

Building a Disciple-Making Church

Discipleship is central to the life of the mature Christian. One cannot take salvation seriously, nor one's purpose in the world, without embracing this concept embedded in biblical teaching. Established as Jesus' plan, discipleship is not an "add-on" to the individual's life or a "programme" added to the schedule of a local church. Rather, it is a serious and intentional response to how we live and conduct our lives in answer to the call of Jesus to "come and follow Me." Each local church is intended to be a disciple-making body, and each Christian is called to discipleship as a way of life. This session will look at how we nurture a discipling consciousness and establish local churches that have discipleship at the heart of their ministry.

Eric Bobbitt is a pastor of Zionsville Fellowship near Indianapolis, Indiana, USA. With a M.A. in Counseling Psychology and a M. Div. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, he directs the pastoral care and counseling ministries. His service in a variety of settings includes 18 years of pastoral ministry, along with experience in university ministry, substance abuse residential treatment, and public school counseling. He and his wife, Jan, have 5 children ranging in age from 23 to 9 years.

I. The Power and Importance of Calling

A. Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Essay—"The Place of Responsibility"

1. The call of Jesus is multi-dimensional:
 - A. "Follow Me"—called to live faithfully in relationship with Jesus Christ
 - "Ekklesia"—called to live faithfully in the church
 - "Go into all the world and make disciples"—called to live faithfully in the world, making disciples
2. Taken together these provide a rich and broad understanding of what it means to hear the call of Jesus and follow him.
3. *Discipleship* is the widely accepted term that describes the ongoing life of the disciple. The word is not a pure biblical expression, but a derivative of such terms as *disciple* or *make disciples*.

B. Discipleship and the Church: Resolving the tension

1. Discipleship is personal

2. Discipleship is corporate

II. Being a Disciple

A. A Testimony

B. C.S. Lewis:

C. Dallas Willard:

D. Defining “Disciple”

- What one becomes
- Learner for life
- Disciple-making

E. Beauty of the plan

III. Making Disciples and the Local Church

A. Equipping ministry: “Equip the saints to do the work of the ministry”

1. Plan church life for discipleship
2. Pastors must know their role

B. Comprehensive view of discipleship

1. Pre-evangelism: contact

2. Evangelism: living and telling the Gospel

3. Conversion: coming to Christ

4. Christian formation: learning Christ

5. Reproduction: passing the baton

C. Organizing principles in the life of the disciple-maker

1. Theological/Philosophical

2. Practical