

## Turning Your Church into a Disciple-Making Mission

If you as a pastor were approached by an eager new believer who said: "I desire to become all that Christ wants me to be and to be help others do so as well, how can I learn to do that at your church?", what would you say? Most churches have no clear plan for making disciples. This seminar answers the question, HOW? We need a simple approach that is accessible to average believer that empowers them to become reproducing disciple makers. We will apply Jesus relational model of making disciples to a three step process that you can transform your community into a church of disciple makers.

**Greg Ogden** retired from professional church leadership in 2012 and now lives out his passion of speaking, teaching, and writing about the disciple-making mission of the church. Most recently Greg served as Executive Pastor of Discipleship at Christ Church of Oak Brook, Illinois in the Chicago western suburbs. From 1998-2002, Greg held the position of Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Fuller Theological Seminary and Associate Professor of Lay Equipping and Discipleship. Prior to coming to Fuller, Greg enjoyed 24 years in pastoral ministry. He is the author of six books including *Essential Guide to Becoming a Disciple* (Intervarsity Press, 2016); *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (Intervarsity Press, 2016); *The Essential Commandment: A Guide to Loving God and Others* (InterVarsity Press, 2011); *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ* (InterVarsity Press, 2019). Dr. Ogden is a principal partner in a new ministry entitled the Global Discipleship Initiative (GDI). GDI trains, coaches, and inspires pastors and Christian leaders to establish indigenous, multiplying, discipling networks, both nationally and internationally. ([globaldi.org](http://globaldi.org)).

**Ralph Rittenhouse** was for fourteen years on the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ, now called CRU. In 1983 he became the pastor of Camarillo Community Church in southern California. After serving there for thirty-two years, Ralph retired and joined Dr. Greg Ogden founding the ministry of Global Discipleship Initiative, GDI. He serves as president of GDI, teaching and equipping pastors and church leaders to launch and maintain multiplying disciple-making ministries in their churches. The ministry of GDI prayerfully intends to launch disciple-making initiatives in every country in the world by 2026.

### SUCCESSFUL JOURNEY: BEGINNING WITH THE END IN MIND

#### I. The Camarillo Church: Successful Journey

[Discussion: As you listen to Pastor Ralph's story of their journey, what elements particular spoke to you?]

#### II. Starts with an unwavering commitment to make Jesus' mission the mission of your church.

##### A. Greg's "Duh" Moment

##### B. Keep laser focused on making reproducing disciples.

1. "The church exists for no other purpose but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are

simply a waste of time. God became man for no other purpose. It is even doubtful, you know, whether the whole universe was created for any other purpose."—C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 163, 169, 170.

## 2. Paul's Mission Statement (Colossians 1:28-29)

**GDI Value 1: Disciple making is the church's mission, not just one bullet point of the many things a church does.** Discuss the key points that you think this value statement is making:

III. Taking Stock: Assessing where you are on the continuum to become a disciple making congregation.

**The Problem:** By almost any measure we can conceive, we have a low state of discipleship in our church today. But we need only one measurement to confirm the trouble we are in.

**Case Study:** How would you respond if you were approached, *"I want you introduce you to Joe. He is a new convert and has just come to know Christ. I want you to walk alongside him, stay with him, help him to become a mature follower of Christ. And by the way, your job is not done until Joe has assumed responsibility and been equipped to do the same for others?"*

**Discussion:** How might you respond to that challenge? Would you feel prepared to disciple another? Why or why not? What would help you to be able to be able to "yes" to the challenge?

## HOW?

### RELATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

#### Basic Disciple Making Unit: The Micro Group

**GDI Value 2: MICRO GROUPS: Disciples grow best and are empowered to disciple others in a gender-specific micro group (3s and 4s).**

## I. The Key Components of a Micro Group (see Appendix 1)

## II. Why the Micro Group is an optimal environment to transform and multiply reproducing disciples.

### A. Relational:

1. Jesus modeled personal investment as the way to make disciples (Luke 6:12-13) What are the strategic reasons Jesus focused on a few? What was He trying to accomplish?

a. Internalization: the only way for Jesus to pass on His message, manner and mission was through intimate association.

“This careful, painstaking education of the disciples secured the teacher’s influence on this world should be permanent; that His kingdom should be founded on the rock of deep and indestructible convictions in the minds of a few, not on the shifting sands of *superficial* impressions in the minds of the many.” -- A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*

b. Multiplication: From the beginning Jesus kept in mind that He would be entrusting His mission to His apostles as He returned to His Father.

### 2. The Power of Personal Invitation

<b>GDI Value 3: Disciples are made to reproduce</b>
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### B. Transformational

When we...

- open our hearts in transparent trust to each other
- around the truth of God’s word
- in the spirit of life-change accountability
- while engaged in our God-designed mission

...we are in the *Holy Spirit’s hothouse of transformation.*

<b>GDI Value 4: God’s Word shape our hearts in an honest, open and mutually accountable environment.</b>
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The micro group maximizes 4 key elements that create the “hothouse” effect.

### 1. Relational Transparency

Key Principle: The extent to which we are willing to reveal to others those areas of our life that need God’s transforming touch is the extent to which we are inviting the Holy Spirit to make us new.

Stages of trust-building:

- Affirmation
- Walking together in difficult times
- Prayerful listening
- Mutual confession

*“In confession the break-through to community takes place. Sin demands to have a man by himself. It withdraws him from the community. The more isolated a person is, the more destructive will be the power of sin over him, and the more deeply he becomes involved in it, the more disastrous is his isolation . . . In confession the light of the Gospel breaks into the darkness and seclusion of the heart...Since the confession of sin is made in the presence of a Christian brother, the last stronghold of self-justification is abandoned.*

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

### 2. Truth in the Context of Real Community

<b>GDI Value 5: Intentional: Discipleship requires purposeful, covenantal, relational investment.</b>
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### 3. Life-Change Accountability

#### **A Disciple's Covenant**

In order to grow toward maturity in Christ and complete *Discipleship Essentials*, I commit myself to the following standards:

1. Complete all assignments on a weekly basis prior to my discipleship appointment in order to contribute fully (see "Suggested Study Format").
2. Meet weekly with my discipleship partners for approximately one and one-half hours to dialogue over the content of the assignments.
3. Offer myself fully to the Lord with the anticipation that I am entering a time of accelerated transformation during this discipleship period.
4. Contribute to a climate of honesty, trust and personal vulnerability in a spirit of mutual up-building.
5. Give serious consideration to continuing the discipling chain by committing myself to invest in at least two other people for the year following the initial completion of *Discipleship Essentials*.

### 4. Being Sent on our God-given mission

#### **INTENTIONAL LEADER<sup>1</sup>**

Every micro group begins with a point person who takes the initiative to start a group. The most important person in your church is the leader who starts a group and helps that group catch a practice and vision of multiplication.

1. Prays for the Holy Spirit's Discernment (who they should invite?)
2. Makes a personal invitation
3. Share with them what is involved (informed decision)
4. Review the Covenant
5. Ask to prayerfully consider the invitation
6. Set the first regular meeting (determines a time to fit everyone's schedule)
7. Guide the participants through the first few sessions.

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<sup>1</sup> See the *Leader's Guide* by Greg Ogden for a more complete description of the role of leader and detailed guidance for how to carry out the leader's role.

8. Rotates leadership early on (everyone leads with the intent they will have their own group.)
9. Models Transparency: begin with some good sharing experiences to get to know each other.
10. Keeps restating the intent that they are being disciplined so that they can lead their own group and so forth.

## REPRODUCIBLE PROCESS

### THE MAP/GPS: A TRANSFERABLE CURRICULUM

**GDI Value 6: Biblically Based Curriculum: *Discipleship Essentials* covers the foundation for a life in Christ and is the empowerment tool we use to disciple others.**

A. The Value and Importance of Curriculum...Best answered negatively

**Discussion: If you don't have a curriculum, what will be the consequences?**

## DISCIPLESHIP ESSENTIALS

- Why was this book written?
- Who is the book meant for?
- What are the key elements in each chapter?
- What are the major themes explored?

### **PART ONE: GROWING UP IN CHRIST**

- 1 Making Disciples
- 2 Being a Disciple
- 3 Quiet Time
- 4 Bible Study
- 5 Prayer
- 6 Worship

### **PART TWO: UNDERSTANDING THE MESSAGE OF C.**

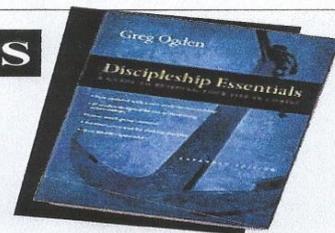
- 7 The Three-Person God
- 8 Made in God's Image
- 9 Sin
- 10 Grace
- 11 Redemption
- 12 Justification
- 13 Adoption

### **PART THREE: BECOMING LIKE CHRIST**

- 14 Filled with the Holy Spirit
- 15 Fruit of the Holy Spirit
- 16 Trust
- 17 Love
- 18 Justice
- 19 Witness

### **PART FOUR: SERVING CHRIST**

- 20 The Church
- 21 Ministry Gifts
- 22 Spiritual Warfare
- 23 Walking in Obedience
- 24 Sharing the Wealth
- 25 Stewardship



#### **FOR REFLECTION**

1. Which of these themes seems most important to recover a grip on in our time? What sparks your conviction about this?

2. Which of these themes seems to touch a particular need in your own life right now? Why?

3. Which of these themes do you feel is a particular strength in your own personal discipleship?

4. If you were developing a basic discipleship curriculum, what might be a chapter or two that you would include that doesn't appear treated in *Discipleship Essentials*?

Interspersary Press, 2007

## B. Characteristics of a Good Curriculum

### **Closing Challenge:**

### ***Suggested Readings:***

Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (InterVarsity Press, 2016)

Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (InterVarsity Press, 2019)

Randy Pope, *Insourcing: Bringing Discipleship Back to the Local Church* (Zondervan, 2013)