



EQUIPPER

The monthly e-magazine from the U.S. Ministry Development Team of
Grace Communion International - Church Administration and Development.

April 2012
Volume 7, Issue 4
MinDev.gci.org

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Dear disciple of Jesus,

During Holy Week, we remember what Jesus said and did.

The night before his death on the cross, Jesus reminded his disciples of the work that the Father accomplishes through his Son (John 14:10-11). Then Jesus told them that, going forward, he would be doing that work through them, his Spirit-led followers (14:12, 15-20). He promised that as they would remain (abide) in him (15:4), their work would yield abundant fruit that lasts (15:5, 16). He then assured them that this life of discipleship would bring them great joy, for they would share in the joy that Jesus himself experiences in accomplishing his Father's work in the world (15:11; 16:24; 17:13).

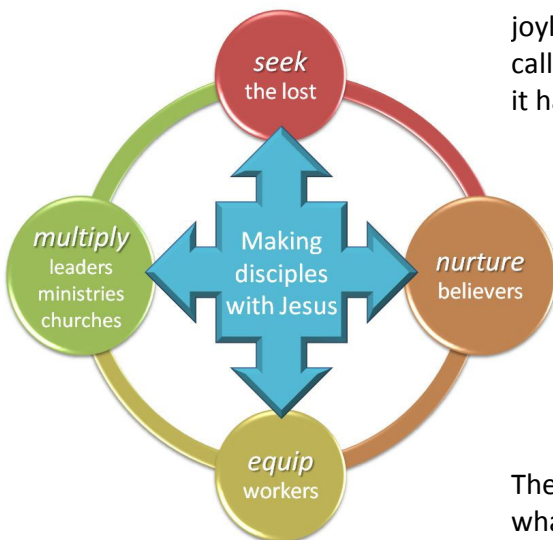
Sadly, some churches either ignore Jesus' call to discipleship or reduce it to joyless, rigid programs. However, the ministry of Jesus, into which we are called, is a *joy-filled lifestyle*. Being Spirit-led, it is free and creative; however, it has consistent, discernible patterns that we in CAD describe this way:

- **Seek the lost:** we join Jesus in extending his life and love to nonbelievers
- **Nurture believers:** we join Jesus in helping believers grow in our Lord's faith, love and hope
- **Equip workers:** we join Jesus in helping believers participate actively in our Lord's work of seeking the lost and nurturing believers
- **Multiply leaders, ministries & churches:** we join Jesus in raising up leaders who our Lord will use to transform existing ministries and churches and to start new ones

These patterns of our sharing in Jesus' ministry are interrelated, forming what we call **the discipleship pathway** (see the diagram). We urge existing churches and new church plants to have a well-defined discipleship pathway of their own. Why? Because it provides a biblical framework that helps them stay focused on what Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, is doing in and through his church: *Multiplying and maturing his disciplemaking followers within particular communities for the sake of the world.*

In this issue, we highlight related resources. For assistance, we invite you to contact a CAD ministry developer (listed at <http://mindev.gci.org/services.htm>).

Ted Johnston
Equipper editor and CAD ministry developer



The discipleship pathway

For a more comprehensive presentation of this pathway, download the PowerPoint file at <http://tinyurl.com/6stm49>

DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY RESOURCES AND EXAMPLES

Below are resources and examples that can help you define or refine your congregation's discipleship pathway. For additional resources, see the Ministry Development website at <http://mindev.gci.org/> (note the *strategy* page). For additional examples, see *It Looks Like This* at <http://gci-usa.blogspot.com/> and *GCI Weekly Update* at <http://update.gci.org/>

Defining the pathway

There are many terms that can be used to define the patterns of Jesus' discipleship pathway as it is sketched out in Holy Scripture. As noted on page one, CAD uses these: **seek, nurture, equip & multiply**. In a powerful video at <http://youtu.be/rk8ERxqCZqQ> the terms used are **love, liberate, lead & launch**.

Of course, other biblically sound terms might be used. What terms does your congregation use? Do your leaders use the same ones, providing unity and synergy? Are most of your members familiar with them? Do they, as well as your visitors, know how to tap into your congregation's programs at each step on the discipleship pathway? Do you have programs that helpfully address each step? Following are examples of progress in three GCI congregations.

Progress at Christ Community Church

Christ Community Church (one of two GCI churches in Cincinnati, OH), defines their discipleship pathway using three terms: **belong, believe & become**. Their pastor, George Hart, describes their progress in organizing around this newly adopted pathway in their newsletter posted online at <http://tinyurl.com/6qczrxp>. The congregation adopted their pathway as part of the Transformational Church process they began over a year ago. George would be glad to share with you what he has learned. Email him at George.Hart@gci.org.



George Hart

Progress at Abundant Grace Church

As noted in the October *Equipper*, Abundant Grace Church (GCI's congregation in Rochester, NY), pastored by Leonard Banks, has been emphasizing the importance of a discipleship pathway to provide clear direction to all of their ministries. To learn about their progress, and their offer to help other churches, watch a video with assistant pastor Lloyd Elwell at <http://youtu.be/1UTXZVLxHZI>



Lloyd Elwell

Progress at Heart of the Cross Church

A great challenge faced by many churches is to find ways to join Jesus as he ministers to nonbelievers in the community. There is no one-size-fits-all way to do so, but we can learn from each other. For ideas, watch a video with David Marquis posted at http://youtu.be/x_Vnh66AGNA David pastors Heart of the Cross, the GCI church in Marion, OH. He comments on their Christmas outreach.



David Marquis