



SEE
#ALL
THE
PEOPLE



Developing an Intentional Discipleship System: A Guide for Congregations

Junius B. Dotson



Developing an Intentional Discipleship System: A Guide for Congregations

Junius B. Dotson

Copyright 2017 Discipleship Ministries.

Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*. Abingdon Press, 2003.

Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church - 2016* are copyright 2016 by The United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission.

If you would like to learn more about the resources of Discipleship Ministries, please visit us at **UMCdiscipleship.org**.

This resource is made possible by your generous support of The World Service Fund of The United Methodist Church.

1908 Grand Avenue
Nashville, TN 37212
UMCdiscipleship.org
877.899.2780

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Personal & Corporate Discipleship	8
Need for Clarity: What, How, Why	12
What	12
What & How: Two Repeated Questions	13
Why	15
Understanding & Rediscovering the 'Why' of Discipleship	18
A Deeper Why	20
Rediscovering Our Why	21
Intentional Discipleship Systems	24
Why Systems	24
Context, Language, & Ownership	25
What is a Disciple?	25
Characteristics of an Intentional Discipleship System	26
Tips for Creating Your Intentional Discipleship System	30
Our Wesleyan Way	31
Personal Discipleship & Leadership	32
Seeing & Reaching All the People	34
Big Front Porch	34
It's All About Relationships!	35
Intentional Discipleship Across the Connection	38
For Further Study	52
About the Author	54

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

– MATTHEW 9:35-38

Introduction

The harvest is still plentiful, and the laborers are still few. Today, not unlike the time of Jesus, people still have deep spiritual needs and are longing for greater meaning for their lives. Some, as in Matthew's text, are harassed and helpless. Some are searching for good news. Some need healing. Jesus still looks out over our cities and villages and has compassion for all of the people...and so should we as his disciples.

I remember the nursery rhyme taught to us in Sunday School when we were young...

***Here's the church, here's the steeple,
open the doors and see all the people.***

Unfortunately, many churches today might rewrite the rhyme, "*open the doors, where are all the people?*" Although there are a few examples of towns and cities where jobs and people have left entirely, an overwhelming majority of cities and towns still report growth in population year after year. The problem is not a lack of people. The problem is our inability to see and reach them. We have forgotten why as disciples we are called to reach out in the first place.

A story is told of a philanthropist who hired a number of people during the depression era to build a road. Although his intentions were good, the philanthropist had hired the people for a meaningless job in which

they built a road that went nowhere. As the workers began to realize that their work had no end goal, their enthusiasm for the work waned and the road project was eventually discontinued.

When we talk about intentional discipleship, we must know the end goal, and we must know the reason behind our mission of making disciples. In this resource, we will call this the “why” of discipleship. If we are going to intentionally build roads of discipleship, we must know why we are building them, the path they will take, and where they will lead. The stakes are too high and this moment is too crucial to build roads to nowhere.

"The problem is not a lack of people. The problem is our inability to see and reach them."

Over the years, with the best of intentions, we have tried to make disciples by tinkering – tinkering with our worship services, collecting great amounts of data, tracking demographics, scrutinizing particular metrics, creating hospitality plans, and tinkering with other aspects of congregational life. While these are important and necessary elements to a vital congregation, they can also distract us and lead us to believe that we can tinker or program our way back to vitality.

For too long, The United Methodist Church has looked for a quick fix to help guide our discipleship efforts, and it is not working. We have lost our focus on intentional discipleship, we have forgotten the reasons why we said “yes” to Jesus, and we ourselves have stopped growing as disciples. We have forgotten that being on a path of discipleship is a life-long journey of growth and maturing. I believe a renewed focus on making disciples will be a better investment of our time, money and resources. Our focus must move away from “fixing” churches, toward making and growing disciples! I love the quote from author/speaker Mike Breen, who says:

"If you try to build the church, you will rarely get disciples. But if you make disciples, you will always get the church."¹

¹ *Building a Discipleship Culture*. Mike Breen. 3dm Publishing, 2014.

It is in this spirit that we offer a call to intentional discipleship, with the desire to help bring clarity to our mission as a church, to offer healthy principles for intentional discipleship, and to inspire a passion for making disciples across our denomination. My prayer is that churches will have a relentless focus on making disciples, and a disciple-making movement might spread across the connection once again. I hope you will use this booklet with the core leadership of your church to guide you as you become more intentional about disciple-making. I hope cabinets and conference staff might use this booklet to encourage churches to make our mission of making disciples for the transformation of the world our central focus for all that we do in The United Methodist Church.

Let me officially invite you to join the movement as together we:

#SEE^{ALL}THEPEOPLE

*"Our focus must
move away
from "fixing"
churches
toward making
and growing
disciples!"*

#SEE^{ALL}THEPEOPLE

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God...

– ACTS 20:28

Personal & Corporate Discipleship

It is important to preface our invitation to healthy discipleship systems with the fundamental understanding that intentional discipleship is both personal and corporate.

Personal Discipleship (the individual):

Equipping and empowering disciples for their own growth.

A story is told of a teenager riding on a train with his shoe untied. A passenger on the train, in a kind gesture, pointed it out to the teenager, and the teenager nodded but did nothing. After a few minutes passed, the passenger said again, “Your shoe is untied; I would not want you to trip.” The teenager said thank you, but did nothing in response. As they both got ready to depart at their stop, the passenger noticed that the teenager’s shoe was still untied. As the teenager stepped from the train he stepped on his shoelace and fell flat on his face. The passenger quickly helped him up and asked, “Why didn’t you tie your shoe?” To which the teenager replied, “No one ever taught me how.”

Our pulpits are filled with a lot of “ought to” preaching. Our Sunday School classes talk about a lot of things that affect our discipleship. However, we mistakenly assume that because a person knows the “ought to” that they also know the “how to.” We must shift

our teaching toward equipping and empowering. Have we been superficially tying the shoes of disciples when we should be teaching them how to tie their own shoes?

I believe we must always remind people that being followers of Christ and maturing as his disciples is a life-long journey. This can be as simple as saying in worship each week, "Here are some next steps you can take to deepen your faith this week." You might consider creating a spiritual growth plan at the beginning of each year with administrative teams. This creates space for people to think about their own intentional plan for spiritual growth. It also transforms an administrative team into a covenant group that not only provides excellent ministry, but also accountability to each other for maturing in the faith.

Corporate Discipleship (the church):

Doing everything that we can as a church to provide opportunities for disciples to grow and mature in faith.

Even though our language in our intentional discipleship system will offer continual encouragement, equipping, and empowering of individuals to own their own growth as disciples, we begin the hard work as church leaders to do everything that we possibly can in order to create opportunities within our church for people to grow and mature in faith.

If you have ever planted a garden you know there are some things you can control and there are some things you cannot. So what do you do? You maximize the things you can control, offering your best. You make sure the soil is as close to perfection for the plant as possible. You place it in the best possible location to receive the right amount of sunlight. You offer the right amount of water, factoring in the natural occurrence of rain. You make sure the conditions are as good as possible for the growth of the plant. This is the corporate side of intentional discipleship.

What we are recognizing in our statement that "intentional discipleship is both personal and corporate," is that a disciple needs both in order to see growth and maturity. Healthy, intentional discipleship neither solely depends on the individual's contribution, nor solely on the

contribution of the church system. When both are emphasized and taken seriously, growth and maturing of disciples will occur.

Take a Moment:

Discuss the following questions with your leadership:

1. What does the church offer that has helped me grow in my faith?
2. In what ways does the church encourage me to own my own growth as a disciple?
3. What could I do differently to take more responsibility for my growth?
4. Is our church doing everything it can to offer opportunities for disciples to grow and mature? Are we being intentional?

"I believe in order to rediscover the power at the heart of Methodism, we must rediscover the what, how, and why of discipleship."

#SEE^{AL}THEPEOPLE

I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out.

– JOHN WESLEY, FROM ‘THOUGHTS UPON METHODISM’

Need for Clarity: What, How, Why

When Wesley penned these words he was expressing his fear that someday the people called Methodists might lose the power that was driving the Methodist movement; that Methodists might forget why the movement started in the first place; that we would forget what we believed and why we believed it; that we might lose the spirit behind all that we do and say. Has that moment arrived in some parts of the world? Have we lost our focus on a holiness of heart and life which transforms individuals and communities? I believe in order to rediscover the power at the heart of Methodism, we must rediscover the what, how, and why of discipleship.

What

If you say to the average church leader, “*Tell me a little about what your church does,*” they will typically respond with a list of activities and ministries: “*We worship at 8:30 and 11:00. Sunday School is in between the two services. On the second Sunday of each month we have a breakfast. We go on a mission trip to repair homes in June, and we have a bible study that meets on Wednesday nights.*” All of these things are good and should be a part of what we do as a church, but this should not be our response to the question, “*What does your church do?*”

Well, what is the mission of The United Methodist Church?

***To make disciples of Jesus Christ for
the transformation of the world.***

(¶120 of *The Book of Discipline 2016*)

When we are asked what our church does, our answer should be, “We make disciples.”

Many in the church can recite our mission statement, but we must fully live into it and own it for ourselves. We *do* lots of good things in The United Methodist Church, but we are not necessarily making or growing disciples.

What & How: Two Repeated Questions

As I travel across the country discussing intentional discipleship and listening to pastors, laity, conference staff, and bishops, toward the beginning of most discussions, these two questions arise:

***What is a disciple anyway?
How are disciples really formed?***

It is right, as the questions imply, to ask critically of ourselves and the church, *what part do we play in the making and forming of disciples*, and *where does God enter the process?* For we do believe that the mysteries of God’s grace – prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying – are at work in the lives of all people. The trouble is, the mystery of God’s grace is not always the reason for these two questions. My fear is that what these two questions are really implying is our own desire to relinquish our responsibility within the disciple-making process. Let’s be honest, if we do not know what a disciple is or how they are formed, we will never have to make them. The lack of clarity here will actually keep us from doing the hard and intentional work of making disciples. Indeed, there is no cookie-cutter approach to making disciples, and each disciple’s journey and each church’s process is unique. *And yet* we, as disciples of Jesus, have a role to play in our

own growth as individual disciples, in our accountability to and with other disciples, and in the formation of an intentional discipleship system for our church.

We must take our part in the discipleship process seriously as it has been entrusted to us by Jesus:

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

– Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

The key word in this text is “go!” Christianity is a going religion. We are a going faith. Our mission as a denomination is fundamentally rooted in the Great Commission. We are at our best when we are going. The spirit of the Methodist movement is characterized by going to the people with a passion to make disciples. We have forgotten that the power that fueled our passion for making disciples is found in our continual effort to answer the call of the Great Commission.

If we persist in our ignorance of not knowing what or how, we will need to revisit the mission of The United Methodist Church. And if we do believe in our mission statement, we must bring clarity to these two regularly asked questions. We must know the basic characteristics of a disciple, we must know our end product (what kind of disciples we hope our churches will produce), and we must think intentionally about how our church’s ministries and opportunities work together to assist in disciple formation. It is my hope that in the coming years as more of us join the movement of intentional disciple-making, in addition to the mission statement, each person in the pew will also be able to state *what* a disciple is and have a basic understanding of *how* they are formed.

“The spirit of the Methodist movement is characterized by going to the people with a passion to make disciples.”

Why

Bringing clarity to *what* and *how* is important, but I believe we need to take one more step back, and answer the question: *Why discipleship?*

In his book *Start with Why*, Simon Sinek unpacks how great leaders, movements, and companies know and operate from their *Why*. Simon offers that most companies know *what* they do, some know *how* they do it, but very few can tell you *why*. He calls this *The Golden Circle* (see Figure A).

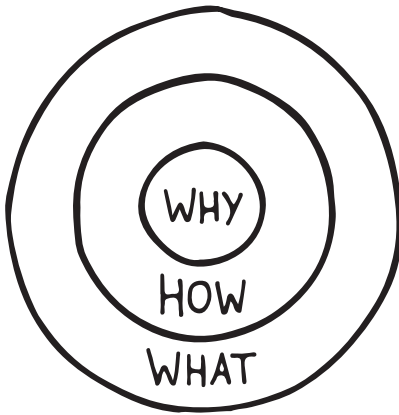


Figure A

“When I say Why, I don’t mean to make money – that’s a result. By Why I mean what is your purpose, cause or belief? Why does your company exist? Why do you get out of bed every morning? And Why should anyone care?”

– Simon Sinek, from *Start with Why*

Although Sinek speaks to the corporate world, I believe the lessons are the same for the church. Can we clearly articulate our why? As we look at this statement, we might (incorrectly) replace “make money” with “fill the pews.” Filling the pews might be a result, but it has nothing to do with our why, nor would it have anything to do with making disciples. Why we make disciples gets to our purpose, our cause, and our belief. It gets to the heart of why we exist. Why does your church exist and why should anyone care?

When asked, “*Why are you here (in this church, in this place)?*” what is your response? I ask this question when visiting churches and the exact numbers vary, but overall results are usually the same:

- **Less than 5%** will say they found this church on their own.
- **5-10%** will say they were invited by a member of the church.

- **80% or more** will say they were “born” Methodist and have always simply attended the United Methodist Church where they live. And a large portion of this group (60-70%) would say they have always been in this church; their parents or their grandparents came to this church, and thus, so do they.

The problem becomes, the longer we have been in one place, the greater the likelihood that we have forgotten why.

It is my assertion that many United Methodists have lost or forgotten their *Why* for being a disciple, for being in a particular church, and thus have forgotten or lost the *Why* of making disciples. As we seek to bring clarity to what a disciple is – how disciples are formed – the most important thing that we can do as followers of Jesus is to reconnect with our *Why*.²

Take a Moment:

Discuss the following questions with your leadership:

1. Why am I here (in this church)?
2. What brought me here?
3. Why do I stay? What keeps me here?
4. Why is this place important to me?

² As a companion to this resource, I invite you to read Simon Sinek’s short book *Start with Why*. In this book he unpacks the success of Apple, the Wright Brothers, and Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement through the lens of The Golden Circle. Or, watch his TED Talk “How Great Leaders Inspire Action” www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action

"Just like a child repeating the question 'why,' it often takes disciples of Christ multiple attempts to find and reflect upon their reason for disciple-making."

#SEE^{ALL}THEPEOPLE

And at the same time that we are justified, yes, in that very moment, sanctification begins. In that instant we are "born again," "born from above," "born of the Spirit." There is a real, as well as relative, change. We are inwardly renewed by the power of God. We feel the "love of God shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us," producing love to all humankind, and more especially to the children of God, expelling the love of the world, the love of pleasure, of ease, of honor, of money; together with pride, anger, self-will, and every other evil disposition – in a word, a changing the "earthly, sensual, devilish" mind into "the mind which was in Christ Jesus."

– JOHN WESLEY, SERMON "THE SCRIPTURE WAY OF SALVATION"³

Understanding & Rediscovering the 'Why' of Discipleship

Now that is a why! "We are inwardly renewed by the power of God... producing love to all humankind." Oh, for a movement of people inwardly renewed and able to see and love all the people! What does such a movement require? A rediscovery of intentional discipleship!

In recent years, we have become very good at highlighting all the things we *should* be doing as a church. Our churches *should* have inspiring worship, ministries engaging our communities, small groups, children and youth ministries, evangelism, stewardship, and the list goes on and on. The problem with knowing and trying to fulfill a list of

³ John Wesley, Sermon "The Scripture Way of Salvation" (1765) 1.4 (Works, 2:158)

things that we *should* do is that it becomes disconnected with our *Why* and becomes a chore, often lacking passion or energy for the task.

What tasks in your church have become chores – things you feel you *should* do or *have to* do?

What we learn from the preaching of John Wesley and the early Methodist movement is everything they said and did emanated from a deep sense of *Why*. Such preaching and teaching deeply rooted in the *Why* generates joy and purpose and hunger for all the things we *get to do* as a body of Christ (small groups, engaging our community, evangelism, stewardship, etc.).

People moved by Wesley and the early Methodists from a deep sense of *Why*, began to ask:

How do I grow in this new faith?

How can I use my gifts?

How can I give?

How can I serve others?

Can I invite a friend?

When we connect with the *Why* of discipleship, we grow in our faith in connection with others, become more generous, think and act beyond ourselves, and invite others into this new way of life in Christ. Being a disciple of Jesus is not, then, a list of *shoulds*, but rather is a way of being. If we successfully rediscover and connect with our why, discipleship becomes a way of being that we cannot help! We do not *have to* invite our friends to church and into this way of life following Jesus, *we get to!* We do not *have to* attend a small group or read our Bible more, *we want to*. When we discover and rediscover the why of discipleship and seek to grow and mature as followers of Jesus, the transformation within us causes a great hunger and desire to do the things God calls us to do. If we lack this, we must circle back to discovering our why once again.

A Deeper Why

Parents are used to the question “Why?” As children develop cognitively, they often seek to better understand why things are and why humans do certain things. I recall moments when my child would ask, “Why?” When I was having a good parenting day, I would take the time to carefully explain the answer to their question. Sometimes my answer was not thorough enough, and I would receive a second, “Why?” (Parents know the more times a “Why” question is asked is often in direct opposition to the amount of patience parents have.) If I had not satisfied my child’s “Why” question by the third or fourth question, a go-to response might be “Because it just is,” or, “Because I said so.” This, as we all know, is not really a sufficient answer to a “Why” question. So why is it that when we ask, “Why do we make disciples?” we often respond, “Because Jesus said so”? It is true – he did say so, but ultimately it is not a good “why.” “Because he said so” at the very least is not a response that inspires and motivates. Just like a child repeating the question “why,” it often takes disciples of Christ multiple attempts to find and reflect upon their reason for disciple making.

Not fully understanding the why of discipleship weakens our ability to make disciples, and it ultimately weakens our witness to the world. One cannot give away something they do not have. If we do not know why we are disciples ourselves, or if we have simply forgotten, how can we invite people into a life following Jesus? And if we are doing great things as a church (reducing malaria, improving world health, offering food and after school programs, etc.) but we cannot articulate why we are doing these things, then we are simply another non-profit organization that does good things.

Take a Moment:

Watch together the youtube video *Know Your Why* by Michael, Jr.
www.UMCdiscipleship.org/knowyourwhy

1. Why do we make disciples?
2. Why do we share our faith?
3. Do we have something that we believe others might need?

"When you know your 'why,' your 'what' has more impact." – MICHAEL JR., COMEDIAN

Rediscovering Our Why

Rediscovering our why in every area of discipleship is the first step toward creating an intentional discipleship system in your church. For example: How does volunteering in the nursery connect with discipleship? Typically in churches we understand having and staffing a nursery as something we *should* and *must* do. This would usually entail Safe Sanctuaries® training, background checks, sign-up sheets, and regular bulletin / pulpit announcements to fill the spots. Staffing the nursery could easily become a lifeless chore that must be done. However, as we rediscover our why and connect it intentionally with discipleship, we soon realize that every role has a deep and meaningful disciple-making purpose. What if our requests to fill nursery staff emanated from our deep sense of the why of disciple making? We might ask in this way:

At _____ Church, our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who transform the world around them. When you sign up to staff our nursery, you are joining with God to love and nurture these children, expressing God's grace to them. And thanks to your service in the nursery, the parent of that child will be able to be fully present in weekly worship, helping them to grow and mature in their faith. Thank you for your part in our disciple making.

If we rediscover and communicate from the why of intentional discipleship in all that we do, we will reconnect with an ongoing Jesus movement that reaches back to his original ministry, continued through the ministries of early Methodism, inspiring and moving each of us still today.

Take a Moment:

Every aspect of our church must rediscover their why and understand how it connects to making disciples.

1. What are the roles in the church currently and how do they connect with discipleship?
2. In what ways can you help others rediscover their why?
3. In what ways can you help others connect their roles to discipleship?

*"A disciple is
one who
knows Christ,
is growing
in Christ,
serving Christ,
and sharing
Christ."*

#SEE^{ALL}THEPEOPLE

American car executives were visiting the assembly line in a Japanese auto manufacturer and at the end of the line, the doors were put on the hinges, the same as in America. But something was missing. In the United States, a line worker would take a rubber mallet and tap the edges of the door to ensure that it fit perfectly. In Japan, that job didn't seem to exist. Confused, the American auto executives asked at what point they made sure the door fit perfectly. Their Japanese guide looked at them and smiled sheepishly. "We make sure it fits when we design it." In the Japanese auto plant, they didn't examine the problem and accumulate data to figure out the best solution – they engineered the outcome they wanted from the beginning. If they didn't achieve their desired outcome, they understood it was because of a decision they made at the start of the process.

– **SIMON SINEK**, FROM 'START WITH WHY'⁴

Intentional Discipleship Systems

Why Systems?

Whether you know it or not, you already have a discipleship system in place in your church. Your current system produces exactly what it is designed to produce. Once we begin to think about our church as a system, we can start to think intentionally about what our system is producing. Intentional discipleship means we know and have planned out the many ways that people new to the faith enter into our church's discipleship system and move through it on their way to growth and maturity. We then clearly communicate the opportunities that disciples have through the church, and offer ways to self-assess and

⁴ *Start with Why*, Simon Sinek, Pg. 14-15

reflect upon the next steps for their spiritual journey. Our hope is that as churches and conferences think intentionally, we will begin to chip away at discipleship by osmosis – “We don’t really know: People show up, things happen, and somehow, disciples are formed.”

Context, Language, & Ownership

As we go through the basic principles of an intentional discipleship system, we invite you to take it and make it your own. Each church and ministry setting has a unique context. Your setting has language and terms that work best for you. Please feel free to edit accordingly! It is only by making these basic concepts and language your own that your church leadership and people will be able to own the system you have created. In fact, nothing in this booklet will work unless you take it, engage the material, and make it your own. Our purpose is not that you adopt *this specific* system, but that you become intentional about *your* system.

What is a Disciple?

Keep it simple. People intuitively know how to define a disciple. You want to give language to the people in the pews that is accessible and easy to remember.

You could use the Wesleyan understanding of a disciple according to the General Rules of Discipleship:

A disciple is a witness to Jesus Christ in the world who follows His teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.⁵

I have often used this iteration,

A disciple is one who knows Christ, is growing in Christ, serving Christ, and sharing Christ.

⁵ The *General Rule of Discipleship* is an adaptation of Wesley’s *General Rules*. (The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church—2012, ¶ 1117.2)

This language can be tweaked for your context. The main thing is that you take the time to develop and clarify your definition of a disciple. As Zig Ziglar once said, “If you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time.”

What are the characteristics of a disciple in your context and how will you bring clarity to the definition of a disciple?

Characteristics of an Intentional Discipleship System

Next, every intentional discipleship system should include the following:

1. Characteristics of a disciple: Create descriptions of what a disciple looks like at each stage of growth.
2. Characteristics of a maturing disciple: What is the end product of your system?
3. Stages of growth in the system: How does a disciple grow?

To illustrate these basic elements of an intentional discipleship system, I use a chart that I adapted from the work of Phil Maynard, founder of EMC3 Coaching and author of several excellent books on discipleship, including *Shift: Helping Congregations Back Into the Game of Effective Ministry*, and *Membership to Discipleship: Growing Mature Disciples Who Make Disciples* (See Figure B).

CHARACTERISTICS OF A DISCIPLE (far left column)

For this part of the chart you are listing the characteristics of a disciple that your ministry setting will emphasize as important for a growing maturing disciple. For this example we have listed the following characteristics:

- A disciple **worships**
- Is part of a **community**
- Commits to **spiritual practices**
- Is **generous and serves**
- Is seeking to be **Christ-like**

In your context you may decide to use different variations on these characteristics that match the language used in your ministry setting and correspond to the maturing disciples you hope will be formed in your system.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A MATURING DISCIPLE (far right column)

For each of the characteristics of a disciple listed in the far left column, develop language that best describes what you hope will be the end product for your discipleship system. What will a maturing disciple look like for each?

Worship – *A maturing disciple begins to worship everyday, including the Sabbath, inviting others.*

Community – *Builds relationships with others and shares with them the life and community that they have found in God and their faith community.*

Spiritual Practices – *Enjoys and practices spiritual disciplines, and begins to show others how to use them to grow in faith and be drawn closer to God.*

Generosity and Service – *Tithes and gives beyond a tithe as God leads and restructures their life and resources to join Jesus in service to others.*

Christ-like – *Partners with God and invites others to explore the life and teachings of Jesus.*

STAGES OF GROWTH (top of the chart)

Across the top of the chart list the basic stages of growth that your community will recognize. For our example, we are using: Searching, Exploring, Beginning, Growing, and Maturing. Another example would be: Believing, Behaving, Belonging. And we defined each as:

Searching – *Seeking to make sense of our life: asking questions like, “What gives my life purpose, joy, and fulfillment?”*

Exploring – *Attend, but not belong; may not be committed to follow Jesus; wrestling with God’s presence in our life.*

Beginning – *Beginning to understand and put into practice our newfound faith; excited about faith, but still have doubts.*

Growing – *Eager to be identified as a follower of Christ; taking personal responsibility for our growing relationship with Jesus; beginning to integrate our faith into life in a holistic way and looking to Jesus for help.*

Maturing – *Moving toward surrender of our lives to Jesus; longing to know, love, obey, serve, and be with Jesus as a disciple; begin to make disciples.*

Take a Moment:

Spend time taking these principles of a discipleship system and making them your own:

1. What will your stages of growth look like?
2. What is the definition of a disciple in your context?
3. What do you hope will be the end result of a maturing disciple in your ministry context?

Figure B

DISCIPLESHIP SYSTEM SAMPLE

(adapted from the work of Phil Maynard)

	Searching	Exploring	Beginning	Growing	Maturing
Worship	Searching for something more.	Invited by a friend to attend worship. Attend sporadically.	Begin to worship regularly; becoming more aware of God in each day.	Attend regularly and begin to recognize daily moments of worship.	Begin to honor and worship everyday in work and play; inviting others to worship.
Community	Searching for genuine community.	Begin to feel strangely drawn to these followers of Jesus and feel warm acceptance by them.	Move from receiving gracious hospitality to offering it to others in every day life.	Begin to look for ways to love, accept, and relate to others in the same way that the church and God lovingly welcomed you.	Seek to build relationships with others and share with them the life and community that you have found in God.
Spiritual Practices	Wonder about the Bible and if there are ways to experience God.	Feel drawn to the story of God's love and begin to explore scripture.	Begin to pray and read scripture regularly; being open to God.	Move to exploring spiritual disciplines; drawn closer to God on a daily basis.	Enjoy and practice spiritual disciplines, and begin to show others how to use them to grow in faith and be drawn closer to God.
Generosity & Service	Wonder if there is more to life than making money and selfish gain.	Begin to give occasionally in worship and try a service project at church. See other people making a difference in the lives of others and seek to be a part of that.	Begin to give regularly of money, time, and talents; understand Christ's invitation to serve others and discover how God has gifted you to do this.	Try tithing my resources, time, and talent to God through the ministries of the church; exploring ways to use one's gifts, talents, and passions.	Tithe and occasionally give beyond when led by God; begin to restructure life and resources to join Jesus in mission to others.
Christ-Like	The life and teachings of Jesus are intriguing.	Exploring the life of Jesus on my own by reading the Bible and attending my first Bible study.	Accept the call to follow Jesus and commit to the church; seek to become like Jesus and serve others.	Begin to daily apply the teachings of Jesus in everyday life.	Partner with God and invite others to explore the life and teachings of Jesus.
Prevenient Grace			Justifying Grace		Sanctifying Grace

Tips for Creating Your Intentional Discipleship System

As you take these intentional discipleship system principles and apply them to your congregation, you will begin to create your own *Discipleship System*. If you remove the descriptions of each characteristic at each stage of growth, you are left with a simple discipleship system chart (see Figure C below). The leadership of your church can then begin to discern in what ways your church (corporate discipleship) does everything that it can to provide opportunities for disciples to grow and mature in their faith.

DISCIPLESHIP: AS SYSTEM & STRUCTURE (adapted from the work of Phil Maynard)

	Exploring	Searching	Beginning	Growing	Maturing
Worship					
Community					
Spiritual Practices					
Generosity & Service					
Christ-Like					
	Prevenient Grace		Justifying Grace		Sanctifying Grace

Figure C

Our Wesleyan Way

As we begin to formulate intentional discipleship systems, we must remember that we have a long tradition of intentional discipleship to draw upon. The early Methodists created class meetings, band meetings, and select societies (the early small group structure and opportunities for spiritual formation) as their system for introducing new disciples to the faith and helping them to grow and mature. Within this system, disciples were encouraged to participate in small groups for Christian conferencing and practicing the means of grace.

Within these small groups, Methodists were encouraged to follow Wesley's *General Rules*:

1. **Do no harm** by avoiding evil of every kind.
2. **Do good** as often as you can to as many as you can (to their bodies and to their souls).
3. **Practice the means of grace** taught to the disciples by Jesus.

MEANS OF GRACE

Works of Mercy

- Feeding the hungry
- Clothing the naked
- Caring for the sick
- Visiting those in prison
- Sheltering the homeless
- Welcoming the stranger
- Peacemaking
- Serving the common good

Works of Piety

- Public worship of God
- Reading of God's Word
- Holy Communion (The Lord's Supper)
- Family & Private Prayer
- Searching the scriptures
- Fasting or abstinence
- Christian conferencing

To connect with more resources around our Wesleyan Way go to:
www.umcdiscipleship.org/covenantdiscipleship

Personal Discipleship & Leadership

Changing the culture of your church to embrace intentional discipleship begins with leaders. Everything rises and falls on leadership. Too many leaders mistake busyness for accomplishment and activity for success. We often falsely believe that the goal of an effective church is to offer a countless number of programs seven days a week. The reality is that your church can be busy and still might not be doing the right things!

Intentional discipleship begins when authentic leaders model what it means to be a growing, maturing disciple. Leadership at all levels must be honest and vulnerable, sharing how they are growing in their faith as they lead others, while encouraging others in their journey. We should see every team gathering as opportunities to not only accomplish administrative or ministry tasks, but also to provide time for accountability to growing spiritually. In essence, much like the historic Methodist class system, every team would operate like a small group.

Intentional discipleship at all levels of leadership will then shape the focus in our Pastor Parish/Staff Parish Relations Committees and our Committees on Nominations and Leadership Development. Focusing on developing and growing healthy disciples among your leaders may not seem very glamorous, but it will be the engine that makes your church go and grow. Healthy leaders grow healthy churches. Healthy churches grow healthy leaders. We must model constant growth in discipleship among our leadership if we wish to see it across our churches.

Intentional discipleship must be the priority of every leadership team. We must be relentlessly focused on making and growing disciples. Leaders should have a clear understanding of their role in helping

"Intentional discipleship begins when authentic leaders model what it means to be a growing, maturing disciple."

people grow and progress spiritually in their church and community context. In this way, the role of leadership is transformed from a “fix our church” agenda to a kingdom building agenda. Our focus moves from growing larger churches to growing a larger number of disciples.

Take a Moment:

1. How will a focus on intentional discipleship change how your leaders lead?
2. How will a focus on intentional discipleship change the focus of your SPRC/PPRC or Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development?

Seeing & Reaching All The People

Big Front Porch

As we look at the current and future challenges of making disciples in the 21st century, I see a growing need for our churches to develop a *Big Front Porch* understanding. What I mean by this is creating more intentionality in the front areas of our discipleship systems. If you think along the lines of stages of growth, I am talking about the opportunities that we offer in the *Searching* and *Exploring* areas. How can your church be more intentional about creating spaces and opportunities for people who are searching for spiritual meaning in life or exploring Christianity? How will you help your leaders understand the importance of creating such spaces and equip them with the best ways to interact with those who are searching and exploring?

We already see efforts to do this across our connection in many ways. *Fresh Expressions* is one example of churches creating safe places for non-church folks to begin to rub shoulders with the church. These efforts are usually connected to lifestyle or hobbies, such as skateboarding, surfing, rock climbing, etc., but can also coalesce around music or coffee.

As your church begins to create such spaces and experiences, make sure your intentionality does not end there. If you create a coffee shop or a skateboard park that never offers opportunities for deeper community or invitations to discipleship, you just help coffee drinkers and skateboarders. Make sure you are also building a sense of community with opportunities to introduce the beginnings of discipleship. As people on the Big Front Porch begin to explore the ways of Jesus, how will you assist with next steps? In what ways will you help explorers become beginners? At the same time, do not

let the Big Front Porch go away as more people become followers of Jesus. If this happens, you will have a Christian coffee shop or Christian skateboard club. The intentional spaces and experiences that you create for those who are searching and exploring must continue for the next group of searchers and explorers. Through Big Front Porch systems, your church must be intentional about continuing to offer safe places where people can search for spiritual meaning and explore Christianity.

It's All About Relationships!

MISSIONAL ENGAGEMENT & RELATIONSHIPS

I use the word *engagement* in deliberate contrast to our traditional understanding of *outreach*. Let me offer some distinctions. Outreach has traditionally taken two forms. It can be missional efforts. These are traditional helping ministries such as food and clothing drives, neighborhood clean-ups, and food pantries. There are some outreach efforts that are more evangelistic efforts. These include activities like attending a street festival and handing out invitations to church, or going to a park to pass out water bottles with the church's information on it. I believe any outreach effort whose goal is simply inviting people to church or only providing ministry "for people" and not "with people" without regard to building relationships is shortsighted – it misses the point of intentional discipleship. Missional engagement entails the building of authentic, organic, and consistent relationships. Only relationships built on these three characteristics will lead to intentional discipleship.

AUTHENTIC: Merriam-Webster defines authentic as "of undisputed origin; genuine." Is our missional engagement with people genuine? Does it start from a good place? Does it have good origins? As we grow in our faith as disciples of Jesus, we should become more selfless, having greater concern and care for the world and the people around us. This care and concern should begin to manifest itself in our relationships. As we develop relationships with people outside of our churches, it is important that we check our motivations and make sure they are genuine. The more authentic and honest the encounter, the more effective we are in faith sharing.

ORGANIC: As we engage with others and begin to build relationships, it must be organic – it cannot be forced. Think about organic as being something that takes on a life of its own naturally. A young pastor shared with me that he and his wife decided to turn off their cable in order to save money. This action left him without a place to watch football after church on Sundays, so naturally he started going to a local bar to watch the game. Over the course of several weeks, something unexpected happened. He became friends and developed relationships with many of the people he would see in the bar each week. Over time these encounters and conversations deepened and suddenly they were talking about Jesus and faith. These conversations resulted in several persons accepting Jesus as Savior and many of them beginning to show up and help out at his church.

CONSISTENT: Any healthy relationship requires a consistent investment of time. Consistent means that our interaction is not transactional. We are not simply trying to get you to attend church. We have a real desire to know you as a person and are committed to being in relationship with you as our neighbor, even if you don't attend our church. Consistent interaction can include a phone call, personal invitations to special events, or a simple acknowledgement that you have been prayed for by our church. You will be surprised by the number of neighbors who will become the biggest cheerleaders for the ministry of your church in the community even if they happen to attend another church.

When engagement is authentic, organic, and consistent, we create the space necessary for people to share their faith. Engagement is not a program, it is an ethos that is deeply rooted in a congregation's understanding of intentional discipleship. This ethos can also fundamentally change the way a church approaches the planning of any activity or event. Consider an outreach event that your church does regularly. Examples might include an Easter egg hunt during the Lenten season, an annual clothing giveaway event, or a community yard/garage sale. How would the nature of that event change if it were planned to ensure that our encounter with people at the event was organic, authentic, and consistent? It could involve a team of people whose sole responsibility is to simply talk to people and listen to their stories. We cannot make disciples without first being in relationship with people!

Finally, consider how you might leverage technology in your ministry setting in order to increase connections and possible future relationships. How can we begin conversations and relationships through websites, social media, blogs, videos, and podcasts? How can we engage people outside of our church in positive ways which meet them where they are, recognizing and articulating some of their deep spiritual needs? Creating the space for conversations, may lead to new relationships. But do not forget, technology does not replace authentic in-person relationships, but it may be a very good starting place.

Discipleship begins with relationships – authentic, organic, and consistent.

Intentional Discipleship Across the Connection

The intentional discipleship movement is already happening across the connection. More and more churches and leaders are recognizing that we must have a relentless focus on making and growing disciples, and move away from fixing churches. Here are just a few examples. You can find more by visiting UMCdiscipleship.org.

Intentional Discipleship in Small Groups

Broomfield United Methodist Church, Colorado

The people of Broomfield United Methodist Church, located between Denver and Boulder in Colorado, actively participate in a wide variety of small groups. Through a congregational discernment process in 2004-2005 utilizing focus groups, the members and leaders of BUMC confirmed the importance of small groups as a crucial part of an intentional discipleship system. The congregation's mission – *Worship God, Grow with God, Share God with Others* – is manifested in the following essential priorities: Holy Scripture, regular worship, fellowship of small groups, outreach to the world, and the shared ministry of laity and pastors. Core discipleship groups include four Sunday morning groups, six men's groups, four women's Bible studies, several ongoing evening study groups, three neighborhood groups, and six United Methodist Women's Circles. These groups provide a wide variety of opportunities for learning, spiritual growth, and mutual support and accountability. Most of these groups engage in Bible studies, topical studies, or book studies.

In addition, small group leaders develop new affinity groups each year to address special needs and interests. Many of these groups are short-term, but others become ongoing groups due to the bonds that members make with each other. Current affinity groups include *The Artist's Way*, Just 10 LBS (a weight-loss group), Parents of Teens, and Parents of Adult Children. BUMC has offered a wide variety of support groups over the years, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, a Caregiver Group, Grief Support Groups, and an Autism Group. These groups are formed in response to felt needs and run as long as church and community members continue to participate. Other small groups, such as singles, athletic, and dinner groups, have a purely social function, allowing people to build friendships. Still other groups, such as the Prayer Shawl Ministry and the Heart-to-Heart Visitation Team, have a mission to serve others. In addition, Thomas Cross, who serves as Pastor of Discipleship, offers a rotating series of short-term groups focused upon Wesleyan theology and Christian history. These include Basic United Methodist Beliefs, Three Simple Rules, Five Marks of a Methodist, the Story of the English Bible, Dictionary of a Loving God, and a Holy Spirit Seminar.

In addition, the pastors select thematic studies for Lent each year, in which preaching themes are coordinated with small group studies. Small group sessions are aligned with the Sunday sermons during Lent. In addition, the pastors promote the text and make it available for those who want to read along during the study. The Sunday Seasonal Scripture Study Group always convenes for this short-term study, as well as an Advent study in November and December. These short-term studies effectively attract new participants into small groups, and some of these people remain involved on an ongoing basis.

In order to help newcomers get involved, the pastors and program staff host a monthly Pizza with Pastors supper, in which staffers get acquainted with new attendees and present ministry highlights, including small group offerings. Staffers invite those who attend to express their interests and experiences. The Pastor of Discipleship invites all who attend Pizza with Pastors or join the church to a follow-up dessert gathering, which is offered quarterly. This Dessert for New Members is focused primarily around small group opportunities, and several small group leaders help host the event, talking about the groups and ministries they lead.

Small groups are an integral part of the discipleship system of Broomfield United Methodist Church. Congregational leadership identified small groups as a core value and recruited staff who share this vision. Members have responded enthusiastically by serving as leaders and joining groups in droves. Over time, BUMC has moved from being a church with small groups to a church *of* small groups. The result is an atmosphere of mutual love, in which people grow in Christ and know and care about one another.

Rev. Thomas Cross

Pastor of Discipleship

Intentional Discipleship District by District

Oklahoma Annual Conference

The Oklahoma Conference is refocusing efforts on intentional discipleship systems and pathways in all local churches. District Superintendents (chief missional strategists) are assisting churches in creating opportunities for lay people to become deeply committed followers of Christ. At the beginning of the new quadrennium, our conference Discipleship Ministry Team (equivalent to the Board of Discipleship as defined in *The Discipline*) met with Jeff Campbell of Discipleship Ministries to orient our team to the principles of intentional discipleship systems. Conference staff members have presented similar workshops in districts and local churches. Regional rural and small membership church training events have been held focusing on H.O.P.E., a discipleship system based on paragraph 122 of *The Book of Discipline*. H.O.P.E. stands for hospitality, offering Christ, purpose, and engagement. At this year's session of annual conference, we will honor one church in each district with the *One Matters Discipleship Award* recognizing turn-around churches making strides in professions of faith and baptisms. Future plans include supporting local churches as they prepare and implement clear and concise discipleship pathways and plans to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. As Paul writes in his first letter to the Corinthians, "But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries." Churches do, indeed, face many adversaries in the world, but there are also many wide doors for effective ministry opened each and every day. Intentional discipleship systems help followers of Christ lead others through those doors to the feet of Jesus.

Rev. Derrek Belase

Director of Discipleship

Intentional Discipleship System: Local Church Example

Peace United Methodist Church, Pickerington, Ohio

Peace Church's discipleship pathway is about transforming people into fully submitted followers of Christ who love God and love others. We meet people in our community at their point of emotional, heartfelt need by sharing God's prevenient grace through support groups, serving and witnessing and mission and outreach opportunities. Programs such as Grief Share, Divorce Care, Upwards Soccer, Preschool, and serving our community by volunteering at our City Festival, painting storage sheds for our local schools, etc. allow us to connect and love people in real and tangible ways.

As we build relationships with people, we invite them to join us in worship, small groups, classes, and ministry teams. It is our expectation that everyone who calls Peace Church home will participate in these core activities of the church. It is through these involvements that people experience God's justifying grace which impacts people most directly through their mind, belief and behaviors.

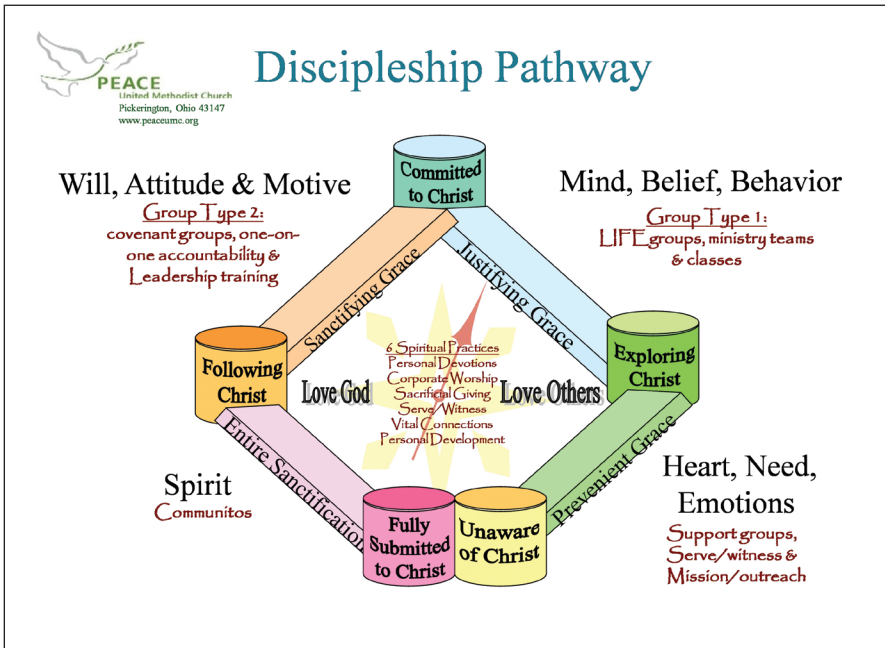
As people continue to grow, some of them will desire to go further in their faith development. Deeper discipleship is offered through adding covenant groups, one-on-one accountability partners, and various types of leadership training to their ongoing activities. It is through these more specific and intense spiritual conversationally based relationships that the church helps people experience God's sanctifying grace with the intent of crucifying the misdeeds of the flesh and perfecting them in love. The focus at Peace Church is to address a person's will, motive, and attitudes.

After years of intentional self-sacrifice, a few individuals will begin to experience God's entire sanctification. This experience of God's entire sanctification is lived out in the *Communitos* (the entire body of Christ) and most directly impacts a person's spirit. These people are being perfected in love and good works and understand at the deepest levels what it means to be fully submitted followers of Christ who love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, and love others as much as they love themselves.

There are also six spiritual practices/disciplines we expect everyone to participate in throughout their entire journey regardless of where they are in the process. The first three help us to learn to love God more (personal devotion, corporate worship and sacrificial giving) and the second three help us to learn to love others more (serve/witness, vital relationships, and personal development). These spiritual practices are lived out with deeper conviction the further people move in their spiritual journey, but all six practices are expected at every stage of a person’s spiritual development. These spiritual practices, along with intentional discipleship programs designed to address different aspects of faith development, are what allow people to grow in their faith.

For more information about our process please contact Peace Church 614-837-3732 or scotttd@peaceumc.org as we would be glad to explain our process in greater detail.

Rev. Bill Lyle
Senior Pastor



Intentional Discipleship in Sermon Series/ Church-Wide Resource

South Carolina Annual Conference

How do we help churches think about discipleship instead of membership? When and where do we talk about moving from members to disciples? Several South Carolina clergy discussed these questions at the Intentional Growth Center at Lake Junaluska. That discussion, based on Phil Maynard's book, *Shift*, led to a dream of involving other United Methodist clergy. This group, after much conversation, began by defining *discipleship* as "our response to Jesus' invitation to 'Come, Follow Me.'" From this beginning, we began to develop a sermon series and church-wide resource with that title.

Every congregation has "members" with varying levels of faith development. The congregational task is to reach people who are seeking God, while at the same time to help others move into a deeper relationship with God. In writing *Come, Follow Me*, we hope to stir a conversation where members move toward discipleship. We hope congregants will learn from Peter's journey of discipleship and instill a desire to begin or restart their journey as disciples of Jesus.

The initial portion of this project includes seven sermons based on facets of Peter's journey as a disciple. We include background material, sermons, suggestions for video, and other resources. We hope that clergy in the conference will use these sermons as models for their own series to move from membership to discipleship.

We will follow up this series with resources for congregation-wide study based on the series. Writing teams are focusing on broad age-level resources to include children, youth, and adults in this study. All materials will be available as PDF downloads from the South Carolina Annual Conference website.

Writers of the series include Ross Chellis, Brad Gray, Angela Ford Nelson, Ken Nelson, Paul Harmon, Wendy Hudson-Jacoby, and Neal Woods. Jim Arant, Cathy Joens, and Chris Lynch lead the age-level

teams. George Donigian, formerly a children's curriculum developer and editor, brought editorial skills to the project.

The Bible passages and session themes are:

1. Following – Mark 1:16-20
2. Confessing – Matthew 16:13-20
3. Faltering – Luke 22:54-62
4. Transforming – John 21:1-14
5. Serving – John 21:15-19
6. Proclaiming – Acts 2:29-39
7. Crossing – Acts 10:34-38

Rev. George Hovaness Donigian

Development Editor (on behalf of the Discipleship Curriculum Team)

Intentional Discipleship: Conference Suggested System

Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference

At the beginning of every journey, we must take the first step. Sometimes we know where we should go and that first step is easy to define. But when we do not know or are unsure, we can easily get distracted, discouraged or displaced. If we are fortunate, a guide comes alongside to help show us the way.

One of the most important journeys anyone can take is a journey with Jesus, but like any other journey, it can be confusing. We, the church, can either hope for the best or we can help to point out the way. We can offer a smorgasbord of opportunities, hoping that something will fill the needs and desires of the heart, or we can guide individuals to what will truly satisfy and cause growth.

The Road to Discipleship is an intentional plan that helps churches create a system of welcoming, building, and deepening discipleship. It centers on Wesley's understanding of discipleship as a journey of grace and also sees discipleship holistically – a process made up of four equally necessary parts: Community (*koinonia*), Teaching/Learning (*didache*), Proclamation/Transformation (*kerygma*) and Service (*diakonia*). As we map out the route, we help to point others in the right direction of discipleship.

Rev. Chris Kindle

Director of Discipleship and Spiritual Formation



THE ROAD TO DISCIPLESHIP



EXPLORING CHRIST (PREVENTIVE GRACE) CREATING SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIPS

COMMUNITY

- Lunch with Pastor
- Visitor follow-up
- Integration into a small group
- Participation in a "get to know our church" study

TEACHING

- The Story, Zondervan
- Alpha
- Disciple's Path, Jim Harnish
- 40 Days of Purpose
- A "How to Read the Bible" Class

PROCLAMATION

- Commit to pray for 5 minutes a day
- Commit to read the Bible with a provided plan
- Share with someone that you are attending church

SERVICE

- Volunteer to greet others as they come to church
- Participate in a church ministry (CROP Walk, food or blood drive)



MATURING IN CHRIST (SANCTIFYING GRACE) CREATING A SACRIFICIAL LIFE

COMMUNITY

- Lead or co-lead a small group
- Participate in New Member Classes as mentor
- Help to lead a church retreat
- Participate in a Walk to Emmaus

TEACHING

- Disciple-type Bible Study
- Dare to Dream, Mike Slaughter
- 40 Days of Service

PROCLAMATION

- Commit to practice the discipline of Fasting once a month
- Commit to memorize 2 verses a month
- Commit to daily reading of scripture and prayer
- Look for ways to practice forgiveness
- Commit to giving a tithe of your income

SERVICE

- Lead or co-lead a VIM Team
- Participate in a visitation and prayer ministry
- Participate in Lay Servants' School
- Participate in Regional help ministries, such as EUMA or Northside Ministries



TRANSFORMING IN CHRIST (JUSTIFYING GRACE) CREATING FOUNDATIONAL BELIEFS

COMMUNITY

- Participate on a membership class
- Participate in a small group
- Participate in a church retreat

TEACHING

- A Disciple's Heart, Jim Harnish
- Believe, Randy Frazee
- The Life You've Always Wanted, John Ortberg
- 40 Days of Community
- 40 Days of Love

PROCLAMATION

- Write out and learn to share your testimony
- Commit to memorize 1 verse a month
- Commit to daily reading of scripture and prayer
- Commit to giving to your church financially

SERVICE

- Participate in a Volunteer in Missions (VIM) Team
- Serve at a local soup kitchen
- Volunteer with a local church ministry (after school program, tutoring)



CENTERED IN CHRIST (GOING ON TO PERFECTION) CREATING A MISSIONAL LIFE

COMMUNITY

- Lead a group
- Find someone to mentor
- Be a leader in Walk to Emmaus

TEACHING

- Disciple Bible Study
- Life on Mission

PROCLAMATION

- Commit to participation in a poverty-related ministry
- Commit to give to other ministries beyond the local church tithe
- Provide preaching assistance to your church and/or district

SERVICE

- VIM Team leader
- Volunteer to serve longer periods of time
- Join NOMADS Mission volunteers

Intentional Discipleship: Conference Initiatives

Upper New York Annual Conference

In the Upper New York Conference, intentional discipleship systems have been identified as one of the components for Vital Congregations. To that end, multiple approaches are being used to come alongside congregations to help develop discipleship systems. A concerted effort has been underway to communicate the value of an intentional discipleship system, and the importance of a system for the mission and ministry of the local congregation. This has been done in presentations from Episcopal leadership, District Superintendents, and multiple staff members. Additionally, publications have included stories and information about intentional discipleship systems.

As the value and importance is communicated, programmatic opportunities have been employed at the conference level. The goal of the programs has not been to give a congregation a system to follow, rather it has been to teach the components of an effective discipleship system. Also, care has been given to remain consistent with Wesleyan theology and tradition. Workshops have been given on a district level as well as through conference-wide trainings. During the course of the revitalization process called *Hand to Plow*, congregations are given an opportunity to take a deeper look at what it will take to develop a discipleship system, as well as how to go about creating a system for their congregation.

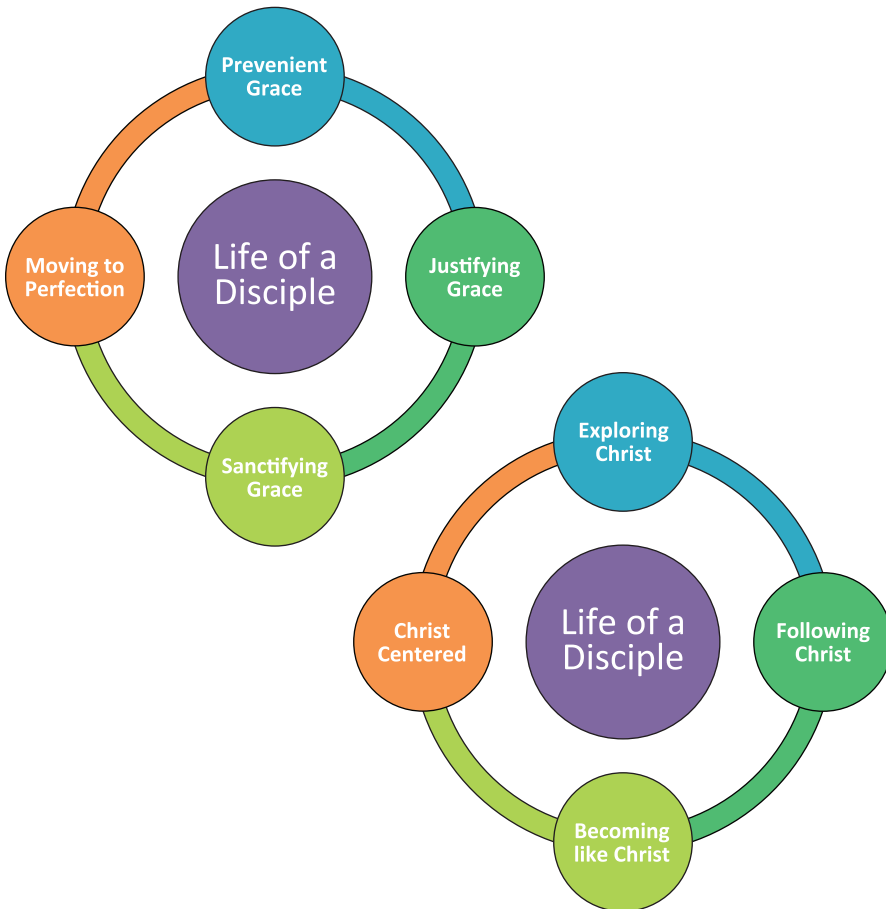
Congregations are invited to become familiar with discipleship systems by reading various books where systems are outlined. Part of the learning is discovering key components to be included in an effective system. The components are tied to the place people might be in their development as followers of Jesus Christ. Congregations need to have growth opportunities for those who are exploring Christ, whether they know it or not. Second, congregations need growth opportunities for those who are deciding to follow Christ, or are new to being followers. Third, opportunities need to be available for people who are growing deeper in their life with Christ, as well as those who have been along the journey for longer. Those who have been journeying in growth longer are often those who are leading others in their journey. These

components match the wave of grace seen in Wesleyan theology: prevenient, justifying, sanctifying, and those moving more deeply toward perfection.

Details of programs and approaches are often not taught, as it is important for the local congregation to adapt the components to fit their context. Suggestions might be made available, yet great effort is given to inviting local congregations to develop a discipleship system which is consistent with their congregation and community. The accompanying image is used to give a visual reference point to congregations as they develop their system. It is hoped the simple visual will remind the people working on the system of the components, as well as the Wesleyan waves of grace.

Rev. Dr. Aaron M. Bouwens

Director of Vital Congregations



Intentional Discipleship: International

Manila Episcopal Area

The UMC DOC (United Methodist Church, Disciples of Christ) is a primer created as an evangelistic/discipleship model to help pastors, deaconesses, and lay members in the Manila Episcopal Area with its 12 Annual Conferences consisting of 28 Districts.

In the DOC system, disciples participate in Evangelism, Discipleship, and CARE groups. Disciples share their faith, inviting others into a life with Christ. When a person accepts and receives Jesus Christ as Lord they are invited to join a CARE group. In these groups, the new disciples experience being loved, character development into Christlikeness, being equipped and empowered, and experiences of fellowship with other disciples. All disciples then go through a process of training and equipping in preparation for being a disciple-maker.

The model includes the following system: **Evangelizing** (one-on-one evangelism, open houses, CARE groups, CARE group network gatherings, worship), **Enfolding** (weekly CARE group meetings, daily devotion, prayer patters, Pre-Experience Seminar, 3-Day Experience Retreat, Post-Experience Seminar, Accountable Discipleship Class 1), **Equipping** (Accountable Discipleship Class 2, 3, and 4), and **Empowering** (commissioning of new CARE group leaders, Accountable Discipleship Class 5 and 6).

The UMC DOC model includes examples and directions for Personal daily devotions with journaling, Weekly CARE group meetings, Monthly Network Gathering of CARE groups, UMC Heartwarming Classes and Retreats, Accountable Discipleship Classes and Re-Experience Retreat, Membership Class for New Believers and Old Members (as a review), and Lay Servant Ministry / Lay Speakers' Seminars.

To see the complete UMC DOC model, go to: UMCdiscipleship.org/UMCDOC

Rev. Magusig 'John' B. Manalo, Jr.

*Director for Connectional Ministries, UMC DOC (Disciples of Christ),
Manila Episcopal Area of the Philippines Central Conference*

*"We cannot
make disciples
without first
being in
relationship
with people!"*

#SEE^{ALL}THEPEOPLE

For Further Study

Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action.
Simon Sinek. Portfolio, 2011.

Building a Discipleship Culture. Mike Breen. 3dm Publishing, 2014.

Shift: Helping Congregations Back Into the Game of Effective Ministry.
Phil Maynard. Self published, 2013.

Membership to Discipleship: Growing Mature Disciples Who Make Disciples. Phil Maynard. Excellence in Ministry Coaching, 2016.

A Disciple's Path Daily Workbook: Deepening Your Relationship with Christ and the Church. James Harnish with Justin LaRosa. Abingdon Press, 2012.

Michael Jr., *Know Your Why*: www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZe5y2D60YU

Simon Sinek, *Start with Why: Ted Talk*:
www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action

About The Author



A recognized visionary leader in church revitalization, the Rev. Junius B. Dotson is the General Secretary (chief executive officer) of Discipleship Ministries, an international agency of The United Methodist Church. He began his tenure on July 1, 2016. Prior to his present position, Rev. Dotson was Senior Pastor of Saint Mark United Methodist Church in Wichita, Kansas, where he was instrumental in transforming the 3,500-member church into a multi-campus congregation. The church is also the host to the E.C. Tyree Health & Dental Clinic that provides affordable care to thousands of patients annually.

Rev. Dotson received his undergraduate degree in political science, with a concentration in economics, at the University of Texas at Arlington. While attending UT-Arlington, he was president of the local chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, the nation's oldest African-American fraternity.

Rev. Dotson began his graduate work at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, and earned his Master of Divinity degree from the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. He was ordained in June 1992. In 1996, Rev. Dotson responded to the challenge of planting Genesis United Methodist Church, a new and innovative church in the Silicon Valley of California, which grew into a diverse faith community of nearly 500 people.

As a leader who responds to challenges and opportunities in new and creative ways, Rev. Dotson believes that effective ministry is about training, developing, and empowering leaders to establish ministries that address the needs of the whole person – body, mind, and spirit.

Rev. Dotson's unique innovations have generated a great deal of interest. His ministry has been featured in *The San Jose Mercury*

News, The San Francisco Examiner, The Sacramento Bee, The Wichita Eagle, religious journals and segments on CBS Radio's "The Osgood File," as well as on ABC, NBC and CBS affiliates in San Francisco, San Jose and Wichita.

A dynamic preacher and public speaker, Rev. Dotson is highly respected for his ability to establish networks that get things done in the faith and larger communities. Rev. Dotson served on the Board of Ordained Ministry and the Revitalization Taskforce of the Kansas West Conference (now part of the Great Plains Conference). He has served as facilitator for the Fitzgerald Program, a Discipleship Ministries program to equip pastors to begin start-up congregations. From 2009 to 2012, Rev. Dotson served on the Board of Directors of Discipleship Ministries, where he was chair of the New Church Starts/ Path 1 division of the agency. Rev. Dotson also served on The Wichita Food Bank Executive Board, Wichita Children's Home Board, W.G. Williams Community Foundation Board, Wichita Ministerial Alliance and as a three-term appointee by the governor of Kansas to serve on the Kansas Sentencing Commission.

Rev. Dotson resides in Nashville, Tennessee, and is married to Christina Price. They have two children, Wesley and Janelle.

***We cannot make disciples
without first being in
relationship with people!***

We can't program our way back to vitality. Rather, it requires a movement toward disciple-making, and it begins with a disciple-making process that reaches out into your community.

We invite you to use this resource to begin a conversation in your ministry setting about creating a lifestyle of intentional discipleship.

You're invited to **#SeeAllThePeople**.



DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES
The United Methodist Church

