

A Model for Developing a God-Centered Ministry

Dr. David M. Doran

Senior Pastor, Inter-City Baptist Church
President, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary

Introduction:

1. The ultimate model of God-centered ministry was the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Being a God-centered church means, then, that God's glory is the motivation and measurement of our ministry.
3. The way we state it here at Inter-City Baptist Church is ICBC exists to honor God by making and maturing disciples who are becoming like Jesus Christ.
4. There are three components to this statement:
 - a. Purpose: our ultimate goal for ministry
 - b. Process: how we seek to reach that goal
 - c. Product: what goal accomplishment looks like

I. A God-Centered Purpose, "to honor God"

- A. Statement of the Principle, 2 Cor 4:15
- B. Explanation of the Principle: Immediate and Ultimate Goals
- C. Clarification Regarding the Principle

The truth in this text also helps us provide the right kind of balance to our mindset regarding ministry and missions. We have no excuse to use a God-centered purpose to develop a ministry strategy that is out of balance with biblical truth. Two balancing implications may be drawn from these words:

1. This does not mean that no other goals exist.
2. This does not mean that all other goals are unimportant.

II. A God-Centered Process, “by making and maturing disciples”

A. The Commission to Discipleship, Matt 28:18-20

1. The command, “make disciples” (cf. Eph 4:17-24)
 - Calling people to become followers of Jesus Christ through faith in His person and work that results in conversion and is evidenced by changed lives.
2. The circumstances, “Go therefore”
3. The characteristics, “baptizing them...teaching them” (cf. Acts 2:41-47)

B. The Commitments of Discipleship

1. An Upward Dimension: Worship
 - Gathering with God’s people in God’s presence in order to exalt Him through prayer, praise, the presentation of ourselves and our gifts, participation in the ordinances, and the proclamation of His Word.
2. An Inward Dimension: Fellowship and Edification
 - Building spiritual relationships that display Christ’s love and help us grow toward godliness.
3. An Outward Dimension: Evangelism
 - Boldly proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ while living like we truly believe it.

III. A God-Centered Product

A. New Creations

1. The Pattern for the New Life, Ephesians 4:22-24
 - a. Removal, v. 22
 - b. Renewal, v. 23
 - c. Replacement, v. 24

2. The Practices of the New Life

- a. A Credible Testimony of Faith in Jesus Christ, Eph 1:13, 15
- b. Baptized and Added to the Church, Eph 4:4-5, cf. Acts 2:41
- c. Committed to and Practicing the Basic Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life, Eph 6:17-18; 5:19-20
 - Word, cf. 1 Peter 2:1-2
 - Prayer, cf. Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17
 - Worship, cf. Hebrews 10:25; John 4:23-24
- d. Using Spiritual Gifts for Ministry within the Local Church, 4:16
- e. Committed to and Participating in the Spread of the Gospel, 6:15, cf. vv. 19-20

B. New Community (marked by unity and purity)

1. Unity, Ephesians 2:13 ff; 4:2-6
 - a. Its Basis, 2:13-18
 - b. Its Nature, 4:2-6, 13
 - 1) Spiritual, “unity of the Spirit”
 - 2) Relational, “for one another”
 - 3) Doctrinal, “one faith...unity of the faith”
2. Purity, Ephesians 5:25-27
 - a. Aspects
 - 1) Purity of Life, 4:25-5:13
 - 2) Purity of Doctrine, 4:4-6, 13-14
 - b. Applications
 - 1) Discipline, 5:3-6
 - 2) Separation, 5:7, 11-13

C. New Congregations

The Great Commission calls for discipleship that leads to local assemblies which will reproduce themselves.

1. The Content of the Great Commission, Matt 28:19-20
2. The Backdrop of the Great Commission, Matt 16:18
3. The Implementation of the Great Commission, Acts 11:19-26; 14:21-23
4. The Description of the Great Commission, 1 Cor 3:5-10
5. The Fulfillment of the Great Commission, Rom 15:19-23

Conclusion and Summary:

1. A Doxological Focus
 - a. Ultimate Goal: God's glory
 - b. All other goals serve this!
2. A Discipleship Mandate
 - a. Committed to Worship, Edification, Fellowship, and Evangelism as the means by which disciples are made and matured.
 - b. Committed to biblical church discipline and separation as the means by which the health of the saints and church is preserved.
3. A Deliberate Result
 - a. New Creatures
 - b. New Community
 - c. New Congregations