

THE DISCIPLESHIP DOCUMENT
A White Paper on Deep Discipleship at Trinity Wellsprings Church
~ Rev. Dr. Jason Carter

Discipleship is a paradox in the local church. Discipleship is central to our calling but one of the hardest things to orchestrate in the life of the church. For the last 5-10 years, I would call TWC a “fellowship church”: we are friendly, love being in relationship, and there are pockets in our church of very strong bonds of relationship and community.

In the past, staff and session tried to transition our church from a “Purpose-Driven Church” to a “Missional Church”. Both these models of church represented national movements that caught the attention of local church leaders. Both movements taught local churches significant and lasting lessons, and Trinity has reason to look back with gratitude for these shaping and pivotal moments in our church’s life.

Yet, the transition from “Purpose-Driven Church” which is essentially an “Attractional Church Model” to the “Missional Church Model” was, by all accounts, rather uneven, underdeveloped, not fully understood, and never fully embraced with the enthusiasm of the earlier model of church at Trinity Wellsprings Church. I believe that it is worth asking the simple question: why not? Why was this transition from attractional to missional so hard for Trinity?

The short and simple answer is that *deep discipleship* has never permeated the church as the driving factor which affects everything we do. This is not to say that Trinity is a spiritually immature church – quite the contrary. Trinity is comprised of many saints who know their Bibles, give super-generously of their time, talent, and treasures, and serve sacrificially and enthusiastically in a variety of ministries both inside and outside the walls of the church. It’s a joy to be the Sr. Pastor at Trinity and witness our church mobilize for action on a consistent basis. Yet the question is this: has *deep discipleship* been a tidal wave washing over the entire church affecting everything we do, everything that we are about, and everything that we focus our labors on? I think we have yet to see this kind of energy marshalled towards deep discipleship on a sustained basis which reaches into every corner of our church’s life.

What the attractional model of church did best in its heyday around the country was “get people in the door” and what the missional model of church does best is “deploy people out the door”.¹ But this transition from attractional to missional left a missing piece behind: deep discipleship. It is very hard for churches to deploy a band of people who came to the church for attractional reasons to suddenly want to “get out the door” and “live a life of mission” without a sustained season of deep discipleship that *matures* and *equips* them to live out their calling as disciples of Jesus.

¹ Randy Pope asks admittedly “alarming” questions about the various models of church which have washed ashore on many American evangelical churches: “What if the pastoral/attractional model of church produced an army of Christians who are consumeristic, shallow, and bland? And what if the influential [missional] model of church cranked out wild-eyed activists who do loving acts without the love that springs from spiritual maturity?” Randy Pope, *Insourcing: Bringing Discipleship Back to the Local Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 25.

In 2019, Trinity adopted a new mission statement: *Being and making fully-alive missional disciples of Jesus Christ who overflow into our community and world*. Every word of this mission statement was defined:

Being: Nobody can *make* disciples without first *being* a disciple.

Fully Alive: Many people are living the “good life” on the Beachside & in Melbourne. Trinity longs to equip people to become **fully** alive in Jesus.

Making Missional Disciples: Missional describes the *nature* and *kind* of discipleship we long to see re-produced at Trinity: disciples who multiply by making disciples and whose deep discipleship propels them to live their lives on mission with God.

Jesus Christ: The center of our lives and our mission, Always & Forever the Head of the Church.

Overflow into our Community and World: On Trinity’s best day, we live for and serve others, intentionally expressing our discipleship in the community we love and for a world desperate to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The new mission statement captured elements of our...

unique context (“fully alive”) where many people are pursuing the “good life” beachside/Melbourne whereas TWC aims to equip people to become *fully alive* in the fullness of Jesus,

&

central mission (“being & making missional disciples”) places living out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) at the center of our life together,

while communicating...

aspirational movement (“overflow into our community and world”) which thrusts us out beyond the walls of our church. We go deep at Trinity to be sent out missionally.

The mission statement put discipleship at the theoretical front and center of the church. But not much changed at our church. Except for one big thing: almost as soon as we adopted and rolled out the new mission statement, Trinity began the Shine Capital Campaign which lasted a full 9 months (June 2019 – February 2020) which, at least for my schedule, was experienced like a veritable Mac Truck running full barrel down my priorities and my schedule. In March 2020, our church began a series of adventures and pivots sparked by the coronavirus. American Christianity has learned lots of lessons during the last 18 months: live stream, zoom meetings, endless sermons on fear, elaborate plans of worship which impacted everything from our venue (outside/inside) to the way we take the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper to everything in between. Yet the biggest takeaway for most churches regardless of size, denomination, or

geographical location has been this: the coronavirus exposed a massive discipleship gap in nearly every church in America.²

Thus, we are now at a pivotal point in the life of our church to raise some deep-seated and central questions: What does discipleship look like at Trinity? Knowing that nobody “graduates” from a life of discipleship, how can we disciple people of different maturity levels in the church? How can we best live into our mission statement “Being and making missional disciples of Jesus Christ who overflow into our community and world”?

After spending the last several weeks reading and contemplating these questions, one thing that I'd like to do is to offer a summary of critical concepts which have shaped my own thinking and resonated in my own soul. You will see these thoughts from other authors on page 7.

I will try to distill my thoughts into six major principles for implementing deep discipleship at Trinity Wellsprings Church which, I believe, will **further** help us nurture and cultivate a discipleship culture within our church family.

Deep Discipleship at Trinity Wellsprings Church

Overarching Principals:

(1) Discipleship occurs when lives are shared with Gospel Growth at the center of the relationship. This was the discipleship methodology of Jesus and Paul. 1 Thess. 2:8 is especially impactful: *“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well”* (1 Thess. 2:8).

The examples of Jesus and Paul are instructive. Jesus had his “beloved disciple” (John), invested heavily in the “inner three” (Peter, James, John) and discipled the twelve personally. All were taught by Jesus (learning), known by Jesus (connected relationally), participated in ministry with Jesus (hands on ministry). The disciples were (1) taught doctrine and spiritual practices by Jesus, (2) experienced life-on-life relationship with Jesus, and (3) had an expectation of present and future ministry as the end goal of their discipleship. Ministry was the final destination of the discipling process, not just “the discipling relationship” and not just “the information” itself as ends in themselves. Paul also had a life-on-life missional discipling relationship with Barnabas and later with Timothy. For Paul’s central vision for discipleship, Col. 1:28 is key: *“We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ”* (Col. 1:28).

² According to George Barna in 2011, “Only one out of every five self-identified Christians (21%) believes that spiritual maturity requires a vital connect to a community of faith.” This represents an enormous discipleship gap and a complete departure from the New Testament view of discipleship. Only “four out of ten self-identified Christian adults (39%) have participated in a combination of three ‘normal’ religious activities in the past week (i.e. attending church services, praying, reading the Bible).” See Randy Pope, *Insourcing*, 86-87.

(2) A real need exists for Trinity to incubate discipleship at different levels in the church.



Trinity needs to raise up new disciplined leaders (discipleship for everyone), equip our current leaders (discipleship for leaders), and equip and send ministry leaders (discipleship residency). Currently, there is no clear pathway for raising up new disciples of Jesus in a life-on-life way or for *equipping* and *maturing* the disciples who are leading ministries at Trinity who want or need to grow deeper in the faith. Considering that no one ever “graduates” from the discipleship process, both elements are needed. The third tier of discipleship (discipleship residency) consists of a vision to formalize our rather haphazard internship program alongside The Fellows Program; finishing the 2nd floor of the Beach House into 6-8 resident rooms (“The Upper Room”?) would provide space to eventually lodge and disciple ministry leaders.

(3) D-Groups | Discipleship for Everyone | D-Groups can be the backbone of releasing our disciplers to mature and equip disciples with a view towards ministry and/or multiplication

D-Groups | Discipleship For Everyone

Deepening our discipleship culture will require a multi-year commitment to this process (3-5 years) to create momentum for discipleship at our church. Life Groups naturally carry some of this load (yeah!) but are primarily a place of connection, relationship, and general Christian growth. The deep discipleship of life-on-life missional discipleship is different: more intentional relationally with a view towards multiplication. The process will be for 1-2 years with a view towards co-leading with folks in the 2nd or 3rd years to launch them out to start their own groups. A covenant agreement is signed by all participants who agree to walk together for a 9-10 month time-frame.

Principles for D-Groups: start slow; (typically) same-sex groups of 2-7 people; rally around a common curriculum so the process is replicable; look for hungry people who are teachable and available and want to go deeper in their faith. The “what” involves the method of Jesus: disciples will (1) explore bible, beliefs, and spiritual practices, (2) experience life-on-life

relationship, and (3) have an expectation of present/future multiplication ministry as the end goal.

(4) The Way: Apprenticeship with Jesus | Discipleship for Leaders. THE WAY can be the backbone for discipling our lay leaders, elders, deacons, and Life Group leaders so they are fully equipped for wisdom, ministry, and service and are engaging in spiritual practices and growth as they lead the various ministries of Trinity Wellsprings Church.

➤ The Way: Apprenticeship with Jesus

THE WAY: Maturing and Equipping

Goal: Transformational knowledge & practices that matures and equips disciples of Jesus Christ.

Who: Elders will be invited to participate in one year of The Way during their three years on Session. Life Group leaders will be invited to participate in The Way this year or the next. Deacons will be invited to participate this year or the next. Leaders in other areas of the church (mission, finance, children, students) will be asked to participate to mature and equip them for life and service.

What: Three Basic Building Blocks of THE WAY:

- **Christian Story** | **Christian Belief** | **Christian Formation**
(Bible) (Doctrine) (Practices)

7-weeks that covers the basic habits and practices that shape the Christian life. The goal of this class is to help disciples understand, value, and employ these practices in their lives as means of grace.

8-weeks that covers the basic storyline of Scripture. The goal of this class is to help disciples understand, explain, and participate in the true story of the world in deeper and richer ways.

7-weeks that covers the basic orthodox beliefs of Christianity. The goal of this class is to help disciples understand, explain, and apply the basic confessions of Christianity.

3 Year Rotating Core:

Year 1

BIBLE

The Story of Redemption: Paul and Romans

Description: An overview of Paul's life and theology; the great story of redemption in the Book of Romans (chapters 1-8) is Taught, Explained, and Applied to our lives.

BELIEFS **Amazing Grace: Union with Christ & The Depths of Our Salvation**
Description: *The great doctrine of salvation in all its rich dimensions are explained, enjoyed, and applied to our lives.*

PRACTICES **Living the Story: 7 Core Spiritual Practices of Healthy Disciples**
Description: *Spiritual Practices explained, taught, and practiced together in the context of community. Every three weeks, a new spiritual practice is introduced with the purpose of living it out to grow more like Christ.*

FUTURE | BLUE YEAR (Year 2)

BIBLE **The Glorious Gospel: Jesus, Kingdom, & Matthew's Gospel**
BELIEFS The Incomparable Christ: The Person & Work of Jesus
PRACTICES **Living the Story: 7 Additional Practices of Healthy Disciples**

FUTURE | GREEN YEAR (Year 3)

BIBLE **Exploring the Foundation of our Faith: The Law & The Prophets**
BELIEFS The Triune Nature: Trinity, Attributes, & Holy Spirit
PRACTICES **Practicing the Presence: Discovering Hidden Gems in Prayer**

(5) Life Groups will continue to be a distinguishing feature of Trinity Wellsprings Church. Life Groups will continue to play an important part of the overall caring, sharing, praying, and growing in Christ at TWC. D-Groups are not designed to replace Life Groups but to offer a different focus of discipleship. The D-Groups and the Life Groups will co-exist together, as each brings its own unique strengths to the life of the church.

(6) A discipleship culture is cultivated as coaches “check in” and “mentor the mentors” in providing encouragement, accountability, and companionship during the discipleship process. We will need a mechanism to install this kind of “encouraging accountability” at staff and lay levels.

Again, discipleship is a paradox: it's the central mission of the church but often the hardest task to orchestrate effectively within a local church. Trouble-shooting the overall process and constantly tweaking our efforts to make sure we are hitting the mark in the first couple of years will require the patience, wisdom, and persistence of everybody involved. This is a reason why we will start small. However, the slow, steady beat of discipleship can have a great effect if we “keep at it” and “give our lives” in life-on-life ways for the growth of deep discipleship at our church.

Soli Deo Gloria,
Rev. Dr. Jason Carter

Distilled Thoughts about Discipleship

These are the chapters of specific books and ideas that I found especially compelling. Find quotes below from the following authors:

- **Chapters 3 & 4** of J.T. English, *Deep Discipleship: How the Church Can Make Whole Disciples of Jesus* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2020).
- **Sections** of Randy Pope, *Insourcing: Bringing Discipleship Back to the Local Church* (Grand Rapid, Zondervan, 2013). Perimeter Church in Atlanta is known for its discipleship culture in the Reformed Church world.

Deep Discipleship, Chapter 3 – “Space: Where does Discipleship Happen in the Church?”

- We have a lot of environments that had the highest stated purpose of community and almost no environments where the highest stated value was learning. (p. 77)
- What about your church? Have you given an either/or answer to a both/and question? If your church has an either/or approach, you are probably creating either/or disciples – disciples who are in community but lack discipleship outcomes related to learning, or who are learning but lack the kind of community that is indispensable to the Christian Life. (p. 78)
- Over the past several years many churches have begun adopting discipleship spaces that have the highest stated value of community while eliminating spaces that have the highest stated value of learning. (p. 81)
- I want to state this clearly: community is indispensable to discipleship, but community is not discipleship. We cannot be disciples of Christ outside the context of community. However, we can be in community that is not teaching us to be disciples of Christ. Just because we get people into community does not mean we are discipling them. In other words, it is not enough to connect people to community; it must be a community that is committed to learning the way of Jesus together. It must be a community that learns. (p. 83)
- The tragic irony of the demise of Christian education is that it is happening at precisely the wrong time. Study after study shows that Christians do not know their Bibles, the basics of the faith, or how to practice spiritual disciplines. We are basically illiterate when it comes to the Christian faith, yet we are adopting philosophies of ministry that de-emphasize the importance of learning for the Christian life....This is unfortunate, given the overwhelming evidence that what is lacking in our discipleship is basic biblical and theological literacy. It is tragic that at the moment the church is struggling with deep discipleship, many ministry models have decidedly moved away from learning environments in the church.

Disciples who are in community but are not learning run the risk of loving their neighbor but not God. Disciples who are learning but who are not in community run the

risk of loving God but not their neighbor. Disciples who are both learning and in community have the opportunity of being people who love God and neighbor. (p. 85-86)

- It is time for us to admit that we need two tools, not one. In community-driven spaces learning should happen. In learning-driving spaces community should happen. A culture of deep discipleship is birthed in a local church that has spaces where learning is the highest stated value and spaces where community is the highest stated value. (p. 86)
- It is absolutely impossible to create a culture of holistic disciples if they only come to church twenty-six times a year. The fastest way to disrupt a journey of deep discipleship is to forsake regularly gathering together with the church. **The weekly gathering is the long game of deep discipleship.** It does not matter what your philosophy of ministry is if people are not regularly being formed in the gathering. It does not matter how many community groups people are in, how many Bible studies or classes they participate in, or how many books they read if they are not gathering regularly with the whole church body. In the weekly gathering we come together to proclaim the good news to one another, to sing praise to our Triune God, to sit under the ministry of the Word, and participate in the ordinances. Perhaps nothing is more formative than a few decades of regular church attendance. (p. 87-88)
- Can we just have one space and accomplish both learning and community? Honestly, the answer is no. Allen Duty makes the point, “When churches offer *only* Sunday school classes *or* small groups, they are expecting the classroom to do what the living room does best, and the living room to do what the classroom does best.” (p. 91-92)
- If we have only community-driven spaces, we slowly begin to believe that community is the only pillar to discipleship. If we have only learning-driven spaces, we will slowly begin to believe that learning is the only pillar to discipleship. (p. 96)

Deep Discipleship, Chapter 4 – “Scope, What Do Disciples Need”

- [Leaders have been]... asking the question, “What do disciples want?”, instead of asking the better question, “What do disciples need?” (p. 100) [Carter: The first is a consumeristic question raised to “keep people happy”; the second is a question of a shepherd that knows the discipleship gap being experienced at a local church.]
- Your scope represents what you think are the core competencies of discipleship. What is absolutely indispensable for your people to be learning and growing? What are the core competencies you believe every disciple should have? What are the absolute necessities a disciple of Jesus must study and learn in order to walk as a whole disciple of Christ? (p. 104)
- **The three topics, or buckets, that I think present a comprehensive picture of discipleship are Bible, beliefs, and spiritual habits.** A healthy disciple must be growing in the understanding of God’s Word, founded on distinctively Christian beliefs and

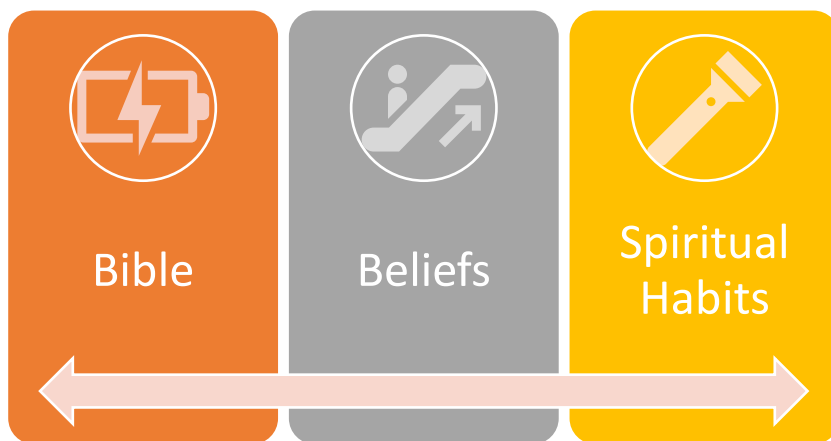
practicing spiritual disciplines. What does every disciple need? They need Scripture, doctrine, and spiritual habits.

The Bible must be at the center of the Christian life. It is God’s Word, authoritative, inerrant, and sufficient for growing as a healthy disciple of Christ. Scripture is God’s ordained means of revealing and giving himself to us.

Basic Christian beliefs are also indispensable for the Christian life. They help us know who God is, who we are, what the world is, and how we can be faithful participants in God’s mission.

Spiritual habits help disciples train not just their heads but also their hearts and their bodies as disciples of Christ. Discipleship is not just growing to love God with our minds but with our whole selves. Spiritual habits help us become whole people.

Scope: What do disciples need?



Christian Story | Bible

- ...one of the greatest challenges to discipleship is the biblical illiteracy that plagues the contemporary church. It is simply impossible to grow as a follower of Christ without being a student of his word, yet we find that there are so few students of the Word. We lack deep disciples because we lack deep meditation on the Word. Biblical illiteracy is devastating to discipleship. The goal of Bible literacy is not simply biblical knowledge but participation. Knowledge of God’s Word is meant to lead to participation in God’s story.

Yet study after study suggests that the church has never been less familiar with our sacred text than we are today, even while we have never enjoyed more access to it. We have an abundance of biblical resources and a famine of biblical knowledge. You can’t participate in a story you don’t understand. If we don’t know the story contained in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation—and by every indication we don’t—how can we hope to participate in it? (p. 110-111)

- James 1:21-24. Surely we need to be both hearers and doers of God’s Word, but we can’t expect to be doers until we have first been hearers. (p. 112)
- How is that we agree on the Bible’s authority, yet so many of our churches are biblically illiterate?

Christian Belief | Doctrine

- Often theology is seen as an obstacle to discipleship, but it is actually the foundation of Christian living. The term *theology* comes from two Greek words: *theos*, meaning God, and *logos*, meaning Word. It basically translates as “words about God, or God’s Word about himself” Is anything more practical than words about God? Is anything more important and practical than synthesizing and understanding what God has said about himself? I do not think there is. Doctrine and discipleship go hand in hand.

In many churches, theology has gained a reputation of being distant, impractical, and unimportant. I have even heard some pastors and churches say that doctrine gets in the way of true discipleship. Many people have seen doctrine divide and not heal, confuse and not guide. The truth is, I have seen that too, But that is not the fault of doctrine; it is the fault of people misusing doctrine.

When we see theology as unimportant for discipleship, it is not as if our people are adopting a doctrineless discipleship. If we fail to teach disciples how to believe like Christians, they will adopt other beliefs. Everyone is a theologian because everyone has words about God. Everyone has gone to seminary: the only question is whether we know it or not. The question for our churches and for the people we are discipling is: *Are we forming people who think and believe Christianly, or are we neglecting doctrine and letting the world form them into people who think and believe like the world?* (p. 113-114)

- 2018 Lifeway Research and Ligonier Ministries released a research project on “The State of Theology” ...For example, we can see that evangelicals are largely confused about the person of Christ. When asked to agree or disagree with the statement “Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God,” a fourth-century heresy known as Arianism, 78% of evangelicals agreed. The church is also largely confused about the exclusivity of Christ. When asked to agree or disagree that “God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam,” 51% of evangelicals agreed. One final example: when asked to agree or disagree, “Everyone sins a little, but most people are good by nature,” a heresy known as Pelagianism, 52% of evangelicals agreed. [Carter: Plus, many evangelicals must be ignorant of Romans 3:10 – “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God; All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”] (p. 116)
- All disciples believe doctrine, just not always Christian doctrine. (p. 117)
- For centuries the church was led by creed, confession, and catechism. One of the ways forward for holistic disciples in the local church is a recovery of doctrinally motivated

discipleship. Discipleship that is apathetic to doctrine, beliefs, and theology is not Christian discipleship. Why is doctrine so important? It is important because of what it is – the pathway into deeper fellowship and joy with God. Our belief about who God is leads us deeper into communion with him, not further away from him. Doctrine is ultimately about love. (p. 118-119)

- Jen Wilkin: “The heart cannot love what the mind does not know.”
- Doctrineless disciples cannot love God because they do not know him. (p. 119)
- Knowledge of God leads us deeper into God, not further away from God.
- Kevin Vanhoozer: “Christians learn doctrine in order to participate more deeply, passionately, and truthfully in the drama of redemption.” (p. 120)

Christian Formation | Spiritual Practices

- We are all formed by what we do. The habits we develop shape us into who we are....We are not just minds that need to know doctrine but whole people who need to learn rhythms and habits that help us live into the story of God. (p. 124-125)
- Distinctly Christian habits are precariously absent from most discipleship initiatives. (p. 125)
- Justin Earley: “We are all living according to a specific regimen of habits, and those habits shape most of our life.” (p. 125)
- The rhythms and habits of the world are forming our people, and the church that is focused on creating holistic disciples is offering counter rhythms and habits that form us into the people of God.
- Carter: Deep discipleship embraces corporate habits (in weekly worship; small groups) and personal habits (individual spiritual practices).

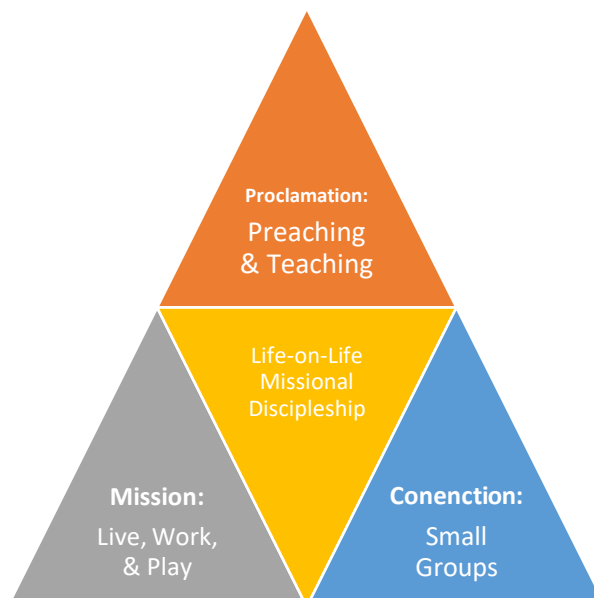
Sections of Randy Pope, *Insourcing: Bringing Discipleship Back to the Local Church* (Grand Rapid, Zondervan, 2013).

Randy Pope: Defines “Life-on-Life Missional Discipleship” (LOLMD) this way:

- Life on life missional discipleship is laboring the lives of a few with the intentions of imparting one’s life, the gospel, and God’s Word in such a way as to see them become mature and equipped followers of Christ, committed to doing the same in the lives of others (p. 106).

Picture of Life-on-Life Missional Discipleship in the Life of the Church

(See Pope's picture on p. 106)



- What is the hoped for end-result of LOLMD?
 1. A mature, equipped leader leads himself well in his own walk with God which includes study of the Word prayer, and a missional life.
 2. A mature, equipped leader has a strong, consistent personal worship habit. You can't feed others if you haven't been fed yourself. One discipler said she was surprised and disheartened by the number of leaders who are trying to fill leadership roles in the church (both discipleship and otherwise) without having a consistent personal worship habit.
 3. A mature, equipped leader has a humble, teachable spirit. None of us has ever "arrived". The sanctification process is lifelong, and if someone thinks he is ready to lead because he has nothing else to learn he is probably the last person you want leading a group.
 4. A mature, equipped leader leads his family well, including leading consistent family worship and devotional times, practicing healthy marriage principles, and seeking to lead his children to Christ.
 5. A mature, equipped leader is available. She exhibits a commitment to give of her precious resources of time money, and energy so that others may know the Lord better.
 6. A mature, equipped leader has depth in the areas of knowledge, skills, character, and vision of the Christian life. This includes adequate training in theology and knowledge of the Scriptures. This doesn't mean that a leader must have all the answers. Wisdom is more important than knowledge.

7. A mature, equipped leader has had training and/or experience in group dynamics and leadership. One woman remarked that she had been in groups where the leader was a mature Christian but was not equipped to lead group conversations.
8. A mature, equipped leader demonstrates a willingness to be vulnerable, to share honestly and openly about failures and weaknesses.
9. A mature, equipped leader is accountable to others.
10. A mature equipped leader knows where the group is going, is clear on the group's purpose, and knows where each member is in their walk with God and how to move them forward.

...Is there a mechanism in your church that has the capacity to create leaders with these qualities ingrained in their character and practices? (p. 151-152)

- **Small Groups and Discipleship:** “Many churches have used various types of small groups as part of their discipleship strategy (home groups, life groups, etc.) Many pastors acknowledge that these type of small groups provide community but are not sufficient to make mature and equipped followers of Christ. These groups often have missional expectation, but I’ve observed that mission doesn’t happen as much as was hoped for.” (p. 107)
- **Life on Life Missional Discipleship:** “These groups combine a mission and a nurture component, which is why growth seems to happen at an accelerated pace. When there is a missional bias in these types of groups, you get nurture thrown in. If you focus only on nurture, you may or may not get mission.” (p. 107)
- “The work of discipleship is not just informational, nor is it simply relational; it must be action oriented as well.” (p. 111)
- “When a church begins to implement LOLMD and they attempt too much too soon, we find that they *almost never* sustain a discipleship movement regardless of how impressive their first year starts out. Those who begin slowly and grow steadily over years, however, tend to experience long-term shifts in the culture of their church.” (p. 129)
- This is how we define the finish line: mature, equipped disciples who invest in the maturing and equipping of other disciples.” (p. 136)
- “When one person won’t or can’t do the homework, attend the meetings, or call when he can’t attend, the commitment of the entire group begins to erode...Most groups operate by a ‘least common denominator’ rule: if a leader allows the standard to fall for one member, that level will become the standard for that group.” (p. 136-137)
- What about a curriculum?
 - Without a careful curriculum your discipleship won’t be reproducible.
 - Without a curriculum your discipleship won’t get better.
 - Without a curriculum your discipleship won’t be intentional.
 - Without a curriculum your discipleship won’t be able to manage the expectations of the group.

- The church that impacts the world for the kingdom is not necessarily a growing church in terms of square footage or membership rolls. It is a healthy one. A healthy child will grow, but it isn't always true that a growing child will be healthy. In the same way, if as a church we get healthy, we'll likely grow, but just growth alone won't make us healthy. When we chose to disciple our people, we were investing in the health of our church. (p. 90-91)
- Do your people pop up in worship like a flash mob in a shopping mall, or do they genuinely worship as a daily lifestyle? (p. 90)
- Big picture questions for LOLMD and Life Groups: Will everyone in the group prepare or only the leader? Will they demand a high commitment for participation or allow attendance with no cost to the participants, at all? Will group members be selected or can they merely sign up? Will the time together be spent in teaching, prayer, caring, and sharing or will the focus be on truth, equipping, accountability, mission and supplication? What size group? Large or limited? Will the groups produce community or seek to mature and equip the members? Will the groups be for believers only or will they included interested non-Christians? Will the groups have a missional requirement and commitment or focus solely on the needs of the participants? Will the expectation of its members be fellowship or leader development? (p. 195)
- What is the difference and distinctives between small groups and LOLMD Groups?

Small Groups	LOLMD Groups
Knowledge transfer	Life transformation
Leader prepares	Everyone prepares
Low commitment, low cost	High commitment, high cost
Members sign up	Leaders selects members
Teach, Pray, Care, Share	Truth, Equipping, Accountability, Mission, Supplication
Size: 8-25	Size: 4-10
Produces community	Produces mature and equipped followers
Non-Christians and Christians	Christians
Mixed-gender group	Men with men; Women with women
Leader is a teacher	Leader is a disciple, coach, mentor
Missional Hope	Missional experience
Fellowship	Leader development