Module 2 - Task 2

THE DISCIPLESHIP MISSION OF THE CHURCH: GOING

When a new organization forms, whether it is a business or a nonprofit, one of the first things that is tackled by the leadership of that organization is to define its mission and to craft a mission statement. The mission statement defines in a short, succinct way why that organization exists and what it exists to do.

So, as a church, what has our Leader, Jesus Christ, defined as our mission? In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus gave His church her mission statement. In this passage there is, grammatically, only one imperative, the command to "make disciples" (Matt. 28:19). To disciple then is a command given to the church by King Jesus who has been given all authority "in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). This command is then supported by three actions or movements by which we make disciples: 1) going (Matt. 28:19a), 2) baptizing (Matt. 28:19b), and 3) teaching (Matt. 28:20).

Let's take a look at each of these three actions or movements in making disciples. We begin with "going."

GOING

The first of these ("go") indicates movement—movement toward the end of making disciples of all the nations. The "nations" was a catch-all word used by the Jews for any group outside of Judaism. The people of "the nations" would be unfamiliar with the one God of Israel, the God who had sent His Son Jesus to earth.

This movement reminds us that making disciples presumes an evangelistic mission—going and sharing the gospel with those who have not heard the good news of the kingdom. As Paul says, "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14). Simply put, a disciple cannot be made if he or she has not first heard the good news and come to faith in Christ. That is the starting point for the journey of discipleship.

A Strategy for Cultural Transformation

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-8. What, according to Paul, are the essential elements of the gospel/good news he received and preached to others?

Why do you think these elements are critically important to a proper understanding of the gospel?

One of the keys in evangelism is thinking strategically as a church (and as individuals) of how to connect to the culture that is around us in order to communicate the gospel in fresh ways that can be heard and understood. God models this to us in the incarnation. Jesus, as the Message Bible puts it, “became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes” (John 1:14).

The church as a whole is struggling to “move into the neighborhood” with youth and young adults. Surveys often show that this age group is rapidly exiting the church. View Dr. Evans’ response to the following question: “One of the biggest factors that many churches are dealing with is the loss of youth and an inability to reach and disciple millennials and post-millennials (Gen Z, iGen, Plurals, etc.). What are some suggestions you would give churches so that they can be more intentional and more successful about evangelism and discipleship of these generations?

A Strategy for Cultural Transformation

How is your church doing on thinking strategically about reaching out to youth and young adults?

How is your church doing on reaching your city or neighborhood with the gospel?

How is your church equipping its people to go into their neighborhoods and workplaces to be witnesses for the kingdom?