

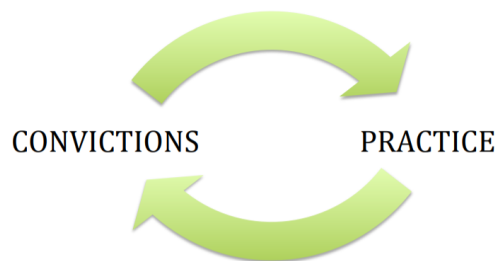


**The Vine Project**  
Tony Payne & Col Marshall

Phase 1: **Sharpen Your Convictions** pp 43-151

Two Main Problems

- 1.
- 2.

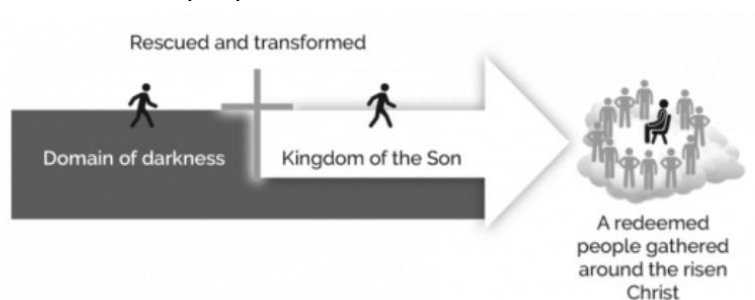


Five Key Convictions

- |                             |     |                     |
|-----------------------------|-----|---------------------|
| 1. Why make disciples?      | The | for disciple making |
| 2. What is a disciple?      | The | of disciple making  |
| 3. How are disciples made?  | The | of disciple making  |
| 4. Who makes disciples?     | The | of disciple making  |
| 5. Where to make disciples? | The | for disciple making |

### **Conviction 1: Why make Disciples?**

**Answer:** God's goal for the whole world and the whole of human history is to glorify his beloved Son in the midst of the people he has rescued and transformed



**Summary:** *God's goal for the whole world and the whole of human history is to glorify his beloved Son in the midst of the people he has rescued and transformed.*

Read at least one of the following passages: Revelation 7:9-17, Colossians 1:13-20, Hebrews 12:18-24, Ephesians 1:1-14, Titus 2:11-14, Romans 8

In each passage, particularly note what you learn about:

1. the end towards which God is moving everything (including us)
2. the place of Jesus Christ in God's plans
3. the significance of Jesus' death for God's plans
4. humanity's place in God's plans
5. why making disciples is important

	The end towards which God is moving everything (including us)	The place of Jesus Christ in God's plans	The significance of Jesus' death for God's plans	Humanity's place in God's plans	Why making disciples is important
Revelation 7:9-17					
Hebrews 12:18-24					
Titus 2:11-14					
Colossians 1:13-20					
Ephesians 1:1-14					
Romans 8					

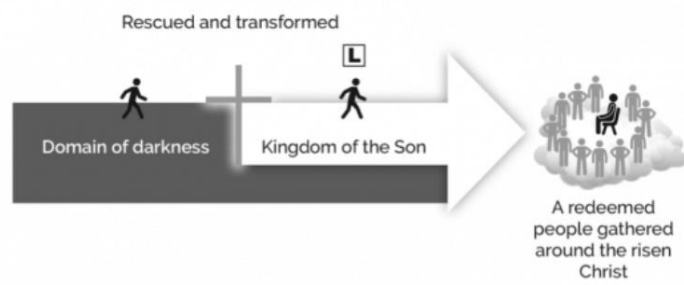
Why do you think many churches lose motivation and urgency for making more disciples of Jesus? (How would you describe your own urgency for the task? And that of your church plant?)

See how many different ways you can truthfully finish this sentence:

We make disciples because...

## Conviction 2: What is a Disciple?

**Answer:** a forgiven sinner who is learning Christ in repentance and faith



**Summary:**

Read these well-known passages where Jesus explains what it means to be his disciple:

Matthew 10:16-33

Mark 8:31-38

Luke 14:25-33

- a. What do disciples need to learn about Jesus?
- b. What are the consequences of learning Christ in this way?
- c. Why is it inconsistent to 'learn Christ' and not subject our whole life to his will?

d. What alternative masters does Jesus highlight?

Discuss each of the following common views of discipleship. What truth (if any) do they express? Where are they wrong or inadequate?

**View 1:** Discipleship is a second stage of Christian experience that happens sometime after conversion. You can be a Christian but it's only the really dedicated, committed people who are disciples.

**View 2:** Discipleship is an intentional ministry strategy or program—like one-to-one mentoring, small group ministry, or a 12-week discipleship program.

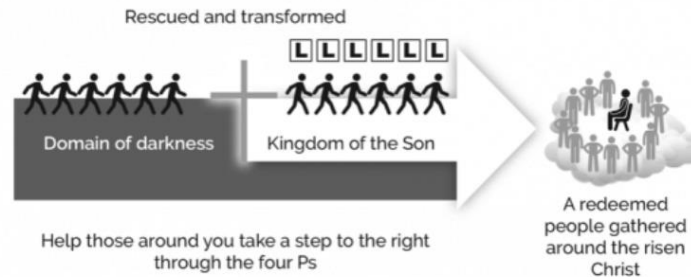
**View 3:** The essence of discipleship is personal accountability to a discipler. Discipleship is about the kind of trusted relationship where someone keeps us accountable about quiet times, church attendance, or avoidance of particular sins, like pornography.

**View 4:** Preaching is not really about discipling people. It's more to do with proclamation, teaching and exhortation.

Compose your own concise statement of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. (You might find this statement useful later on in Phase 3, in assessing how effectively the various ministries of your church are 'making disciples'.)

### Conviction 3: How are Disciples Made?

**Answer:** *the persevering proclamation of the word of God by the people of God in prayerful dependence on the Spirit of God*



#### Summary:

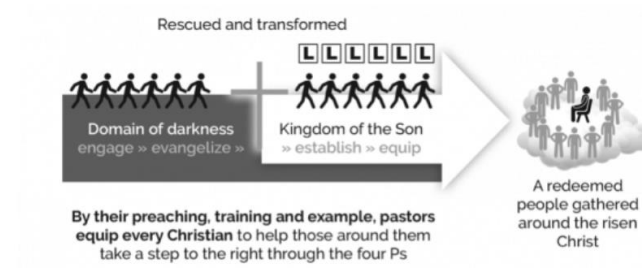
1. of the word in multiple ways
2. dependence on the Spirit
3. are God's fellow workers
4. step by step

We can use the four Es as handy signposts for different stages of the journey: Engage, Evangelize, Establish and Equip.

1. Think of someone you know who is finding life hard in this fallen world, and pray about what you could do to help them 'take a step to the right' toward Christ. How could you demonstrate your love for them? What story could you tell from your life that would point them to Christ? What could you say to them about the truth of Christ? What Scripture passage could you share with them (in person, by email, by card)? What might stop you from taking any action?

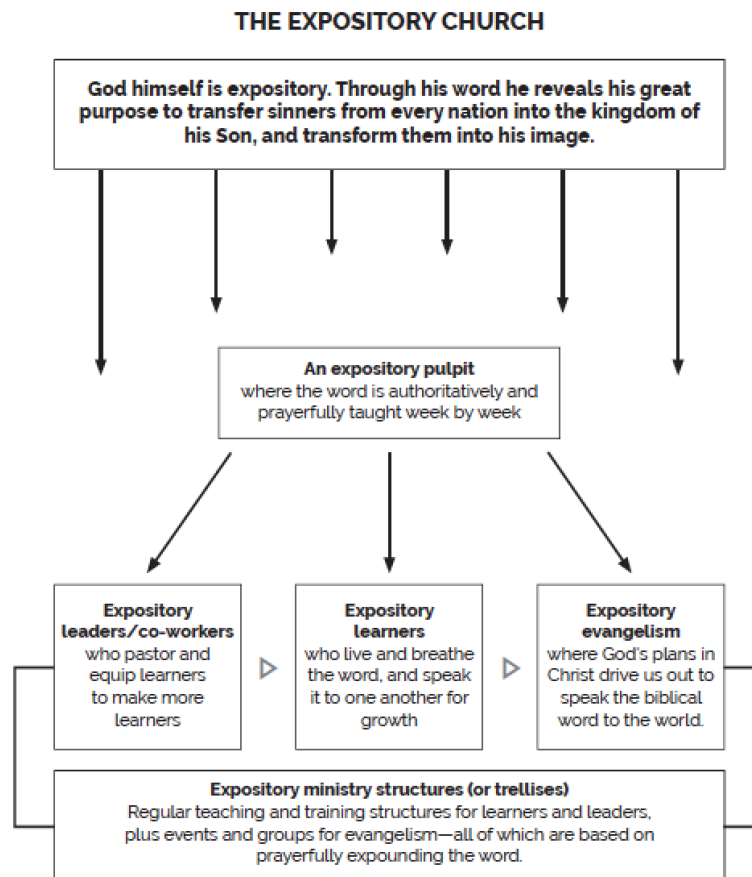
#### Conviction 4: Who makes Disciples?

**Answer:** *by their preaching, training and example, pastors equip every Christian  
To be a Christ-learner who helps others to learn Christ*



#### Summary:

1. What does the Bible say about all Christians speaking the word?
2. What does that look like in practice?
3. How do we overcome inhibitions?
4. What's the relationship between the expository pulpit and the expository church?



1. Look closely at the 'Expository Church' diagram:

- What do you appreciate about it?
- Where do you think it could be improved or modified?
- Do you think it currently describes your church plant? Why/why not?

2. What are the main reasons (do you think) that many people in your church are not engaged in speaking the word to others in the church, home or community?

## Conviction 5: Where to Make Disciples?

**Answer:** *it happens in every facet and activity of the transformative learning communities we call churches; and through our churches, it also happens in every corner of this present darkness*

### Summary:

1. What does a 'learning community' look like in practice, do you think? See how many different ways you can imagine—formally and informally—for people to help others take a 'step to the right' as part of your church community.
2. Think of as many subcultures or communities that you are in contact with (individually or as a church).
  - a. How successfully are you reaching out to make 'learners' of Christ in these communities?
  - b. If people from some of these communities came to your church, what would they find helpful or unhelpful about your current church meetings?
3. See if you can track down some statistics on the ethnic, religious and socio-economic make-up of your local area.
  - a. How closely does the profile of your church membership match your local community profile?
  - b. Which subcultures or types of people do you think your church members find it hard to associate and engage with? Why is it difficult for them?
  - c. Think of some church members who could have a special role in reaching subgroups in your community—not just ethnic and religious groups but peoples associated by age, job, disability, loneliness, financial need, sporting or cultural interest, and so on. (Don't feel the need to do anything with this information just yet—we'll come back to all this in Phases 3 and 4.)

Now it's over to you. It's time for you to draw together all that you have learned through sharpening your convictions, by coming up with your own way of expressing them.

### Exercise 1: **Write a manifesto**

From your work on the five convictions, write your own short summary of what you believe about discipleship and making disciples. You might like to use our five headings or come up with some of your own. You might like to use (or modify) our diagram to illustrate your summary, or devise your own.

What you are trying to express is your theological DNA, or vision for Christian ministry. Don't have too many headings or sub-points—the idea is to write a short readable document (of, say, no more than 1000 words) that can function as a sharp summary of what you believe and what drives you.

We suggest that one person on your Vine Project Team be given the job of coming up with a first draft that the rest can tweak and debate and improve.<sup>1</sup>

### Exercise 2: **Boil it down**

Having finalized your manifesto, try to boil it down into one simple, compelling summary statement that would cut through and make sense to your people. This is not necessarily the church motto that would go on the sign out the front, or that you would advertise to outsiders in the local paper—this is an internal mission or purpose statement that reminds your members what you're on about as a church.

Keep it to one sentence if possible. Avoid waffly or vague ideas. Don't try to make it catchy or clever until you're absolutely sure of what you want to say.

### Exercise 3: **Prepare a hypothetical vision session for your members**

As a further way of clarifying your convictions and how you'd communicate them, build on Exercises 1 and 2 by putting together the draft of a 'vision session' with your whole church—the content of a special one-off meeting where you laid out before the whole congregation the key convictions that were going to be the basis of moving forward together.

We'll revisit this exercise in Phase 4, but the draft you come up with now will be very helpful not only in crystallizing your convictions, but in beginning to think about how you are going to communicate them to the congregation as a whole.

a. What would you include in such a presentation?

---

<sup>1</sup> We'd also suggest that it might be best if the person who does this draft is *not* the senior pastor of the church—unless your team is sufficiently comfortable with one another to critique the draft even if it is written by the pastor.

- b. Which Bible passages would you read or explain or discuss?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c. What key illustrations or examples would you use?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- d. How would you persuade your congregation of the need for change, given these convictions?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- e. What questions would you anticipate?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- f. What might you give them to take home and read, for further discussion?