
GROWTH POINTS

With Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.

Genesis of Disciple-making

The genesis of disciple-making is the leader, and the pastor must lead in this endeavor. You cannot make disciples until you are a disciple. You cannot challenge others to be followers of Christ unless you are a follower of Christ. It is out of your *followership* that you lead others to follow. The truth is that the greatest way to create a movement is to be a follower and to show others how to follow.

Following is the most underrated form of leadership in existence. Paul said to those he led, "Follow my example, as I follow Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1 NLT). Craig Groeschel, the lead pastor of Life Church in Oklahoma City, explains, "We have too many full time pastors who are part-time followers of Christ. What we need are more part-time pastors who are full time followers of Christ."

He was not making a case for bi-vocational ministry, but instead was making the point that pastors are to be followers of Jesus first. It is from following Jesus you are to pastor/lead your church.

Pastor you are the genesis, epicenter, core of the disciple-making aspect of your church. You must be in a discipling relationship and you must be discipling others. It will be from your modeling and living as a disciple that your church will progress toward fitness in this area. It is out of your connection with God that you are able to influence others to connect with God. The only enduring influence we have to offer others is the influence God has in our lives. What are you doing to increase being influenced by God?

Aubrey Malphurs in his book, *Strategic Disciple Making*, identifies four competencies a leader can, and must, bring to the disciple-making process: Character (being), knowledge (knowing), skills (doing), and emotions (feeling). He notes, "Achieving excellence in all four competencies must take place for the leaders to be able to do their jobs effectively."

30th Anniversary
of
Growth Points

Define a Disciple

In the diving competition at the Rio 2016 Olympics one of the commentators made an interesting comment. He said that in training divers, the first thing the Chinese do is teach their divers how to enter the water from whatever diving apparatus they are competing from (e.g., spring board, platform, etc.). Prior to any work on flips, turns, somersaults, and other aspects of technique, divers are coached on how to enter the water. The result is that Chinese divers enter the water with minimal splash, and minimal splash is a critical element of scoring high marks. In essence the Chinese divers start with the end in mind. Everything else is built on the conclusion of the dive. If they know how to end well, everything leading up to that provides a solid performance.

This same principle needs to be applied to the disciple-making process. You need to know what you are looking for in a disciple. What does a disciple look like? What actions, attitudes, and attributes do you want in a follower of Jesus. You need to define what you want to accomplish and how you are going to do it. Clarity as to the end result will inform the process you put in place to get there.

The three characteristics, or attributes, of a disciple are: A disciple follows Jesus, a disciple is changed by Jesus, and a disciple is on mission with Jesus. Thus, a disciple as an individual who is following Christ, being changed by Christ, and is committed to the mission of Christ. It is the drive to produce these attributes that informs the disciple-making process.

The most basic characteristic of a disciple is obedience. This is seen in John 2. It is in the story of Jesus turning water into wine that this simple obedience maker is specified. Mary, the mother of Jesus, told the servants, “Do whatever he tells you” (Matthew 2:5 NLT). Obedience to the instructions of Jesus without hesitation is the primary mark of a disciple. Basic to all discipleship is our resolve not only to address Jesus with polite titles but to follow his teaching and obey his commands. In all the effort put into a definition of a disciple, obedience is an observable action.

What qualities and behaviors are we trying to develop in disciples?
 What do we want them to do?
 What do we want them to be?”

Adapted from [Building the Body: 12 Characteristics of a Fit Church](#) by Gary L. McIntosh and Phil Stevenson. Available now from your favorite store.

Growth Points is published twelve times a year. Subscription price is \$20 (US Funds) per year. Permission is granted for use in a local church. For other reprint usage, advance permission must be obtained.

Copyrighted 2018 ISSN 1520-5096

Building the Body *12 Characteristics* *of a Fit Church*

Just as physically, healthy people might not actually be fit enough to run a 5K, so churches can appear healthy—with no obvious issues, maintaining a healthy size—but not exhibit fitness.

A fit church is one that is not satisfied with merely coasting along with no problems. A fit church is actively making disciples, maturing in faith, developing strong leaders, reaching out to the community, and more.

Building the Body unveils the twelve characteristics of fit churches and shows pastors and church leaders how to move their church through five levels of fitness, from beginner all the way to elite.

Here's what others are saying

“Building the Body powerfully draws on the biblical imagery of the church while taking the concept of church health to a whole new level. Becoming fit is presented in a way that motivates rather than produces guilt, and the combination of principles and practices applies to churches at all levers of development.” — Wayne Schmidt, general superintendent, the Wesleyan Church

“Practical steps to the next level—that’s what this book offers. Wherever your church lies along a continuum of twelve factors (e.g., outreach, stewardship, worship, disciple making), McIntosh and Stevenson give concrete strategies for advancing to the next level . . . and then the next level . . . and then the next level.”

—Donald R. Sunukjian, chair, department of Christian ministry and leadership, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University

“A practical, informative, doable resource for leaders and churches who want not only to get better but also to get as strong or fit as possible for the good of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.”

—Jim Dunn, vice president of church relations, Wesleyan Investment Foundation

Authors

Gary L. McIntosh (Ph.D., D.Min.) is professor of Leadership at Talbot School of Theology. He is the author of twenty-five books and numerous articles.

Phil Stevenson (D.Min.) is district superintendent of The Pacific Southwest District of the Wesleyan Church. He is a coach, writer, and speaker.

“All fit churches are healthy, but not all healthy churches are fit.”

Digital Download available at Christianaudio.com
Use codes X6BAY or OTT47 or GX6XP.