Review of Organic Disciples: Seven Ways to Grow Spiritually and Naturally Share Jesus by Kevin and Sherry Harney

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Book Review

Organic Disciples: Seven Ways to Grow Spiritually and Naturally Share Jesus

By Kevin and Sherry Harney
Zondervan, 2021
288 pages
US$19.99

Reviewed by Jesse Ruby (DMin candidate, Liberty University), lead pastor of the South Austin Church of the Nazarene, a multilingual church doing church as one church in three languages.

The church's future is discipleship, as it moves us out to the lost. Unfortunately, it seems that the longer people are in the church, the less they connect with the lost. The world needs disciples who love God and people, and who will share their faith regularly. In Organic Disciples: Seven Ways to Grow Spiritually and Naturally Share Jesus, the authors share how to make this sort of discipleship happen. Offering hope and inspiration, the Harneys share, “The future of the church requires leaders who recognize that true discipleship moves people out with the gospel” (20). Written for the layperson and pastor, the Harneys inspire readers to become growing, evangelistic disciples. As they read this book, church leaders will find themselves praying, "Lord, make this true in my church and me."

“This is the central purpose of this book! Good discipleship leads to a lifestyle of evangelistic outreach” (256). Imagine your life and church marked by that statement. In the first three chapters, the Harneys discuss what a growing disciple is. They provide a practical measure of spiritual
growth by noting seven growth markers of thriving disciples. The seven markers are Bible Engagement, Passionate Prayer, Wholehearted Worship, Humble Service, Joyful Generosity, Consistent Community, and Organic Outreach. Most of the book is a discussion of these seven markers. In seven sections, the authors share how Jesus embodied these marks of discipleship, and they explain how each marker connects to evangelism.

In the Bible Engagement section, the Harneys show how Jesus embodied engagement with the Word by consistently quoting Scripture. Jesus lived what the Scriptures teach. The disciple who follows Jesus engages the Word by loving it, knowing it, and following it. The Harneys make it clear that loving and knowing the Bible moves us to the lost.

Jesus embodied passionate prayer. A growing disciple who follows Jesus will have a passionate prayer life. The Harneys note that unbelievers will welcome prayer. They share practical tips for praying with unbelievers in Chapter 9. One practical idea is the “1-1-1 prayer.” “Each day at 1:00 p.m. you pray for one minute for one person who is not yet a Christ follower” (98).

Jesus worshipped, Jesus accepted worship, and Jesus invited others to worship. Jesus’ followers are people who worship wholeheartedly. Wholehearted worship focuses on God and is embodied in a life of surrender. The authors express how a life lived for the glory of God is a life lived to lead others to Jesus.

Jesus served humbly. A Jesus follower is a servant. Humble service draws attention to Jesus. But serving is not enough; there is a need to connect the message to service. They write, “Humble service is not the end of evangelism, it is the door that opens the way to speak words of life, tell Jesus' story, and share the good news of the hope that is found in him alone” (160).

Jesus lived a life of joyful generosity (John 3:16, Heb 12:2). True Jesus followers live lives of joyful generosity. They connect joyful generosity to evangelism through stewardship and investing in eternity. They show how stewardship is counter-cultural. Every church needs disciples who live as joyfully generous people.

The Triune God is the embodiment of a consistent community. Jesus lived continually in community, inviting others to follow Him. The true follower of Jesus will live in consistent community (Heb 10:25). The authors share this hope of consistent community. “Imagine what could happen if every follower of Jesus modeled loving community and embraced people who have not yet met Jesus as Savior” (229).

In the section on Organic Outreach, the Harneys describe how God always moves first. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He commanded...
His disciples to go. Evangelism is the natural response of the disciple. What would happen if every disciple naturally and faithfully shared Jesus? The goal of a disciple is to make more disciples. The authors give practical ideas to make this happen in this section. This section of the book is worth the price of the book itself.

Writing with hope, inspiration, and engaging questions that pique the imagination, the Harneys invite us all to the abundant life of discipleship. Every pastor and layperson interested in becoming all that God desires should read this book. Every church should prayerfully consider using this book in a study group, to inspire and grow disciple-making disciples. Imagine yourself inspired and moving with the Spirit to see others consistently being won to the Lord. Imagine new disciples joining you regularly in following Jesus. That is the goal of this book. Imagine your church excited in worship, passionate in prayer, joyful in generosity, and faithfully sharing Jesus with others. What would your community look like if that were the case? Want to find out? Get this book, study it, share it, and live it.