comprehensive approach that may be useful in some situations is the Life Transformation model (LTG's). This book explains the process:

- ***Search & Rescue: Becoming a Disciple Who Makes a Difference.*** Neil Cole.