

# Global disciple-making depends on a missional church culture

November 22, 2019

WACO—“What would it look like to create a culture for global disciple-making?” Phillip Nation asked a gathering of Texas Baptists.

Nation, director of advancement and global impact churches at the [Baptist World Alliance](#), led a workshop held in conjunction with Texas Baptists’ annual meeting in Waco.

Nation is no stranger to global disciple-making. BWA has member bodies in 125 countries and territories and represents about 45 million Baptists around the globe.

He explained the first thing congregations can do is shift their perspective of what a church looks like. So many churches in America are focused around religious experiences instead of relationships, Nation said.

“The problem is that we have turned much of the church into a place of religious goods and services. It’s transactional,” Nation said. “We say, ‘If you bring us all your hurts and harms, we will give you good feelings and fix you.’”

## Face cultural realities

In order to change this way of thinking, churches must face modern culture’s reality, he explained. Although Christians are not of this world, they do need to trespass into it to understand what broken people believe and value, he asserted.

Culture has deified dissatisfaction and selfishness, he said. So, when people

walk into a Sunday school class or church service and are told they need to 'die to self,' they do not know how to react, he noted.

Counteracting this dissatisfaction culture leads to the creation of a strong, disciple-making church, Nation asserted. He offered several suggestions on how to create this new church culture.

First, churches must prioritize the gospel. Nation recommended that church leaders come together to establish a shared definition of what sharing the gospel looks like within the church, as well as a definition of discipleship.

"When you stand up in front of your congregation, everyone has the picture of a perfect church in their brain, and no one's picture matches. Have a leadership process put in place where you say, as a church family, 'We're going to define what discipleship means when we say it.' That way, as a leader, you can prioritize Jesus in the middle of all of this," Nation explained.

A clear definition of discipleship eliminates confusion and allows leaders and congregants to focus on Jesus, he said.

## **Model generosity**

Next, Nation encouraged church leaders to teach and model generous living.

"We need to be people who are the goers and the givers so that we can model that for the life of the church," he said.

He suggested that church leaders consider changing their churches' ministry formation. Many ministries are formed around catering to the needs of the church members rather than equipping them for ministry to others.

“We do ministry because we are the church, and we do ministry in the community where our church is located, not just within the church,” he said.

Once the church has ministries that equip their members to serve and has a culture that is united in discipleship, it is important to foster a global mindset within the church, he noted. Keep the church informed on what is happening around the world and be in prayer for Christians around the world, he urged.

## **Be globally informed**

Nation reminded workshop participants about some of the crises other countries are experiencing and the need for the gospel to reach all people. He described members of a small church in Myanmar who drove up a mountain once a week to share the gospel with the 120 villagers that lived there.

“For us to become globally informed, we need to recognize that there are brothers and sisters doing incredible missions in these areas that we can pray for and support,” Nation said. “I want to encourage you as a leader in the church to become an expert on spirituality and the church through a global perspective.”

Nation explained that churches need strong leaders training other leaders to keep the church engaged in global missions.

“Churches are pretending not to know that the rest of the world exists. They know it does, but they just turn a blind eye. And you’re not going to turn people to missions both locally and globally if you’re just browbeating them with the Great Commission,” he said.

“What will encourage them into it is training them as a leader, teaching

them that they can be missionaries for Christianity.”

Nation also encouraged participants to remember that they can learn a lot from Christians from around the world. Creating a culture for global disciple-making means not just discipling international people, but also being willing to be disciplined by them, he noted.