

5-21-24: Disciple-Making Class

Does anyone know Community Church's mission statement?

"Developing Gospel-centered disciples, sharing the hope of Christ to transform lives"

Sounds good. A lot Christians hear something like that and think, "I can get on board with that"

I want to begin our class today by taking a good, hard look at some tough numbers:

- Year after year, more churches are closing than opening (even a trend before COVID)
- In the U.S., 9/10 churches are declining or growing at a pace slower than the population rate of their communities
- The average established church declines by 2% each year

The vast majority of church growth that DOES occur is through Christians having kids (or transfers from other churches); very little growth comes from conversions.

And studies have been showing for a while now that around 66% of kids who grew up in church end up leaving as adults.

I'm sure it's difficult to get too precise with these numbers, but they do highlight an overall trend and paint a clear picture: the Church is not doing a good job of making disciples

We aren't seeing conversions/baptisms of lost people to Christ at a rate anywhere close to the rate of population and, in general, we aren't even keeping the kids who grow up in our own homes.

Now, I don't share those figures with you to discourage you. Rather, I share that with you because of the hope that I have that these trends can change!

Things might look rough now, but I still believe what Jesus says:

"...on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." -Matthew 16:18

"The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed...like leaven..." -Matthew 13:31-33

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" -Romans 1:16

"All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations..." -Matthew 28:18-20

1st Requirement of a disciple-maker: FAITH

Do we believe what Jesus says about the expansion of His kingdom?

I believe that if we are faithful to this mission, and if we go about it the way God directs us to, we will see lives transformed, families transformed, churches transformed, neighborhoods, transformed, counties, states, and NATIONS.

But if we hope to see that kind of transformation, we have to first ask: "What's it going to take?"

Prayer

It's going to require a lot of prayer.

Disciple-Making is primarily a work of God. He's the One who is sovereign over all things. He's the One who changes peoples' hearts. And He's the One who receives all the praise, honor, and glory when we finally see waves of people turning to Christ, repenting of their sin, trusting in Him alone for forgiveness and eternal life, and giving their lives to Him in obedience and making more disciples themselves.

Making disciples is a fruit that we, the branches, cannot produce on our own. It can only be produced when we stay connected to the vine, to Jesus. (John 15)

God produces the fruit, but He produces it through us, specifically through our obedience: an obedience of faith, not fear or legalism. (Romans 16:20)

"Whatever you ask in my name..." (John 14:12-14)

"Pray for the Lord of the harvest to send workers..." (Matthew 9:38)

"...in the hope that the Lord will grant repentance..." -2 Timothy 2

Tool: Prayer Calendar - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zunEXAeh70>

Engagement

"let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven"

“no one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket”

“in the world, not of it”

PROXIMITY

POTENCY

Tool: Conversation Quadrant - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9TljHre_4g

Discovery Bible Study

Tool: Discovery Bible Study - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIOM7Ndkx8I>

Disciple-Making Communities

Change is hard; it's even harder when you're trying to do it by yourself

DMC - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRuQF84pstw>