

The Disciple Driven Church

An Old Expression of Faith in a Fresh New Way

Contributors: Dr. Terry & Suzette Goodwin

What is Different About the Disciple Driven Church?

Question? Is your faith focused more on where you gather as the church or what you do as a follower of Christ?

In America it appears that the focus of most believer's faith experience is where they gather as the church. Our faith revolves around our location of worship. In many cases, even our outreach places its focus on getting people to that place of worship.

Question? Has it always been this way?

If we look to Scripture for our answer we will see that the early church was less focused on where and how it met for worship. Its central focus was on how the disciples (followers of Christ) lived their lives. There is instruction for gathering together but it never focuses on the where we gather but always on the, what we do when we gather, aspect of our faith.

For many people this teaching is lost in their current church context. They have become passive participants in the worship gathering. They stand or sit when they are told. They sing along if they know the tune. They listen to the preacher teach. The reality of Bible passages like 1Corinthians 12 are never experienced in their lives. Many do not even know their spiritual gift or never have the opportunity to use it in their church gathering to help build up the body.

This passive and often consumer driven mentality towards church has left a very big mark on the American church. In recent years we have begun to see the effects of what we have lost in the power of the Holy Spirit working through His people. What follows is a call to you – to rediscover what God intended for you when He sent His son to die for you. His intent was to give you a life not just a church gathering.

Somewhere along the path of history the Christian faith has become for many, a life centered around a building and the people that come to that building on a set day of the week. The work of the church has become that of getting more people to that place on that day. This is a shadow of what God intended. God placed His Spirit in you so He could empower you to go and live as His hands and feet. He commanded you to make disciples, care for the poor, the widows, the orphans, and the world.

Have you been equipped to do that? Are you walking in the power of the Holy Spirit that God made to dwell in you? Are you making disciples? Are you caring for the poor, the widows, the orphans, and the world? Your leaders are instructed to equip you for the works of ministry. Are you equipped?

Only you will answer to Jesus on judgement day for what you have done with what He gave you. Ephesians 2:10 speaks of the works He ordained for you to do. Have you found those works? It is what you were made to do. Don't sell God short. He desires to spread the Gospel to the whole world. He made us to be His messengers, His hands and feet.

Rediscovering the Church

Developing a Great Commission mindset requires transforming the way we think about the church. For too long the church has been identified by its outward forms – its buildings, its services, its governing structures, its clergy...

Church attendance statistics warn us that if we do not re-discover the spiritual, organic and transformational nature of the church in this generation it may cease to exist in a meaningful way into the next generation. The state of the church in Europe should stand as a warning to America.

The Great Commission is (or should be):

- The pre-eminent task of every Christian.
- The highest priority of every Christian.
- The defining visionary statement of the Church.
- The supreme directive under which the Church exists and operates.

Consider the Following Estimates that were made in 2004:

UK – will be majority Muslim by the year 2040.

France – will be majority Muslim by the year 2030.

USA – most Americans will be non-Christians by the year 2035.

It may not take that long. Islam will be declared by the United Nations to be the dominant world religion in 2010

Some Startling Facts

If an exceptionally gifted evangelistic ministry averaged winning 1,000 souls to Christ every day, it would take that ministry 16,438.36 years to win the world to Christ if there were no additional babies born and no deaths (there are over 200,000 more births than deaths each *day*).

If you were a gifted, powerful and famous evangelist, and you filled a stadium every day with 50,000 unbelievers, and they all received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior as a result of your preaching, it would take you over 356 *years* to win the whole world to Christ (and that would be only if no new babies were born during that time)!

Are We Making *Enough* Progress?

- Approximately 350,000 babies are born every day (4.1 babies are born every second).
- About 150,000 people die every day (1.8 people die every second).
- Net Increase of 200,000 people per day.
- 1,400,000 per week

- 5,600,000 per month
- 72,800,000 per year
- 200,000 new souls are added to the earth's population every day.
- The best (most-optimistic) church growth figures estimate that 74,000 people come to Christ every day.
- That means:

200,000	
<u>-74,000</u>	
126,000	

We have 126,000 more people to reach today than we did yesterday!

This year it is estimated that we will reach over 27,000,000 people (historically, an *outstanding* number). BUT, 72,800,000 new people will be born.

That means we are falling behind by over 45,000,000 souls each year!
 Project these numbers over a generation and they quickly escalate into billions of unreached people in every nation on earth.

If we continue to rely solely upon a church strategy that produces a modern Western Style church, such as we see operating in America, to reach this generation, we will continue to get the same results. Consider these church attendance figures:

- Kenya – 80% Christian, only 7% go to church.
- Republic of South Africa – 80% Christian, only 16% go to church.
- USA – 77% Christian, only 26% go to church.
- UK – Only 9.4% go to church.

The sad reality is that people are staying home from church in record numbers!

Church Attendance Trends in the USA

- 71% of the WWII generation attend church.
- 38% of the “Baby Boomers” attend church.
- 30% of “Baby Busters” attend church.
- 3% of “Gen X'rs” attend church.
- 60% of Gen X'rs have never been in a church a single time, not even for a wedding or a funeral!

When a local church focuses its efforts on its Sunday morning service or its programs to try to win the lost, it limits those it is reaching to people who either desire a church service or programs, or who believe that they need a church service or programs.

Usually, those people are already Christianized and attending another church.

You are attracting people who like “church”!

If you “do church” better than the church they are attending, they will come to yours.

As the statistics clearly show, the number of people interested in church is falling dramatically. Most church growth in America comes through what is known as transfer growth. Even if “your church” is growing, it is likely due to people coming to your church from another church. Recent statistics claim this accounts for up to 80% of all new members. The church in America is failing to reach the lost with the Gospel at a rate anywhere close to the population growth. In many areas of the country our churches fail to reach their own children.

In 1991 there were 39 million unchurched Americans compared with 90 million currently. (2011)

As of the latest census, the fastest growing religious group in America is atheist/agnostic.

Most Western Churches Have Adopted the “Come and See” Evangelistic Method.

In this method the church attempts to evangelize the community by attracting them to the church’s building, services, events, or programs.

The idea behind this approach is that you offer people what they want or enjoy and they come to “your church”.

It is assumed that somewhere in the process of attending the church’s programs they will find Christ. Even if this was working, is this the goal of the church? Is the church designed to only bring people “to” Christ?

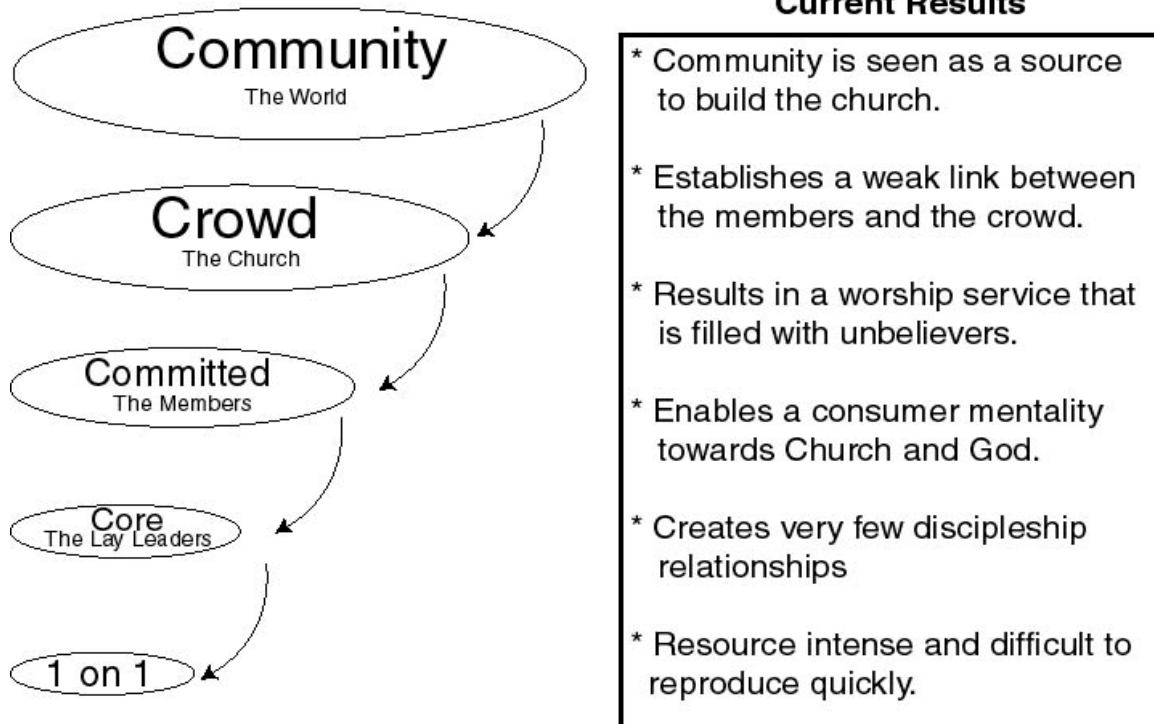
The church described in Scripture is the place where those who are “in Christ” gather to be equipped to do the works of ministry. The church gathering is never referred to as a means to reach the lost. It is the disciple that is commanded to make disciples not the church gathering. When we look to see how the church in America is doing at making disciples that can make disciples, we see a very worrisome scenario.

- Consider this - it is estimated that less than 5% of all Christians are regular soul winners and the average church has no accountability and little teaching for members to share their faith.

This statistic begins to explain the problem we face today in America.

The current model of church that permeates America is something like this.

Modern American Model of Church



Programs and events are designed to draw people into the church in hopes of assimilating them into the church so they can hear about Christ.

When you rely on the “Come and see” approach for evangelism, you will connect people to your church by appealing to what they like, want, or feel they need.

This creates a very weak point of connection to the church.

It is a very weak connection because:

- People who come into the church from this method tend to be very “need” motivated.
- The “you’ll like our services” approach to evangelism doesn’t work in many places!
- It puts churches in competition with one another.
- This method does not require God to be present or active.

We live in the age of the “Mega-church”.

Mega-church: a church with 2,000 or more members.

Some Facts About Mega-churches:

- There are 1,300 mega-churches in the US.
- US mega-churches reach 3 million people – an average of 2,500 per church.
- Less than 1% of US churches are mega-churches.
- US mega-churches plant less than 5 other daughter churches.

While these churches may be good – they cannot do what needs to be done.

It is only through the process of intentional multiplication that we will be able to win this generation to Christ!

A Disciple making movement will require the rapid multiplication of non-traditional churches.

These churches will be:

- Smaller in size.
- Utilize available resources.
- Not be identified by a single meeting location.
- Have less governing structure (less is always better!).
- Be more mobile in outreach.

To fulfill the Great Commission, the church of the early 21st century must be less encumbered with structural restrictions and will, therefore, be more difficult to define.

Launching Disciple-Making Church Multiplication Movements

To “launch” is to “start”, “send off”, “release”, “to set in operation”.

- Launching a movement requires that we design it to be spontaneous – not over-planned or micro-managed.
- It must be self-perpetuating and independent of outside intervention for its growth and spread.
- It also means that we must let it take on its own form and style.
- In order to change this model we must transform the way we think about church.

Through owning our personal responsibility to make disciples we will rediscover the supernatural aspect of our faith. As the Holy Spirit empowers us in our spiritual gift we will connect with God on a deeper level and begin to understand Him better.

Common Habits We Need to Avoid.

1. Inviting people to Church

- Relies on the church to reach people
- Creates a weak link between people and the church
- Enables a consumer mentality

2. Attracting people to Church

- Focuses the church service on appealing to the lost not worshipping God
- Let's the lost control the church
- Enables a consumer mentality

3. Doing Ministry Through Programs

- Puts God in a man sized box
- Control's people's service instead of releasing them to fulfill their passion
- Promotes a false sense of fulfilling our obligations to serve God

4. Meeting Needs Through Impersonal Methods

- We must use our resources to empower people to meet needs personally
- A common tendency is to give through organizations that help the needy.
- Denies us opportunity to connect with the lost and share Christ's love and provision with them personally

5. Being Too Quick to Lead Someone in a Prayer of Repentance

- We must ask new disciples to count the cost.
- We do not need to fear losing them.
- We must recognize that Christ does the work and not us.

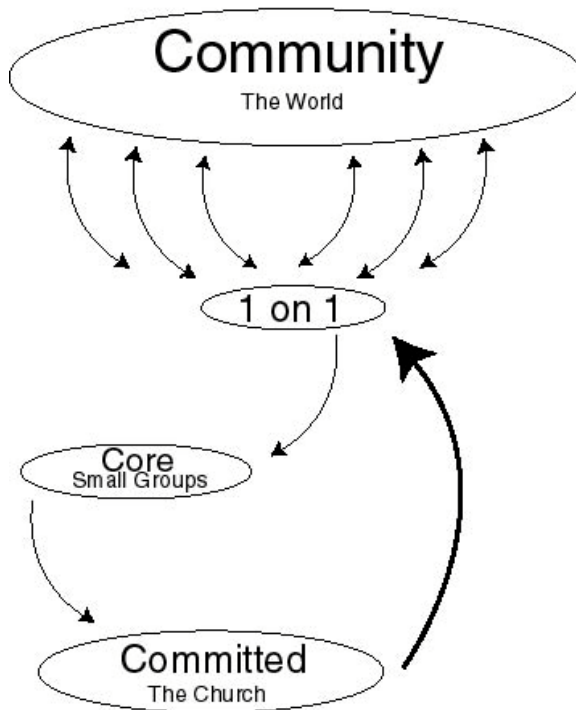
6. Waiting for the Church to Start a Ministry

- We want to empower people (you) to serve God through your passions. You must initiate the process.
- The church is to support you and equip you to fulfill your passionate service to God.
- The church leadership should help you discover that passion and equip you to serve in your gifting.

7. Putting Other Things Above the Great Commission

- All that we do will flow from fulfilling this command
- When we let other things come first then the mission of the church is distorted
- Our spiritual battle centers on this command and we must never forsake this battle.

Disciple Driven Model of Church



Current Results

- * Community is seen as the mission field
- * Establishes a strong link between the church and the community.
- * Results in a worship service that is filled with believers.
- * Deters a consumer mentality towards Church and God.
- * Is based in discipleship relationships
- * Easy to reproduce quickly.

In the Disciple Driven Model of church every believer is discipled by someone. We avoid the traps of invitation and attraction so every person enters the church through a response to the Gospel message. This change in the structure allows some extraordinary things to develop.

1. The ministry of the church is focused on the world not within the church
2. Small groups become the training ground for committed disciple makers
3. The church can exist for the purpose God intended without the pressure to change its structure to appeal to the lost or the fear of being ineffective
4. As the church assembles to worship and take communion it then releases the members to minister in one-on-one relationships with the lost in the world.
5. The responsibility to reach the lost is that of every member working through the Holy Spirit, not the church or the clergy.
6. As new believers are brought in to the church they are quickly trained and sent out to make disciples which enables a multiplication movement.
7. Resources are directed through disciples towards the lost world and not consumed by events, programs, and buildings.

How Do We Grow the Church?

Jesus' Job:

To Build His Church (Matthew 16:18)

Our Job:

To Make Disciples (Matthew 28:19)

Whose job are you doing?

We must focus our energy on what Jesus has instructed us to do and be confident that He will do what He said He would do.

¹⁸And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and I am with you always, *even to the end of the age.*" Amen. Matthew 28:18-20

You cannot join Disciple Driven Church. It has no members. It is a teaching ministry that exists to train, empower, and release disciple multiplication movements. It does this one person or group at a time.

Have you been taught how to make disciples so you can fulfill the commands of Christ? Have you fallen into the American trap of making your church service the focus of your faith?

If you would like to know more about embracing your role in the fulfilling the Great Commission or if you have questions about the Disciple Driven Church contact Dr. Terry Goodwin by email at terry@discipledrivenchurch.org

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