

The Real Measure of Making Disciples

Looking back, 2016 was truly a landmark year. From Olympics to Elections to Chewbacca Mom, the year contained moments worth sharing and remembering. The year contained new beginnings, new opportunities and the potential for new ministry impact.

Maybe 2016 was also supposed to be the year that you *finally* implemented a discipleship strategy, but there never seemed to be enough time, the right team or an applicable model. In this, the last issue of SUMS Remix for 2016, the Auxano team wants to help you jumpstart the implementation of an intentional discipleship strategy for 2017. We are proud to feature disciple-making strategy solutions from three foundational books of the Auxano Vision Framing process.

There is no time like right now to develop a discipleship strategy that engages hearts and inspires growing faith every day. Do not let 2017 slip away. Start building the disciples of tomorrow, today.

Develop the Measures of a growing disciple

THE QUICK SUMMARY - [Church Unique](#), by Will Mancini

Church Unique, written by Will Mancini, outlines a new kind of visioning process to help churches develop a stunningly unique model of ministry that leads to redemptive movement. The process guides churches away from an internal focus to emphasize participation in their community and surrounding culture.

In *Church Unique*, Mancini explains that each church has a culture that reflects its particular values, thought, attitudes, and actions. It also shows how church leaders can unlock their church's individual DNA and unleash their congregation's one-of-a-kind potential.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

Imagine that you are sitting in front of five or six people at your church. They may be elders, council members, volunteer leaders, or members of your small group. For the sake of our illustration, imagine that these people are paid staff at the church.

Then you ask them the simple question, "What ministry bull's-eye are you all aiming at together?"

Would you see blank stares in response to this question? Or if the staff does attempt an answer, the bull's-eye descriptions are never the same. In other words, it is almost impossible to walk into a church where the top leaders have a shared articulation of what results they are looking for.

The question becomes, "How do you know when all of these components are working as they

should? In other words, when do you hit the bull's-eye?" The answer is found in defining Measures as Missional Life Marks.

Auxano defines Measures as a set of attributes in an individual's life that define or reflect the accomplishment of the church's mission. The Measures are the church's portrait of a disciple and definition of spiritual maturity. Measures supply the standard by which the mission can be measured with respect to an individual's development through the ministry of the church.

The old maxim goes, "Your mission is what you measure." Every church feels the gravitation pull to measure only the ABC's (attendance, buildings, and cash). The problem is that you can be very successful with the ABC's but be a circus. So what measures are appropriate for kingdom-minded leaders in the missional church? By defining your measures, you can focus your church on the Spirit's work of soul formation, and Jesus' agenda for multiplication.

Although Measures can be a straightforward and simple definition for pastors, it's strangely missing in our churches. On a typical leadership team, most people could scratch out a basic definition of a disciple within five minutes. Yet years and years go by without ministry staff ever having a shared definition to work from.

Will Mancini, [Church Unique](#)

A NEXT STEP

Use the following exercises to determine the top-level outline of your Measures.

Teams should create four to six categories as the outline of their *Measures*. More than six will be difficult for people to remember. To stimulate creative juices, here is a sample of ideas and exercises to get you started:

Mission man: Have small groups of leaders draw a stick figure on a large white pad. Using parts of the body as a creative spark, develop a list of the attributes of a disciple that corresponds to the body part.

Red-letter maturity: Have groups scan the red letters of the gospel—the words that Jesus spoke directly. Organize them into no more than six categories that describe a mature follower of Christ.

Missional interviews: Bring in three to five people who represent the most missionally minded people in your church. Talk to them about their story and life practices of following Christ. Ask them to list the six most important characteristics of their walk with Jesus. See how their individual lists compare and from them develop your own.

Obviously, these exercises are meant to stimulate the expression of biblical foundations already present on the leadership team. For a more thorough treatment, find books and Bible studies to

work through together. Of course you can always study the Measures of other churches like those found in *Church Unique*. But don't get too preoccupied with the expressions of others. Do the hard work of your own process! At this stage of the process your focus should be on content—what are the most important four to six ideas you want to use to describe the missional life.

Excerpt taken from SUMS Remix 56-1, issued December 2016

*This is part of a weekly series posting content from one of the most innovative content sources in the church world: **SUMS Remix** Book Summaries for church leaders. SUMS Remix takes a practical problem in the church and looks at it with three solutions; and each solution is taken from a different book. As a church leader you get to scan relevant books based on practical tools and solutions to real ministry problems, not just by the cover of the book. Each post will have the edition number which shows the year and what number it is in the overall sequence. (SUMS provides 26 issues per year, delivered every other week to your inbox).*

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