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## HELPING CHURCH LEADERS TRANSITION FROM THE PRESENT TO THE FUTURE

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### MAKING DISCIPLES WHO MAKE DISCIPLES

Bill Easum, author/consultant/president of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Strategies ([www.easum.com](http://www.easum.com)), spoke at the recent Leadership Network *Gathering of Champions*, about churches that make disciples who make disciples. The following are excerpts of his remarks.

If you have any eyes to see and ears to hear these days, you know that there is something going on around the world. If you see a thriving church, you see a church that is making disciples rather than doing programs or making decisions.

I see four major shifts occurring that are affecting the making of disciples. The main shift is from mechanical, where machines and gears and all the people who love boxes and lines ran our world, to a world much like a garden that blossoms. I see a movement away from growing churches to growing people. Instead of managing, you nurture. Instead of fixing things like a mechanic, you work like a gardener. The second shift is from volunteers to servants. All the volunteer management systems of the past are failing. We're moving away from programmatic understanding of ministry to gift-based ministry.

The third shift is from volunteer coordinator to some form of facilitator of lay mobilizers. Not just bringing stuff together and managing it, but actually helping individual people and teams blossom. It's a movement from managing programs to aligning oneself and organization around its DNA. It's from church focus to person focus. The fourth shift is from command and control to permission giving, from centralized to cellular, from top-down to bottom-up, from control to uncontrolled. This is the hardest thing for pastors to get their head around. If you're in control of your church, you're going to kill it over the next 25 years. It's that simple. If you try to manage it, it's over. Those days are gone.

How do these shifts work? First, they are causing the effective, healthy, thriving Church to discover its DNA. The DNA is the mission, vision, values and beliefs of a church. When you put all of those together - the mission telling us why the church exists, the vision telling us how that church is going to go about achieving the mission, the values giving us the boundaries in which people are free to live out their spiritual gift without asking for permission, and then the belief system - you have a church that doesn't have to have meetings to vote on things, to make decisions. It can spend all of its time churning out rosebuds that begin to blossom and create others who blossom. Second, a church develops a process that takes this DNA and embeds it in every leader and every level of the organization. You can't be a leader without exhibiting this DNA. You can't be a leader without embedding this DNA in someone else.

Third, a church focuses ministry on two things: gift-based individuals and teams, and a permission-giving atmosphere. You need both in the world we're going to. There are many things that teams will not do well. There are many things individuals will not do well. We need them both. And we need both of them to be free about the gift God has given them without having to go to a Church board, elders or an agency and say, "Can I live out the gift that God has already given me in this Body of Christ?" The Church, if it is led by the Holy Spirit, cannot be controlled. It must be allowed to be free.

To do these three shifts and embed the DNA in every leader in every cell requires leaders who are going to be clear about their own DNA and the DNA of the church. If your church does not live to make disciples, it is not a church. That's a pretty Biblical stance. Our role is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who make disciples of Jesus Christ.

**Audiotapes of the *Gathering of Church Champions* are available by calling Nationwide Recording Service at (972) 484-8273. A full report on *The Gathering* will be posted on our website, [www.churchchamp.org](http://www.churchchamp.org), by March 1.**

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