

North Georgia Conference
Leadership UMC 2007-2008

Discipleship: Dedicated Followers of Jesus Christ



Kingdom Builders

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Section I - Why do we need to be concerned about discipleship?

Discipleship is not an option that we can take or leave, it is the last commandment from Christ before His ascension, and therefore it should be our first commandment. Christianity without discipleship is Christianity without Christ -- there is trust in God, but no following of Christ and the charge of Great Commission:

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19)

Loss of membership is a growing problem within the denomination. United Methodism is the 3rd largest church of organized religion in the U.S. with approximately 9.6 million lay, ordained, and preparatory members organized in 35,000 congregations.

72% of all UM congregations average less than 100 in worship attendance. Only 40% of these churches reported an increase in their attendance during the 5 year period from 1994-1999.

76% of the congregations reporting an average worship attendance of 500 or more reported an increase.

65% of those averaging 250-499 and 55% of those averaging 150-249 also reported an increase.

Average Worship Attendance Statistics in the Last Three Decades based on Outcomes of the Present UM System:

1. Reduction in the number of congregations reporting their average worship attendance from 37,641 in 1972 to 34,744 at the end of 2001.
2. Increase in the number of congregations reporting an average attendance of 19 or fewer from 3,839 congregations in 1972 to 4,688 at the end of 2001.
3. Decrease in the number of congregations averaging 100 or more at worship from 11,689 in 1972 to 9,925 at the end of 2001.
4. Possible indicator for growth outside America is that the Central Conference increased the number of congregations from 4,691 in 1972 to 6,920 at the end of 2001. In the U.S., we reduced the number of congregations from 39,626 in 1972 to 35, 275 at the end of 2001.

(Statistics from the book **Ice Cube Melting-What is really at Risk in United Methodism?**)

As the children that attended service with their parents grew into young adults they have begun to depart for churches that have an atmosphere of action and excitement. Their life styles are activity-oriented, and they are looking for the same in their place of worship.

Church goers seeking a new church home may prefer to help build a new ministry rather than perpetuate the old standard.

The increased competition from Mega-Churches are raising the bar by offering a more dynamic and diverse worship experience.

The aging congregations, Minister and Laity, may not always relate well to the youth and young adults of today.

THEREFORE
go
AND MAKE
DISCIPLES OF ALL
nations.

MATTHEW 28:19



Section II - Challenges from Contemporary Culture

It's a mystery -- truly a mystery. Why are mainline denominations losing membership? Yet we are told 73% of persons between the ages of 18 and 41 declare that making a commitment to Jesus Christ is important. Why is the church that spread Christianity so successfully in the 19th and 20th centuries no longer able to reach, receive, retain, and grow the un-churched in local communities?

The answer, according to Gabe Lyons, a Christian research analyst and founder of the Fermi Project (an organization of church and society leaders working together to make positive contributions to culture), is that Christians have an image problem. Shocking! Hurtful...yes....hear more.

The Barna Group spent three years studying these questions through extensive interviews and research. Their study focused on Mosaics (born between 1984 and 2002) and Busters (born between 1965 and 1983). Their findings should cause Christians to stand up and take note.

These young adults admit their emotional and intellectual barriers go up when they are around Christians, and they reject Jesus because they feel rejected by Christians. Often outsiders' perceptions of Christianity reflect a church infatuated with itself. Christians seem to have lost their heart for those outside the faith.

One outsider from Mississippi made this blunt observation: "Christianity has become bloated with blind followers who would rather repeat slogans than actually feel true compassion and care. Christianity has become marketed and streamlined into a juggernaut of fear-mongering that has lost its own heart."

One thirty-five-year-old *believer* put it this way: "Christians have become political, judgmental, intolerant, weak, religious, angry, and without balance. Christianity has become a nice Sunday drive." Sadly, *we have become famous for what we oppose, rather than who we are for*.

Six broad themes surfaced that often reflect very real ways in which the Christian community has mistakenly portrayed itself to a skeptical generation. Christians are seen as:

1. *Hypocritical* – saying one thing and doing another
2. *Too focused on getting converts* – Outsiders feel like targets rather than people. They wonder if we really care about them.
3. *Anti-homosexual* – Outsiders say that Christians are bigoted and show disdain for gays and lesbians.
4. *Sheltered* – Christians are thought of as old-fashioned, boring, and out of touch with reality.
5. *Too political* – Overly motivated by a political agenda.

6. *Judgmental* – Quick to judge others. Outsiders doubt that we really love people as we say we do. Outsiders say our underlying concern often seems more about being right than about listening.

Whoa! This is difficult to take -- it is a punch in the gut to Christians. Are you feeling defensive, dismissive, angry, challenged? Good! Hang in there! After all, Jesus warned that the “world” would hate us. Scripture even promises persecution for those who follow Christ.

In many ways, young people perceive the world in very different terms than people ever have before. For example, the lifestyles of Mosaics and Busters are more diverse than those of their parents’ generation. Young people do not want to be defined by a “normal” lifestyle. They are freethinking and possess an “anything-goes” mindset. In an instant they can talk with a friend anywhere in the world. Advertising often shapes their thinking rather than values-teaching coming from the traditional family unit.

Christians have to be very careful about not tossing aside the biblical motivations that contribute to these perceptions. For instance, Christians are known as judgmental because we address sin and its consequences. Christians should be involved in politics because faith weaves itself into every aspect of our lives. Christians should stand up for immoral behavior. Christians should be pursuing conversations and opportunities that point people to Christ because we are representatives of life’s most important message. Christians should strive for purity and integrity even if that makes us appear sheltered.

So, what should we do? How do we change these perceptions? Jesus gave us the answer. He said, “Go into the world.” Mosaics and Busters thrive on relationships. Our job is to introduce them to the one relationship that matters -- a relationship with Jesus Christ. We must build human relationships outside our church walls (Bishop Lindsey Davis tells us 90% of our programming should take place outside the church walls; away from the church campus), and while we do it, we have to deal with Mosaics and Busters as they are – candid, irreverent, and brazen. If we do not, it makes their criticism even more forceful because it goes unanswered.

Jesus is our model -- he was *in the world, not of the world*. He engaged his culture and the world’s people with respect and love. Likewise, he called his churches to love, believe in, serve, reach out to welcome and receive those people and populations that society’s establishment regards as unlikely or even hopeless.

Secondly, reaching the un-churched demands a persistent effort to remain culturally aware. We are called to adapt to the cultures of the peoples we serve and reach, that we might “by all means save some.” (1 Corinthians 9:12-23). Successful churches are adapting to the language, music, and style of the culture of the un-churched they are attempting to reach. However, Christians must be careful not to inter-mingle the

culture and Christian faith. Unfortunately, this is easily done when Christianity holds a preferred place within a culture for a long period of time. Christians must be clear about their faith and live it out in the culture.

Our economy is driven by businesses focused on vision and mission. Successful non-profits follow the same model. Mosaics and Busters are working in these businesses, and therefore, expect the same from their church -- it's the way they think; they want to know where they're headed. They are motivated by seeing what disciples can become. A church devoid of vision may well provide good "chaplaincy services" to a gathered colony of conventional believers, but they'll not grow.

Each church has been called into existence to reach a *different* group of people and to have a *unique influence* on the culture in which it ministers. It's important for a church to have a working knowledge of the people who live in their geographic market and to build its mission and vision around the hurts and needs of that community. A church focused on a vision targeted to reach its community will brim with confidence.

Further, we must find creative ways to communicate the vision. Jesus was a master communicator. He attracted people by making difficult concepts vivid and used the language of common people to help point them toward spiritual depth. Mosaics and Busters are practically begging for creative expressions of the gospel. We must find new stories, new parables, and new ways of sharing the timeless truths of the Bible. Using tired expressions and clichés make us seem out of touch with reality and simpleminded.

And finally, we must remember that God's dream for his church has been that it is made up of believers who understand they are to be apostles. Our evangelism and hospitality efforts must be radical and performed in an exemplary way. We must go the second mile and care for strangers so they find a spiritual home. The un-churched must see Christians giving extravagantly through lavish sharing, sacrifice and service to God and neighbor.

As apostles, we must be rooted in scripture and disciplined prayer. We must be involved in intentional faith development in order that we mature in the faith. This growth will then stretch us beyond our comfort zones and lead us to offering ourselves in ways we would never have done if not for our desire to follow Christ.

And so, we circle back to the critical question: What will we do? If young generations think we no longer look like the people Jesus intended, how do we shift our reputation? The answer is universal, but will be lived individually -- by each Christian; by each church. We have to see people, address their needs and their criticism just as Jesus did. We have to be defined by our service and sacrifice, by lives that exude humility and grace. *Christ followers must learn to respond to people in the way Jesus did.*

Section III - How did John Wesley Disciple People?



"The church has nothing to do but save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work." - John Wesley

What Would John Wesley Do?

"Perhaps the greatest single weakness of the contemporary Christian Church is that millions of supposed members are not really involved at all and, what is worse, do not think it strange that they are not. As soon as we recognize Christ's intention to make His Church a militant company we understand at once that the conventional arrangement cannot suffice. There is no real chance of victory in a campaign if ninety per cent of the soldiers are untrained and uninvolved, but that is exactly where we stand now." -Elton Trueblood

Our spiritual forbearer, John Wesley, shared a passion for discipleship. John Wesley steadfastly refused to allow the word of God to be confined to the church sanctuary. He took every opportunity and used every means available to proclaim the ministry of Jesus Christ. Founded on Jesus' blueprint for discipleship, John Wesley developed a simple plan for maturing and equipping the saints. Wesley said, "The Church changes the world not by making converts but by making disciples." Jesus commanded us to: "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19,20)

Growing Authentic Disciples of Jesus

Discipleship is a common term in churches, but how well are we developing Christ-like people? With millions of born again Christians suffering from biblical illiteracy and culture-accommodating lifestyles, we must reassess how we train people to be true followers of our Lord Jesus.

How Jesus Taught

Jesus ministered to the multitudes at least 17 times according to the Bible. However, there are approximately 46 mentions in the Bible where He spent His time in private with His disciples. In those smaller group settings He trained His committed followers for their own ministries. He ministered one-on-one, one-on-two, and one-on-three. At other times His ministry was conducted one-on-twelve. He also provided on-the-job training with the 70; and spent some apprenticeship time with the 120 as well as placing some emphasis with the 500 in Galilee.

“Go And Make Disciples...Teaching Them To Obey”

(Show, Tell, Release, Supervise):

The great commission has two parts. The first is for us to go and make disciples. The second is of no less significance, but most often set aside to secondary importance if used at all. It is to teach them (apprentice disciples) to obey. In fact, there cannot be a disciple without this training. And there cannot be training without accountability.

The primary objective of the Church today as outlined by Jesus is for disciples of Jesus to develop other men and women into disciples. Discipleship should be at the forefront of our efforts. Everything we do, say and teach should be considered as we ask, “How will this help us make disciples?”

The most effective manner to train and equip people for any skill is by providing effective models and opportunities to practice the skill itself. Jesus used a show, tell, release, and supervise model of training. After calling the disciples, He took them along with Him, teaching and healing the sick as He went. Then, after He thought the disciples had seen and learned enough to try for themselves, He commissioned, empowered, instructed, and sent them out to do the same things. This model of training should be no different for those desiring to bring others into a complete understanding and walk in Christ-likeness.

Wesley’s Four Basic Convictions for Discipleship

1. The Necessity of Discipleship

John Wesley wrote, “I am more and more convinced that the devil himself desires nothing more than this, that the people of any place should be half-awakened and then left to themselves to fall asleep again.”

2. The Necessity of Small Groups for Discipleship

In 1743 John Wesley organized a society. “Such a society is no other than a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their own salvation.” Discipline was the key to this level of holy living. Wesley created 3 strands of discipleship: Societies, Classes, and Bands.

Society: Strand 1 - The Crowd (these were the multitudes)

Purpose: To Bring About A Change in Knowledge

This meeting included those in a geographical area, much like a typical, congregational meeting in today's church. These large groups of people met once a week to pray, sing, study scripture, and to watch over one another in love. There was little or no provision made at this level for personal response or feedback. John described a society as "a company of people having the Form, and seeking the Power of Godliness."

Class: Strand 2 - The Cell (these were Jesus' 12)

Purpose: To Bring About Behavioral Change

A class was the most basic group structure of the society. The class was composed of 12-20 members, both sexes, mixed by age, social standing and spiritual readiness, under the direction of a trained leader. It was not a gathering for academic learning. They met weekly in the evening for mutual confession of sin and accountability for growing in holiness. This group provided the structure to more closely inspect the condition of the flock, to help them through trials and temptations, and to bring further understanding in practical terms to the messages they had heard preached in the public society meeting. Membership in a class meeting was non-negotiable. If you wanted to continue in the society you had to be in a class. In 1742 in one society in London there were 426 members, divided into 65 classes. Eighteen months later that same society had 2200 members, all of whom were in classes. Every week each class member was expected to speak openly and honestly on the true state of his or her soul.

Band: Strand 3 - The CORE (these were Jesus' inner circle made up of Peter, James, and John)

Purpose: To Bring About A Change of Direction, Heart and Position

A Band was composed of 4 members, all the same sex, age, and marital status. They were voluntary cells of people who professed clear Christian commitment, who desired to grow in love, holiness, and purity of motive. The environment was one of ruthless honesty and frank openness. There were specific rules about punctuality and order within the meeting. He introduced accountability questions, which everyone answered openly and honestly in the meeting each week: 1) What known sins have you committed since our last meeting? 2) What temptations have you met with? 3) How were you delivered? 4) What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not? 5) Have you nothing you desire to keep secret? You can see from these questions that there was no place to hide in a Band. Bands became the training ground for future leaders. This group held to extreme confidentiality in a "safe place", mutual submission where matters of indifference were yielded to the released leader, and godly stewardship. This was the group that could intensively pursue goals and vision together.

3. The Necessity of Leadership in Discipleship

A small army was needed to provide the leadership for this 3-Strand Discipleship Model, and, just as is true today, professionally paid staff simply was not available. Wesley trained and mobilized a massive army of leaders, putting as many as 1 in 10 of his members into leadership roles - barbers, blacksmiths, bakers, men and women. The job description of those who looked after societies and classes was: "preach, teach, study, travel, meet with bands, classes, exercise daily and eat sparingly."

4. Holiness and Service as the Goals of Discipleship

Wesley's goals for this entire process were godliness and goodwill - spirituality and service to others. This system and process produced a new kind of citizen at a period of history when crime and every form of public sin were rampant. These men and women reformed both the church and the society in which they lived.

Applications

1. Make small groups - Cells and CORE - a priority for making disciples.
2. Be constantly involved in training others to do the work of making disciples.
3. Consider some adaptation of the 3-Strand Church Model: Crowd + Cell + CORE = Church.
4. Renew a thrust for evangelism by focusing attention on disciple-making.

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Section IV - What Do Successful Churches Do?

What is a successful church? How do we define success in our churches today and what has our experience taught us about the things we need to be doing to make disciples? Is a successful church defined by its membership, its giving and its new buildings, or do we look at how well we are doing at making disciples and building up the body of Christ? Growth is an ongoing concern for congregations large and small. It seems discipleship is often overlooked or is far down the list when evaluating the success of churches.

Success in churches is difficult to define because there are so many; each has its own way of doing things, and the communities they represent and serve are so varied. It seems that we tend to define success in churches based upon the number of members and the amount of resources they have. Churches like Frazier United Methodist in Montgomery, Alabama, Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago, Church of The Resurrection in Leawood Kansas and Ginghamburg Church in Tipp City, Ohio are some of the models we look to. However, it is important to remember that all churches are not destined to be like these. Small community churches can be just as successful as mega-churches if they are making disciples and serving the way God intends for them to.

Our group researched and identified churches that have experienced success in the area of discipleship and some of the methods that have enabled them to thrive. Much of the information we have identified comes from large churches like Frazier United Methodist, Ginghamburg and Church of the Resurrection, but some data comes from much smaller churches filling needs in their community such as Capital View United Methodist in Atlanta. There are also new churches like The Vine in Braselton, Georgia which has over one hundred percent of its membership involved in some type of service. We recognize that what works in one church might not necessarily be effective in another. Our hope is that this information will be an encouragement and an inspiration to churches as they seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

The large church we are highlighting below is Frazer UMC (over 8000 members), a well known church that has been very successful in keeping people involved in ministry. They publish a booklet called Every Member in Ministry authored by their pastor, John Ed Mathison that describes their approach to serving by involving the laity. Highlights of the booklet are as follows:

- 90% of their members have at least one ministry.
- Laypersons are trained to do ministry. This is taught in Sunday school and preached from the pulpit.
- Teamwork is vital (I Corinthians 12 compares ministry to the human body. Individual parts function together to give unity to the whole body.)
- Set expectation high. Everyone is expected to find an area of service.
- New members are given an immediate opportunity to serve.
- Ministries should be based upon needs. Does the ministry meet a need? Does it make disciples?

- They allow their members to develop ministries based on the needs of the community.
- They have many ministries to choose from. (160 different areas to serve)
- Members sign one year service and financial commitment cards.
- Members volunteer where they feel led to serve. (Allows God to call people into appropriate ministry)
- They offer detailed descriptions of ministries.
- Ministries that no one volunteers for are discontinued. Congregation is informed and given a second opportunity to respond. If no one does, they have a funeral service for that mission.
- Volunteers are contacted immediately and given adequate training.
- All members are expected to invite three or more people to church twice each year.
- New member classes are given. These are 4-week classes with a graduation.
- All ministries are lay managed.
- Accurate attendance is kept. Those who miss three Sundays in a row are contacted.

The Vine in Braselton, Ga. is a smaller new Methodist church that is less than a year old. They have about 100 people involved in small groups called Cluster groups. Over 100% of their membership is involved in a serving capacity. They had 49 people in their first membership class with 47 people joining (70% of these were professions of faith). Pastor David Walters describes the current success of The Vine as follows:

- People invite other people (the best form of outreach)
- Focus is not on bringing in members, but bringing in un-reached and un-churched.
- They have a 4-week mandatory membership class that covers what it means to be a member of the Body of Christ and a member of The Vine.
- Members pledge to attend worship and small group, tithe and commit for one year to an area of service.
- Members sign a one-year reviewable covenant.
- Spiritual gifts inventory classes are taught.
- Cluster groups (cell groups) are used to groom identifiable leaders.
- Small groups serve as membership accountability.
- They preach and applaud serving. Members share their stories of serving.

While The Vine has yet to stand the test of time, they have been successful thus far in making disciples and in keeping one another accountable. They have done this without a permanent church home much like the early church. This leads to the question of how much time, energy and money are we pouring into the maintenance of our churches rather than the missions that we should be doing?

A more subtle example of success that we have identified involves a church in downtown Atlanta that has found a way to share Jesus with others. Capital View UMC provides a free weekly lunch and Bible study to the homeless and others in their community. While this mission might not lead to church growth, it certainly brings to mind Matthew 25: 35-36, 40:

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. The King will reply, I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Capital View UMC is certainly successful in each and every meal that they serve to a hungry person.

So what do successful churches do? Most churches probably have some areas in which they can claim success as well as areas where they need to improve. While all churches can't expect to be like Frazier in terms of membership, every church can find ways to be successful especially with regard to discipleship. Below is a list of items that we believe provides a good overview for a modern, relevant, successful church with scripture references included.

- Members know, understand and are committed to the purpose, vision and mission of their church
- They realize that the church is not an organization, but an organism that is represented by the people, not the building. (1 Peter 2:5)
- Lay driven, staff and clergy guided
- People should lead by example (Matthew 5:14)
- Be authentic (Ephesians 4:25)
- Provide a hospitable and welcoming environment at all times to all people (Matthew 25: 35-40)
- Invite others to know God (Matthew 28:19)
- Accept people whether they are seeking, unsure or connected (Galatians 3:28)
- Have a specific plan to help people in their spiritual journey and have committed servants who are intentionally following up with the plan (Ephesians 4: 11-13)
- Provide missions and outreach programs that take people out of the pews and into the world
- Develop leaders with training, education, tools and support
- Don't compete with other churches in the area
- Be flexible and open-minded about worship style and location while staying true to the gospel
- Identify ministry strengths and how they relate to the congregation and the community. Be prepared to let some things go.
- Offer ways for people to connect outside of Sunday worship such as small groups, fellowship events, mission opportunities, etc.

- Share successes with other churches or partner with successful churches to learn what is working for them
- Have high expectations (Philippians 4: 13)
- Pray continually

A Simple Summarization

1. HAVE A PLAN
2. COMMUNICATE THE PLAN
3. EMPOWER LAITY LEADERSHIP
4. WORK THE PLAN BEING OBEDIENT SERVANTS OF JESUS.



Section V - A Primer of Simple Ideas for Being Better Disciples

The word evangelism brings fear into the hearts of many Methodists, but the fear comes from not understanding what to do and how to do it. In John 8:31, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teachings, you are really my disciples.” Jesus taught us everything we need to know about being better disciples and making new ones. He went to everyone including Gentiles and sinners to teach them the Gospel message. In Luke 19:5-7, “When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.’ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, ‘He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.’”

Being a better disciple requires a transformation of both the giver and receiver of the invitation. As Christians, we must step out of our comfort zone and become invitational servants. The un-churched must be open minded 1) about becoming a believer; 2) to the fact that neither the church, as a body, nor Christians, as individuals, are perfect; and 3) to the idea that the worship experience is not a boring waste of time. Both parties must be willing to accept the call of Jesus to be a disciple. Jesus had four elements in His transformational process.

<u>Jesus Did This</u>	<u>Disciple Opportunities</u>
He built individual relationships.	In society each day, we interface with many un-churched people; find a connection.
He uniquely blessed each one.	Do a good deed for them.
He prayed for everyone.	In public or private, pray for their salvation.
He brought the Kingdom into each one’s life	Invite them to a church function.

This primer focuses on the transformational elements listed in the chart above. We shall focus on bringing people from the local community into our church and have segmented that task into three main sections: 1) Get the person in the door; 2) Make the guest feel welcome; 3) Connect the guest and continue to build the relationship. We will attempt to provide detailed suggestions for bringing the Kingdom of God into a person’s life. Each church will need to decide the specific ideas that will best work in their local community and church. One of the strengths of Methodism is our diversity. Therefore, practices that work for one church may need to be adapted for another church or may need to be ignored completely by others. It is often helpful to have conversations with sister churches in your immediate area to identify the practices that work for them. Our goal is to provide an idea, a catalyst, or an inspiration that will bring lost souls one by one to Jesus Christ, and in turn, provide confidence to the new Christian to become a true, inviting disciple for Christ who will lead more lost souls one by one to Jesus Christ.

First of all, we need to make certain assumptions about infrastructure items being in place within the local church before beginning to make new disciples. These include a minister in the pulpit; a chair or pew where the guest can sit; proper heating and cooling of the facility, etc.

The church also needs to have evangelical tools in place in order to make itself known to the community. We call these tools the back office operation. Make certain that these six tools are operational and running smoothly before attempting to attract, welcome, and build a connectional relationship to the guests in your community.

1. As a church, be outwardly instead of internally focused; remove the external walls and silos; develop activities that promote the Gospel and appeal to the community.
2. The church should have a mission statement, which references making disciples and well known by all members.
3. A printed brochure/handout to communicate the church's mission and to highlight ministries within the local church.
4. A process to welcome and follow up with each guest that attends a church function; whether it is a worship service or other event.
5. A formalized method to connect the guest to the church through small groups serving missions, Bible study, Sunday School, sporting events, etc.
6. Reinforcing these "Being a Better Disciple" practices from the pulpit each Sunday and through prayer from the leaders of the congregation.

A) Get the Person in the Door

- a. Develop an understanding of the culture in your community. Know its needs; know the facets that excite or turn-off a guest. Examples:
 - i. Generation X's do not want to be greeted individually in the Narthex; they look for a welcoming environment, but not want to be called out for special attention. This revelation was initiated by one of team members and emphasized by two of our ministers in attendance at the Laity-Minister session on March 7.
 - ii. If the community has drug issues, provide a safe haven for children after school.
 - iii. Help coach a youth recreational activity and build relationships with the parents.
 - iv. Establish an outreach program by taking teddy bears to children in the local hospital.
- b. Establish a communication system with the community. For example, through school contacts you might hear of a child who is sick. A church member who knows the family should call and determine their needs, organize volunteers to meet those needs, and pray for the child.
- c. Implore the entire congregation to be responsible for inviting guests to church

- i. Conduct training on how to extend a personal invitation to come to church and to tell the person why you attend this specific church; the training should include
 - 1. Theological reasons for becoming invitational
 - 2. Parables/stories/practical role plays illustrating how to extend a proper invitation.
 - ii. Have each disciple write down why they attend this church
 - iii. Have fun in the process
 - iv. Set Goals -- Challenge the disciples.
 - d. Develop a meaningful website that is “guest friendly”-- informative and easy to navigate.
 - e. Through area real estate brokers, determine new arrivals into your community and deliver a welcome packet of information about the church and the community such as medical facilities, child care, grocery stores, parks etc.
 - f. Advertise within the local community such as youth sporting events
 - g. Advertise formally with billboards, radio, newspaper and other local media
 - h. Have signs at the street corner publicizing worship on Sunday morning.
 - i. Provide a free tank of gasoline to single mother’s in your community.
 - j. Target your efforts; each church cannot be all things to all people; know your strengths and weaknesses.

B) Welcome the Guest

- a. Have a greeter at all important events to offer help and a personal touch; setup a guest information table in the Narthex or gathering area to provide information regarding small groups including youth and children’s activities.
- b. Have host families who agree to sit with guests during a service to welcome them and answer any question.
- c. Include guest recognition as part of the morning prayer during the service.
- d. Provide a relaxed atmosphere; e.g. a coffee shop.
- e. Have a registration pad/connect card in each pew/row to seek name, address, telephone number, and email address of the guest.
- f. Establish a “greet your neighbor” time during worship
- g. Have the minister/evangelism team member contact the guest within 72 hours to extend personal gratitude for his/her attendance.

C) Potential steps to Connect the Guest & Build the Relationship

- a. Have a minister/evangelism team member write a note of appreciation that the guest attended the church function.
- b. The minister/evangelism team member could visit the person’s home to deliver a gift to the guest after the second visit; the gift could be a CD of the church’s music ministry, a baked item, or a book. Determine their interests and if applicable, discover the guest’s pain. In other words, develop a relationship.

- c. Share a testimony during events/services as to why a disciple chooses to attend this local church.
- d. Celebrate outstanding church accomplishments.
- e. If the guest has a need, develop a team to assist or satisfy the needs.
- f. With the guest's permission, have the prayer warriors pray for this guest and inform the guest that our church is praying for his/her family. Ask the guest to inform the church of any specific prayer concerns.
- g. After the fourth visit, have the minister/evangelism team member provide a follow-up phone call to determine a small group connection for the guest.
- h. Have a minister/lay leader conduct a seeker/inquirer class for guests and new disciples.
- i. Invite guests to a brunch with pastor & spouse and laity for a short program and Q&A session.
- j. Emphasize/explain a Shepherding program for all disciples where all families in the congregation are prayed for each day.
- k. Schedule a membership retreat before guests join in order to tell them the elements that are expected of disciples.
- l. Sign a covenant for each disciple's ministry.
- m. Have a Wednesday night dinner and invite those un-churched families within a residential group/subdivision to attend dinner with a disciple.
- n. Communicate via letter, phone call that the church body extends an invitation to join our congregation.
- o. Periodically, (quarterly, semi annually) dedicate a special segment of the worship service to be devoted to guests joining.
- p. Conduct a connectional event (lunch) for all new disciples
 - i. Ministry fair
 - ii. New disciple packet
 - iii. Invitation/communicate church programs
 - iv. Introduction to their Shepherd or prayer partner
 - v. Spiritual gifts assessment
 - vi. Introduction to stewardship
 - vii. Information about opportunities for fellowship

Section VI -A Suggested Discipling Model for a United Methodist Church

The Kingdom Builders have selected a specific set of ideas from the prior list in Section V that comprises a plan for being better disciples for a hypothetical suburban church in the North Georgia Conference. As in the previous section, we attempt to keep the plan simple by using concrete ideas. We again suggest to the reader that he/she use this to understand the elements of a comprehensive plan and adapt the ideas to the needs of his/her local community and the capabilities and resources of his/her local congregation.

I. Get the person in the door

- a. Get to know your local community and understand the resources within your church. The evangelism committee should determine why the disciples attend your church. Additionally they should formulate a list of needs from the families in your local community. Our church discovered the top five reasons that disciples remain as listed in preferential order: Minister, Worship Style, Friends, Children-Youth Ministries, and Mission activities. We also discovered the top five reasons that guests are attracted to our church listed in preferential order: Denomination, Minister, Children-Youth Ministries, Location, and Worship Style. While some overlap, this study indicates that we Methodists should do a better job of making the community understand who we are and what we believe as it seems that Methodists like to stay with their chosen faith. It also emphasizes the need for a good pulpit person with an emphasis on the style of worship, and the need for strong children and youth activities.

We can improve our knowledge of the local community by establishing better feedback mechanisms. We can seek assistance from the schools as to what families need in the way of education or recreation, and learn to fill the gaps. Here is a key element to remember. A large percentage of guests come to a church seeking to fill a worldly gap or heal a worldly pain within their own life or the lives of their children. If that gap or pain can be identified, the church should attempt to fill it. Remembering that children and youth ministries were a top five priority to our guests, our church has begun to use our family life center for after school programs for teens and children. We offer a “coffee shop” atmosphere where the kids can socialize in a safe environment. We also offer homework assistance and a quiet time for the teens and children to accomplish their assignments along with a more structured Bible study. Realizing that mission work is important, we plan to become involved in an apartment ministry focusing on at-risk kids in a nearby complex where most of the children have a diverse background. This will allow the children within our congregation to reach out and understand the multi cultural issues that we face as Christians.

The bottom line is that the more active we become in our community, the more data points we will gather in order to devise programs that will assist and fill the gaps and needs within the community. By filling these gaps, we will be doing exactly what Jesus instructed us to do. Bless the people who are in need; deeds precede the Word. People are longing to be a part of something, and most people want to be a part of something good.

- b. After identifying the needs of the community, the pastor and lay leadership should hold one or two workshops to instruct the congregation into the theological teachings of Jesus. Specifically, they should remind each of us that, as His disciples, we are called to bring people into His Kingdom. Additionally, the leadership should provide the practical ways to teach disciples how to introduce the subject to their friends, co-workers, and neighbors. The workshop needs a minimum of the following to be successful: 1) endorsed by the leadership; 2) well publicized to the congregation via email and personal phone calls, and announced from the pulpit; 3) communicated that all disciples need to attend; and 4) cards that provide a written summary of key points for each family to take home.
 - i. The theological methods can be summarized in the table listed after the second paragraph in Section V of this paper.
 1. Build individual relationships.
 2. Bless each person by doing good deeds.
 3. Pray for each one.
 4. Bring the Kingdom of God into each one's life
 - ii. A more detailed example of an approach to accomplish this is listed in Appendix A, entitled "Scripted Dialogue for Theological Reasons to become a Better Disciple."
 - iii. The practical side of what to say, how to do it, and the timing as to when to invite a guest to church can take any number of approaches. Since Jesus taught by using parables or stories, we elected to use role plays as our method of communicating the message. The first is a golf outing where a church disciple invites an un-churched person to be his guest at a worship service. The person declines but in doing so, makes a significant point to the disciples that the time to act is now and not later. The second story involves dinner at a local restaurant where a couple from the church invites an un-churched couple to attend. The "church lady" makes several key mistakes in her invitation and turns off the un-churched couple to the point that they want nothing to do with this church or the couple. Both of these scripts and one other are attached in Appendix B at the end of this paper.
 - iv. We decided to be bold in our approach and suggest a goal for each disciple family. Our goal was simply have each disciple family invite one guest to attend church with them per quarter or four per year.

If this is accomplished by 20% of our disciple families, we will quadruple our current rate of guests over the course of the next twelve months.

- v. We chose to summarize the four key theological points above on a magnetic card that could be attached to each family's refrigerator as a reminder of the reasons we need to be good disciples and as a reminder to get the job done.
 - c. Our pastors remind the congregation each week that the job of Discipleship is not just the responsibility of the Evangelism committee and not just a one shot task. It is the task of each disciple in our church and something that we should hold each day in the forefront of our mind. When the opportunity presents itself in a worldly setting, we must be equipped and ready to seize that opportunity for making Disciples for God's Kingdom.
 - d. We also have undertaken the task to bring our church website up to date. This includes a makeover of the website with more guest friendly information and a plan to update our data more frequently. This involved several components.
 - i. Seek volunteers within the congregation who had the aptitude and willingness to update the website and maintain a more current status. Designate them as the official webmasters.
 - ii. Training of the webmasters and equipping them with the manuals and tools to get the job done.
 - iii. Providing a methodology for the church calendar and information from the various ministries to be channeled to the webmaster.
 - iv. Provide a way to disseminate information such as prayer requests to the congregation via the website.
 - v. This process should continue to evolve in order that the website can be a tool to reach guests and keep the disciples informed.
- II. Welcome the guest into your church

We have heard church disciples say, "I would bring a guest to church, but I don't know what I would do with them once I got there." Too often we minister to ourselves because we know one another. Too often we allow our discomfort with small talk to stand in the way of sincerely welcoming a guest. Too often we greet guests with a façade of plastic smiles and holier than thou attitudes that permeate our welcome. We end up turning off the very people we are attempting to attract. We need to be sincere and genuine and remember that guests should be treated with love, care, concern and attention. Jesus went beyond the normal socially-accepted standards and associated with everyone- Jews, Gentiles, sinners, tax collectors, prostitutes, the lame, the sick, etc. We need to learn that when people come into our midst, they often are uneasy and sometimes feel pain and suffering of some magnitude. They have realized that there is something missing in their lives. We need to be there to receive and serve them until they are ready to take the next step in their walk into the Kingdom.

- a. We have a greeter at all significant events at our church. The greeter welcomes everyone and takes note of newcomers who arrive at the door. He/she has a warm smile and handshake and is standing near a table or booth that is labeled “guest information.” We try to answer any question and put the guest at ease by making them feel that this is their home as well as ours.
- b. The guest information table has the following materials: 1) an overview of the church and its ministries for children, youth, young adults, and adults- here is what we do for all ages; 2) a listing of small groups ranging from Sunday School classes and their locations to Bible study and sporting events sponsored by the church; 3) a brochure on how a guest can become connected to the next level in the church with names, emails and telephone numbers of staff persons/leaders for each ministry; and 4) a pamphlet on how to become a disciple. We have chosen to give bookmarks informing guests of our health ministry and where they can find answers. If that family has an illness or needs just to talk about a relative’s or friend’s illness, we are attempting to discover that pain in a low key way on the first visit to our church.
- c. We have friendship (pew) pads in the sanctuary and take the pads to all large events where we expect a number of guests to be present. We seek contact information from the guest such as names of family members, telephone number, email address, and mailing address. These are collected at the end of each service/event, and an administrative assistant compiles a list of newcomers into an electronic guest database. In addition to the contact information, we have a data element for multiple dates when the guest attends and a place for notes when additional information regarding this guest is attained.
- d. We attempt to identify the guests as they arrive and often are able to communicate the name of the person to the minister in order that he/she may greet them by name as they exit the sanctuary.
- e. We have a two minute segment of each worship service devoted to having each person greet their neighbor and specifically request that each person introduce him(her)self to someone that he/she does not know. During our main prayer, we specifically thank God for the guests in our midst and pray that they will have a meaningful worship experience.
- f. Most un-churched folks think that church is boring. We try to let all our congregants know that we enjoy being where we are and doing God’s work in our lives. While we keep our announcements short in length, we attempt to highlight our missions, the accomplishments in our ministries, and keep all our people informed of upcoming events in the life of the church. In other words, we emphasize having fun and being bold in our work for the Kingdom. Occasionally, we share our testimonies as to why we believe or why we belong to this specific church; often these are emotionally charged.

- g. Within 72 hours after the first visit by a guest, our pastor calls each guest and talks with them about our church, what we believe, our mission statement, and attempts to gather more information about the family. This is documented in our database. Our pastor always ends the conversation with we hope to see you back in church next Sunday. He will often schedule a face to face visit at the guest's home.

III. Connect the Guest; Build the Relationship

I Corinthians 3:6-8, Paul writes,

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they each will be rewarded according to their own labor."

The next series of tasks is crucial to watering the seed. We have attempted to make the guest feel welcome and to discover the individual needs without prying. We now need to build the relationship and connect the guest to our church in order to allow God to do His work in germinating the seed and developing it into a believer in His Kingdom. If you have plants, there is always the question of how much to water. If you water too little or too much, the end result is the same- the plant will wither and die. It is extremely important to know your community, to understand individual needs and to treat each guest uniquely. Some guests will want to take a giant step after the first visit; others will want to stay in the curious stage as a seedling for more than a year. Our job, as disciples, is to be there for each guest and to continue to show them why we attend and worship, to be servants, and to do as many good deeds for our guests as possible to help them in his/her journey in the Kingdom.

- a. During the pastor's initial telephone call, the guest may welcome the pastor's request to come into their home. During this visit, additional data about the family is collected and later compiled in the electronic guest database. A copy of this database report is sent to selected members of the evangelism team on a weekly basis.
- b. If the guest has a specific need such as illness, getting acclimated to the community, an interest in a particular ministry; this information is forwarded to the lead person for that group within the church.
- c. During the week after the latest contact from the pastor, a member of the evangelism team contacts the guest and talks to them about the church activities and the reasons why they enjoy being a disciple of the church. The disciple determines if there are interests or questions and invites them back to a church event or worship service. The purpose of this contact is to ascertain the point where the guest can become better connected to the congregation. After requesting the guest's permission, the disciple informs the guest that our prayer groups are praying for their family and asks if they have any specific requests. This information is forwarded to our prayer warriors who meet formally once per week and have a notification system

of more urgent needs. These prayer requests are summarized weekly, printed, and distributed on Sunday mornings to our congregation.

- d. Three to four times per year, we offer a “Seekers’ Class” for new disciples and guests. The main objective of these classes is to present an overview of Methodism, the local church, our activities and our ministries. We schedule various ministry leaders who will speak to the class as to the details and mission of that group. We include stewardship and explain where our money is spent and why it is important to be a good steward in the church.
- e. On a semi-annual basis, the evangelism committee sponsors a connectional luncheon for all new disciples and those interested guests for a time of learning and fellowship. The gathering is very informal with children, and the food is simple such as a sandwiches and chips. The main emphasis is making the new disciple and the guest feel more comfortable and to allow them an opportunity to become better connected within the church. Prior to this luncheon we send letters to the new disciples and to those guests that we feel may be ready to make a commitment to our church. The guest letter informs them of the upcoming special segment of our worship service that will be dedicated for new disciples joining the church.
- f. As guests become disciples, we have developed a Shepherding program where each shepherd has responsibility to pray daily and make monthly contact with each member in his “flock.” The shepherd is designated the official liaison where open and frequent communication with all disciples is the objective. The Shepherding program provides a vehicle for making certain that each family is cared for, prayed for, and encouraged to take additional steps in their walk with God.

Section VII - Building a Foundation

So - what should you take-away from this paper?

Jesus Christ and John Wesley have provided the perfect model for discipleship. Jesus had twelve apostles with an inner circle of three. Their beginning was awesome with the power of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. After they witnessed the risen Lord, they saw their mission clearly and began to build the church. Their fervor and passion for spreading the gospel continued throughout each of their lives until some of them died violent deaths in defense and proclamation of the risen Savior.

These few took Christianity to the ends of the known world within 89 years after Jesus' death by making a disciple who, in turn, made other disciples. This 89 year period is the only period in recorded history when Christianity grew at a faster pace than the world population. At that time, the movement was influenced by Greek culture and shifted from people and relationships to information; the leaders wanted to achieve the results without making disciples.

However in a microcosm in England during the eighteenth century, Jesus' model was reinstated by John Wesley. He led predominantly English commoners to Christ by making disciples who became accountable to make other disciples. When Wesley died, one in every thirty people in England was Methodist. But thirty years *after* Wesley's death, one in every three people was Methodist.

Wesley returned to Jesus' Hebrew model where one person learns spiritually from another rather than the Greek model of providing information. Instead of focusing on the result, we need to focus on building relationships and connecting people to the church and to God; if we do so, the results will follow. See Appendix C for an illustration of the impact of one disciple leading two guests who in turn lead two guests to Christ each year thereafter. The first column in the chart illustrates the results of a super-evangelist who leads 1,000 people per day to Christ but makes no disciples. The second column illustrates the phenomenal power of each disciple making two more disciples per year. For the first 15 years, the super-evangelist leads with bringing guests to Christ, but in year 16 and thereafter, the disciple model brings more new disciples to Christ. In fact in year 20 the methodology of making disciples exceeds the super-evangelist method by over 1 billion people; the benefits and numbers are awesome. Building disciples will allow us success and bring all the people on earth into the Kingdom.

The Kingdom Builders encourage each Methodist congregation in the North Georgia Conference to take action and be better disciples. Again, let us remind the reader that the foregoing is only one hypothetical church's program for discipleship. We hope that the reader can take one idea and adapt it to his/her local community and church and bring one non believer into the Kingdom or allow one believer to move one step closer in his walk with God. This movement toward John Wesley's sanctification will promote better disciples- ones that lead others to Christ.

Continuous Improvements in our Discipleship

Mindset- Philippians 2:5 “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus”

We start by admitting that we can always improve on what we are doing, and we should develop a mindset to not become discouraged in the activities to make Disciples for Christ. The first step is to acquire the desire to make improvement and to overcome any fear of rejection. The task of being an inviting church is influencing another person’s behavior- in commercial terms, performing a selling function. We disciples are attempting to lead a guest into changing his way of life; we are attempting to “sell” this guest into our way of life, which is a servant/slave in Christ Jesus.

The Kingdom Builders acknowledge that in a great number of congregations, this discipling program will be a culture change. Culture changes require planning, time for adjustment, and a strong commitment on the part of the local church leadership. However, both the worldly rewards and the heavenly rewards are priceless. If each disciple of the North Georgia Conference would share the Kingdom with just one person during his/her lifetime, think of the impact that would have on the Methodist Church. There is no higher calling than to be a Disciple for Jesus. Keep in mind that a Discipleship program is like a fever, and once a few people catch it, others will want to take part. Churches should be intentional in their practice of discipling people within and outside the church

Communicate – Francis of Assisi said “Go into the world and share the gospel, if you must use words”

It is of vital importance that our churches communicate effectively both internally and externally. Once a church has identified its purpose, mission and vision, it must be shared repeatedly- both verbally and through actions. The book immediately following the four gospels is entitled Acts, not beliefs. What better way to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Empower Leaders – Luke 9:1-2 “When Jesus had called the twelve together, he gave them great power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick”

There is no time like the present to empower people to assist in the work of Holy Spirit. There is no credential required (being a Christian for a certain amount of the year, attending seminary, etc). The biblical model shows that Jesus sent out His first disciples in His name and at that time they did not necessarily have the full understanding of Him, God incarnate. Willingness and obedience is all that it takes. Mistakes will be made. Embrace leader initiative.

Connect - Philippians 2:1-4 “If you have any encouragement from being United in Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love,

being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your interest, but also to the interests of others.”

God wants all of his children to be in relationship with Him; in II Peter 3:9, “Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish.” People want to innately belong somewhere, and what better place for each of us to connect with the body of Christ. Connecting people to the body of Christ is an essential element in becoming an effective disciple. Jesus provided the role model for us in the amount of time and effort he invested in people. Meeting and connecting people where they are allows non believers to experience the unconditional love and acceptance that Christ offers.

Urgency- Luke 9:59-61 “He (Jesus) said to another man, Follow me. But the man replied, Lord, first let me go and bury my father. Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God. Still another said, I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.”

We offer the most important suggestion of this entire paper; pick one or more ideas and try it. Quoting Nike, “**Just do it.**” Quoting the cable guy, “**Git ‘er done!**”

And in common terms, “Do it now, rather than later.”

A. The Kingdom Builders’ objective is not solely to grow the Methodist Church; moreover, it is to share our experience of Jesus Christ in an authentic, natural way. If, by this report, one non-believer is brought into the Kingdom, this project will have been a success. It takes just one disciple at each church working with one non-believer at a time to make discipling a success.

In Romans 6:6-7, “For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin- because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.” And from Romans 6:17-18, “But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.”

B. Jesus has provided us the teachings and the Spirit to perform miracles. When you lead your first soul into the Kingdom, you will know that you have performed a miracle and freed someone from the bondage of sin and eternal death. And from Romans 10:15, “...how beautiful are the feet of those that bring the good news!” Glory be to God.

Appendix A - Script for Theological Reasons to being Better Disciples.

Invitational Church Session

I. Why am I here?

K: OK Laurence, why am I here? Why have you dragged me out here on a Sunday afternoon? Don't you know this is the Sabbath? I'm supposed to rest on the Sabbath and you are depriving me of my afternoon nap?

- L: Mission statement/ 2nd half
- L: Not a big church, but big Christians
- L: Great Commission Matt.28 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And remember I am with you even until the end of the age.

II. The Vision

K.I see. Well if that's why we're here then would you mind telling me where we are going?

- L: God says to Abraham in Gen. 12 "to a place that I will show you."
- L: In Matt.16 the Angel in white robe says," He is not here. Look, there is the place the laid him. Go tell His disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see Him just as He told you."
- God's spirit will continue to guide us into Exodus, both for those who are here and for those who are to come.
- We don't have a mission statement. We are a mission

III. Overcoming Objections

L. You know when you think about it, it kind of makes you wonder. Why would anyone want to join this church? Can't you hear them saying, "I know the people at that church and I know the pastors, too. Why there just a bunch of hypocrites. Why should I join up with people like that?"

K. Good question, Laurence. We are:

- Hypocrites and Sinners/ we have problems; don't always handle them very well.
- Worried, weak, and wobbly.
- Isn't it great there's a place where we can go?
- Disciples were just ordinary people/ tax collector/ fishermen/ accountant
- They had doubts/ slow to understand.
- God doesn't choose us / what we can do for him/ what He can do through us.

- God calls us
- L. You make some good points, Keith, but what about the people who will say, “You just want me to come to Simpsonwood so I’ll give you my money.”
- K. Actually nothing could be farther from the truth.
- Time and talents and their money.
 - We want to serve their needs
 - We want to help them build relationships w/ Christ and others
 - We want them to engage first and then have the joy of giving back.
 - Giving is not a burden but an opportunity to participate according to how you receive.
 - We want people to become engage in the life/ God will do the rest.
- L. OK, OK, I see your reasoning there. But, I’ve heard people ask “why do I need a church to be a good Christian? I can pray and read the Bible on my own. I can give my money to the organizations I choose. Can’t I be saved just by doing my own thing?”
- K. Two part question. Tackle one at a time.
- Take the last first: No you can’t. God does the saving, not us. Our good works are never sufficient/ regardless of membership.
 - More important question is why would you try to go it alone?
 - Not misery loves company/ Rather life is just plain tough.
 - Don’t have all the answers/ need relationships to help us negotiate
 - Sin interferes with those relationships
 - Grace restores them
 - So much easier to learn about Jesus Christ in a faith community
 - So much easier to accept grace in a faith community
 - So much easier to grow spiritually in a faith community.
 - So much easier to help others in their walk in a faith community.

Now let’s see some more skits.

IV. The invitational Church

K. So Laurence what does it look like to be an Invitational Church

L. As the skits have shown us;

- Everyone feels invited
- Everyone gets spoken to every Sunday
- Everyone feels a part of a group
- Everyone has a place to share their feelings
- Everyone participates in something they are passionate about.

L. Now I have a question for you? You're the analyst/ consultant type. What model should we use to pattern our behavior as an inviting church?

K. I'm so glad you asked. While we answer the question can some of you help us pass out these cards?

K. First we share a deed.

- Kindness/ favor/ hospitality/ help Story of the man born blind. Jesus healed him. We might not be able to heal/ but we can help. Meal/ carpool/ etc.
- Deeds should precede words.

L Next we share a word.

- Jesus explained his deed to his Disciples.
- I like Simpsonwood because...
- Testimony/ why it is important. (Statistic) 75% will come if you tell them why.

K. Then share an Invitation

- Jesus asked people to follow him to join him
- Doesn't have to be to worship/ event/ activity/ program.
- You are not alone/ Jesus is working too.
- LEGO principle / help someone find something to be passionate about.

L. Share an ear

- Listen to what they say/ good or bad
- Feedback helps us be more effective
- People desperately need someone to listen.
- Jesus was a great listener. He heard their hearts as well as their words.

K. Share a prayer

- Jesus always began anything important with a prayer.

- Be an advocate; let them know
- It's a blessing few will turn down.
- It shares the work of being invitational with Jesus.
- Now turn over your cards and write down four names of folks to invite.



Appendix B - Additional Role Play Scripts

A. Role Play for Golf Outing

Being an Inviting Church
Role Play- 2 guys during a round of golf
Written by Johnny Johns¹

Walking on stage dressed in golf attire and carrying a golf bag

Johnny	Charles, it sure is a great day to be on the golf course.
Charles	Yes, the Lord does not make them any better than this.
Johnny	Charles, your course is immaculate, and the homes are really pretty; kids are out playing; it looks like a great place to live.
Charles	Thanks
Johnny	Hey Charles, did you hear about this new golf gun, invented by Juan Gonzalez?
Charles	No, I didn't; what is a golf gun?
Johnny	I don't really know; but he had an accident with it, and it sure made a hole in Juan!!!
Charles	(Shaking head) That was really bad; Johnny, did you hear about the mom who went in to wake up her son, Laurence, on Sunday morning
Johnny	No
Charles	She goes in and shakes Laurence and says, get up Laurence; it's time to go to church. Laurence replies, "I don't want to go." She says, "well why not." Laurence says "I'll give you two good reasons. I don't like those people and they don't like me." Laurence's mother says "I'll give you two good reasons that you should go, You're 69 years old and you're the pastor."
Johnny	That's funny; I don't go to church, but that was good. I wish I knew a pastor named Laurence that I could tell that to. It looks like the group in front of us has cleared. Are you ready to tee it up?
Charles	You go ahead.
Johnny	OK (pretends to tee up the ball, gets a club, takes a huge swing and looks in the distance); Charles, did you see that shot; is it out there about 250 yards. I swung with all my might but I didn't see where it went.
Charles	I think you topped it and it went in the water hazard.
Johnny	Man- I swung with all that I had; I cannot believe it didn't go any farther than that.
Charles	That's a tough break; Let me see how I can do. (Swings and ball goes down the middle of fairway)
Johnny	Wow, what a drive. It's out there about 260 yards right down the middle and you're in great position for your next shot. You play golf just like you lead your life- right down the middle.
Charles	I think that shot had a little luck but I do try to hold my life in the middle of the road.
Johnny	(Walks to next shot)

Charles	(Walks with Johnny) You can place your ball here and be in fairly good shape
Johnny	You are generous to let me play from here. I appreciate it.
Charles	You don't have to walk out on the water like Jesus did.
Johnny	Yeah right, I don't think anyone has ever walked on water. (Gets club for next shot) Let's see what I can do on the next shot. (Swings hard again). Where did that one go? I did not see it either. Is it on the green?
Charles	I'm afraid not; I think you shanked this one and it went into the woods.
Johnny	Man- I can't buy a break; I'll go in here while you hit and see if I can find it.
Charles	(Swings club and looks at approach shot; walks over to Johnny)
Johnny	Well, how did you hit it?
Charles	I think it is on the green
Johnny	Wow; you seem to be on target
Charles	Here's your ball and I think you have a clearing here in the trees.
Johnny	Let's see what I can do from here. (Swings club and sound of ball hitting tree; both guys duck) Woooo. That was close. Sorry about that. Didn't mean to hit that tree. I just can't seem to get it right.
Charles	You'll do better after you get warmed up. This is just the first hole.
Johnny	That's what I know; it could be a long day
Charles	Let's put your ball out here in the fairway and try to get out of the hazards
Johnny	Well you have allowed me some wonderful ball placements. Maybe I can get it close to the hole this time. (Swings again). Oh no, in the sand trap; I hate going to the beach when I have a golf club in my hand.
Charles	Just take your time and keep your weight forward and have faith that you can get out of this sand.
Johnny	Charles, this hole reminds me a lot of my life. Work hard, try to do well, but it's just not quite good enough. Just like my golf game, something is missing.
Charles	Well there is something that I have wanted to ask you for several months. I know that you and your family don't go to church. Going to church has made a real difference in my life. Why don't you come to church with me and Virginia this Sunday?
Johnny	I don't know, man. It is the only day of the week that I have to sleep in, relax, and read the paper. And besides, I think a lot of church folks are hypocrites. They observe moral values just on Sunday morning. Especially those folks at Simpsonwood Methodist. Where do you go to church, Charles?
Charles	Well, Johnny, I am one of those hypocrites at Simpsonwood Methodist. We are not all that bad
Johnny	Ooops, sorry, Charles. I didn't mean that the way it sounded. You know I respect you and Virginia. I sometimes speak before I think and put my foot in my mouth. In fact, I seem to make a lot of mistakes that are even worse than that.
Charles	Well, Johnny. That is what being a Christian is all about
Johnny	What do you mean?
Charles	Christians realize that they are not perfect and that they are unworthy of God's gifts. By believing in Christ, we are forgiven for our sins and don't need to earn our way to heaven. Besides, being a Christian is a great way to lead your life.

Johnny	Well, it sounds good but I am just not sure.
Charles	If you'll meet Virginia and me at church, I'll take you out to lunch afterwards.
Johnny	OK, I may take you up on that deal. I will have my grandkids this weekend; they're five of them. Can I bring them along?
Charles	Sure
Johnny	And my son and his wife are visiting. How about them?
Charles	Fine
Johnny	And you know my other son and his wife live with me. Can I bring them too
Charles	Johnny, this is not part of the script. Where are you going with this? (Laughing)
Johnny	(Laughing)I just trying to keep the audience's attention until one of us makes a final point. Let me go see if I can get out of the sand and finish this hole.
Charles	OK
Johnny	(Swings and dodges sand) Bummer. I would say worse but there are children here in the neighborhood. I'm still buried on the beach. One more time, (swings and dodges sand again) Hey Charles, I'm just going to pick up. You go ahead and putt.
Charles	(putts and makes a birdie)
Johnny	Way to go, Charles, a birdie.
Charles	Thanks
Johnny	Charles, I've been thinking about what you said about church. And I'm not sure. Let me take a pass for now. Maybe later but it's just not the right time for me.
Charles	You never know when your time here on this earth is right and you should do it sooner rather than later.
Johnny	I know but let's hope there will be another opportunity.
Charles	We all say that until it's too late. There are a good number of members of my church who have a fear of inviting someone to church. They are afraid that they will be embarrassed or it will jeopardize a relationship
Johnny	Interesting- I thought church folks had it all figured out.
Charles	We never understand everything in life, but Christians know the one important thing- where we will spend eternity and in the process, we have fun doing it.
Johnny	Thanks again, Charles for the invitation. I hope you understand but it is just not the right time for me.
Both	(Walk off stage)
Charles	I hope and pray that time is on your side and also on the side of all of us who delay in asking.

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B. *Role Play for “How to Catch A Fish”*

The setting is a restaurant where one church-going couple has invited another un-churched couple for the purpose of inviting them to attend church with them. The church lady makes several mistakes in attempting to lead her friends to Christ.



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C. *Role Play for a “A Foot Ministry”*

“A Foot Ministry” is about a church council meeting called for the purpose of taking the church into the community. During the session, a neighbor wanders into the room and needs help. The Council finally realizes that they must go into the community in order to be Disciples for Christ.



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Appendix C – Chart Illustrating Case for Discipling

The Quantitative Benefit of Making Disciples		
<u>Year</u>	Conversions	Making Disciples
	<u>1000 per day</u>	<u>Each Disciple leads 2 per year</u>
1	1	1
2	365,000	3
3	730,000	9
4	1,095,000	27
5	1,460,000	81
6	1,825,000	243
7	2,190,000	729
8	2,555,000	2,187
9	2,920,000	6,561
10	3,285,000	19,683
11	3,650,000	59,049
12	4,015,000	177,147
13	4,380,000	531,441
14	4,745,000	1,594,323
15	5,110,000	4,782,969
16	5,475,000	14,348,907
17	5,840,000	43,046,721
18	6,205,000	129,140,163
19	6,570,000	387,420,489
20	6,935,000	1,162,261,467

Note what happens in year 16.
More disciples are led into the Kingdom from this point forward
under the methodology of Making Disciples.

Note also the type of structure that Discipleship has created.
Strong leadership in the beginning and at the top has started
a pyramid with a strong base that expands itself.

Appendix D - Additional References

Callahan, Kennon L.; *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*

- Community dynamics are decisive in planning for ministry.
 - Follow a diagnostic approach when developing ministry.
 - Data suggests there are central characteristics of developing relationships for effective churches (listed in order of importance). Additional excerpts from some of these readings are offered for those points that support the common theme of “going out.”
1. Specific, Concrete Ministry Objectives
(two or three objectives that involve strong groupings of the congregation in ministry with **persons in the community** who have specific human hurts and hopes.)
 2. Pastoral and Lay Visitation
(consequential **visitation with the un-churched**, new comers, constituents, and members...)
 3. Corporate, Dynamic Worship
 4. Significant Relational Groups
 5. Strong Leadership Resources
 6. Several Competent Programs and Activities
 7. Open Accessibility

Cokesbury; *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation*

Five functions are essential to strengthen and support the ministry of the church:

1. Identify leaders as spiritual leaders
2. Discover Current Reality
3. Name Shared Vision
How to identify your role and place in a faithful community that extends itself in its fourfold mission of **reaching out** and receiving people in the name of God.)
4. Develop Action Plans
5. Monitor the Journey
6. Celebrate Ministry

Barna, George; *The Power of Vision*

- Each church has been called into existence to **reach a different group of people** and to have a unique influence on the culture in which it ministers.
- Know your ministry environment.
- It is important to have a working knowledge of the **people who live** in your geographic market.
- A church led by God’s **vision for outreach** brims with confidence.

Hunter, George G. III; *Radical Outreach*

- Jesus Christ calls his churches to love, believe in, serve, **reach out to, welcome, and receive** those people and populations that society's establishment regards as **unlikely or even hopeless**, and to deploy their converts in witness and ministry.
- A church devoid of this vision may well provide good "chaplaincy services" to a gathered colony of conventional believers. This characterizes the main business of at least a quarter million churches in the U.S.A.
- We are called to adapt to the cultures of the peoples we serve and reach, that we might "by all means save some." (1 Corinthians 9:12:23)
- Recovery ministries are a prototype for outreach ministries.
- Proactive outreach begins, and then, multiplies.
- Witness through ministry, hospitality, and conversation.

Hunter, George G. III; *Church for the Unchurched*

- God's dream for his church has been that it is made up of believers who understood they were to be apostles, called and **sent by God** to reach an **un-churched pre-Christian** population.
- Top Ten Features of the "Apostolic (reaching out) Congregation"
 1. Redundant approach to rooting believers and seekers in Scripture
 2. Disciplined and earnest in prayer
 3. Compassion for **lost, un-churched, pre-Christian** people
 4. Obey the Great Commissionmake faith possible for **unreached** people
 5. Motivationally sufficient vision for what people, as disciples, can become
 6. Adapt to the language, music and style of the target population's culture
 7. Prioritize the involvement of all Christians in lay ministries for which they are gifted
 8. Receive regular pastoral care
 9. Engage in many ministries to **un-churched non-Christian** people

Barna, George; *Grow Your Church from the Outside In*

- Reaching the un-churched demands a persistent effort to remain culturally aware
-it all starts with relationships and perhaps other exposure to the faith world before the un-churched individual sets foot inside the worship center.
- About half of the highly effective churches use some form of advertising to get the word out, too.
- Recognize that church and un-churched people have similar needs and dissimilar needs.
- Develop a well-conceived and carefully carried out process once a guest submits information. The process will differ from church to church. One example is:

1. Pastor or other church leaders are available to meet with guests after the service in a designated area.
2. Within 48 hours, the pastor sends a letter of thanks and encouragement to return.
3. Within five days of attending a worship service, call the guest to thank him/her for coming to church and to see if he/she has any questions.
4. If guest does not return, continue to send mailings for at least a year
5. If the guest returns, become more aggressive.....send someone to the home, make another phone call or send another targeted letter. The idea is to get the person integrated into the life of the church.
6. If the guest attends the newcomer's class, get him/her involved in a service ministry.

Halverson, Delia; *The Gift of Hospitality*

- If we are to take Christ's challenge serious, we will put service at the heart of our ministry. It is through service that we **reach out** to others.
- If we are to challenge our people to live out their Christian calling in all aspects of life, then we should recognize their service in other ministries in the community besides those within the confines of the church.
- When **we reach beyond our local church boundaries** in ministry, it changes us.

Sjogren, Steve; *Ways to Reach Your Community*

- Every small group or church needs to have some form of evangelism going on in order to maintain health.
- For a group to vitally endure, it must have an **explicit outward component**.
- If we hope to operate in the real world, we must be practically **involved in the lives of outsiders** who have real problems.
- There is a spirit of life in those groups that **reach out**.
- As followers of Jesus, we've all been called to bring the good news **to our world** (Matthew 28:18-20)
- If groups are to be healthy, they need to have an in-focused component to meet the needs and circumstances of their members. While inwardness is part of the Christian community experience, **an outward focus creates balance** in the life of a group. Going out is simply **healthy and invigorating to the spiritual life** of small groups.
- This book outlines projects for reaching out.

Poe, Harry Lee; *Christian Witness in a Postmodern World*

- When a culture or civilization begins to collapse, does their first loyalty lie with defending the old order or with advancing the cause of Christ? Unfortunately, when Christianity holds a preferred place within a culture for a long period of time, Christians have a difficult time distinguishing between the culture and Christian faith. The two become intermingled because people belong to a culture.
- The gospel offers a spirituality based on personal relationship with God who gives purpose to life. The gospel story has within it the answer to a spiritual longing people are once again expressing.

Kinnaman, David; *unChristian*

- Christianity has an image problem.
- Many of those outside of Christianity have little trust in the Christian faith and esteem for the lifestyle of Christ followers is quickly fading outsiders.
-they reject Jesus because they feel rejected by Christians.
- Outsiders' perceptions of Christianity reflect a church infatuated with itself. Research proved many Christians have lost their heart for those outside the faith.
- Outsiders' most common reaction to the faith: they think Christians no longer represent what Jesus had in mind, that Christianity in our society is not what it was meant to be.....the growing hostility toward Christians is very much a reflection of what outsiders feel they receive from believers.
- We have become famous for what we oppose, rather than who we are for.
- Jesus listened to the Holy Spirit so he could point people to his Father. He engaged his culture and its people with respect and love. He was *in* not *of* the world.
- unChristians see Christians as: Hypocritical; only about getting saved; antihomosexual (not that we should accept homosexuality; but rather, love the homosexual); sheltered; too political; and judgmental.

Schnaes, Robert; *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*

- People are searching for a church shaped and sustained by five practices: Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Intentional Faith Development, Risk-Taking Mission and Service, and Extravagant Generosity.
- The presence and strength of these five practices demonstrate congregational health, vitality, and fruitfulness.
-failure to perform them in an exemplary way results in congregational deterioration and decline.
- Radical Christian Hospitality
 - Active desire to invite, welcome, receive, and care for **strangers** so they find a spiritual home and discover for themselves the unending richness of life in Christ.

- Is drastically different and goes the second mile.
- Passionate Worship
 - Connects people to God
 - People enter into with expectancy
 - Is authentic, connecting, and sustaining
- Intentional Faith Development
 - Purposeful learning environment that helps followers mature in Faith.
- Risk-Taking Mission
 - **Stretches us out** of our comfort zone and has us engaging people and offering ourselves in ways we would never have done if not for our desire to follow Christ.
 - Ventures into uncertainty and **creates discomfort** and maybe resistance or sacrifice.
 - Pushes us **beyond the circle of relationship that routinely define** our church commitments.
- Extravagant Generosity
 - Giving that exceeds expectations
 - Lavish sharing, sacrifice and giving in service to God and neighbor
 - Focuses on the Christian's need to give because of the giving nature of God