Authentic Discipleship

Integrated Resources for Discipleship Communities

www.authenticdiscipleship.org

They will be called oaks of Righteousness – Isaiah 61:3

Authentic Discipleship Ministry Introduction:

Authentic Discipleship is an inter-denominational integrated resource equipping ministry focusing on developing lay leaders for ministry within their church and work context... to provide free resources in an accessible format and platform to encourage and deepen spiritual maturity.

Ministry values are drawn from three Biblical sources, which will be expanded and explained in the integrated threefold ministry:

1. *Imago Dei* – understanding who we are as made in the image of God... this is based upon the nature of Biblical revelation and God’s calling upon humanity.
2. *Imago Christi* – understanding who we are as the image and presence of Christ... this is based upon deepening relationship with our Lord Jesus whose character and nature is being formed within every indwelled believer by the power of the Spirit.
3. *Missio Dei* – understanding that all believers are ambassadors of the Kingdom of God and conscripted as ministers of the Gospel to intentionally advance the mission of Christ to evangelize and make disciples.

Authentic Discipleship is an integrated threefold ministry:

1. Developing the Mind of Christ through Biblical Literacy – developing the hermeneutic practice of understanding the Scriptures through Bible Survey, and to communicate God’s Truth effectively to others through life application.
2. Developing the Heart of Christ through Spiritual Formation – growing in love and intimacy with God and His people, and being a living example of the fragrance of Christ to our world.
3. Developing the Mission of Christ through personal leadership cultivation and missional directives – discovering God’s calling, our individual ministry passion and pursuing our own ministry giftedness.

The resources found throughout this web site are intended to make available seminary level study
content to promote both individual and group spiritual development in a non-academic environment. The resources represent much of the fruit of personal seminary experience. It is our hope and expectation that these resources would be engaged within a student [disciple] and teacher [discipler] relationship through which those who study these contents will experience a more expansive view of God, and a develop closer & more disciplined relationship with God.

These resources are in the ongoing process of development... as you investigate the drop-down tabs, those with content uploaded will have darkened font and will open as a pdf file. Those with a light-grey font are still in development and will not open. Please check back as we are regularly adding new content, but expect this process to continue for quite some while. Thanks for exploring our site, we pray God’s blessing on you as you pursue Him.

**DISCIPLESHIP DEFINITION:**

Christian Discipleship – is a quest fueled by a hunger to know God more intimately, a desire for Spiritual Holiness, and a thirst for Spiritual Water. Discipleship is an individual being progressively transformed into the character and likeness of Jesus. Discipleship transformation is a process that involves both mind and heart, and the out working of our faith in engaging the mission Jesus commissioned to the Church... it is the inworking and outworking of the Great Commandment and the Great Commission culminating in spiritual vitality [Philippians 2:12-13].

1. Discipleship results in a profound love for God, and for humanity – this is the Great Commandment ... to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and to Love your neighbor as yourself.” – Luke 10:27.

2. Discipleship results in identifying with Jesus as Savior and Lord and pursuing His Mission for the reclamation of humanity – this is the Great Commission... Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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 I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” – Matthew 28:18-20.

3. Discipleship begins with the desire to know God more intimately and to intentionally please God; and results with the deliberate submersion of the self in Christ, and living evidence of spiritual fruit [Gal 5:19-23].

Disciples are Spirit dependent, intentionally growing, consciously reproducing, and fully committed followers of Jesus Christ who live life in fellowship and community where faith, hope, and love are defined and experienced. Discipleship contains components of vertical relational interaction – between the disciple and God, and horizontal relational interaction – between disciples within community.
Discipleship is the deliberate and purposeful discipline of the mind with the engagement and liberation of the heart... all in cooperation with the Spirit, where spiritual formation and personal transformation occurs. It is a process where Jesus is being formed in me and my life demonstrates His presence and priorities. It is not mere knowledge or wisdom... it is a lifestyle based on a disciplined mind equipped with Biblical Truth, coupled with a tender heart that loves God & longs to be with Him, and willingly does what pleases Him.

DISCIPLESHIP PARADIGM:
Isaiah 61:1-4 provides a picture of Messianic Discipleship that Jesus inaugurated and that His followers continue until He comes again. Listen to the Heart of God in this amplified text:

Isa 61:1
THE SPIRIT of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed [called & qualified] me to preach good news [the Gospel of good tidings] to the poor [oppressed & afflicted]. He has sent me to bind up [heal] the brokenhearted [alienated & alone], to proclaim liberty to the [physical & spiritual oppressed] captives and the opening of the prison and of the eyes to those who are bound [victimized, shamed, & guilt burdened]. (Romans 10:15)

Isa 61:2
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord [the year of Jubilee [freedom & restoration] and the day of vengeance [justice] of our God, to comfort all who mourn [the bereft & feeble]. (Matt. 11:2-6; Luke 4:18, 19; 7:22)

Isa 61:3
To proclaim freedom [consolation and joy] to those who mourn — to give them a crown of beauty [honor & distinction] instead of ashes [humiliation & dismay], the oil of joy instead of mourning, the garment of praise [festive apparel] instead of despair [a heavy, burdened, & failing spirit]—that they may be called Oaks of Righteousness [enduring, strong, and magnificent, distinguished by their uprightness & justice before humanity, and their right standing with God], the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified through them... [a demonstration of God’s Presence].

Isa 61:4
And they shall rebuild the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former desolations and renew the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations [a picture of healing and the reversal from desolation & destruction to transformation & continual renewal].

Isaiah wrote of what Jesus’ Mission would be, and Jesus inaugurated His ministry with the announcement that “this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” – Luke 4:18-21. This is the Heart of Christian Discipleship... the advancement of which Christian Leadership is all about. As a Ministry, Authentic Discipleship is all about continuing in Jesus’ name what He began with joyful praise that as we forward the calling of the Great Commandment and the Great Commission, knowing that God Himself fulfills the advancement of the Kingdom of God – Ephesians 1:3-23.

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH: It is our desire to focus on the main elements of Christian faith held through the ages, and allow for and even enjoy the minor differences in form and practice of the extended Body of Christ.
God has called upon His Church to be united in love...

• “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” – John 13:34-35
• “For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same
function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly – Romans 12:4-6.

- Though we have many traditions, we remain “one body”... indwelled by “one Spirit”... with “one hope”... and “one Lord”... in “one faith”... with “one baptism”... Serving “one God and Father” – Ephesians 4:4-6. [See the Theology Introduction – http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/1-biblical-literacy/Introduction%20to%20Theology.pdf – under the “Biblical Literacy-Theology” tab for a more comprehensive information of this important topic.]

- This diagram of a tree is an appropriate picture of the Church in all its expressions and complexity... many traditions, but One God, One Lord, One Spirit, and One Mission.