

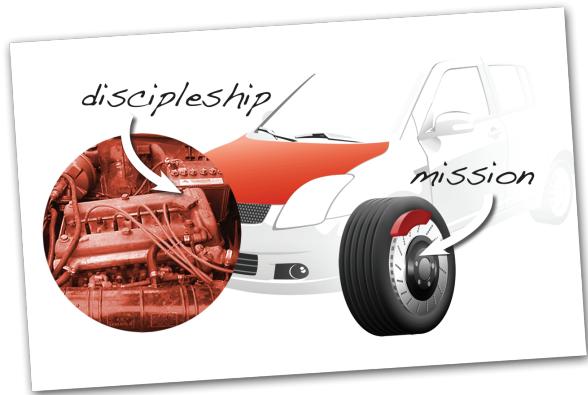
2014 Ministry Theme

As a local church, Cornerstone exists for the sake of God's world-restoring mission. Together, we are called to live in line with our mission-shaped identity. This is only possible as we follow Jesus closely, walking in his Way. This has been our focus throughout 2013.

Building on this, our 2014 Ministry Theme will be **DiscipleShift: Finding New Traction in Following Jesus.**

Think of the church as a car. Its purpose is to "go" into the world on mission for God. Discipleship is the engine that makes the car go. Apart from discipleship, we won't get anywhere in mission. This is why Jesus' Great Commission to make disciples must always be the primary focus of our church:

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age
(Jesus, Matthew 28: 19-20).



What is a Disciple?

A disciple is a follower, student, or apprentice of Jesus – someone who learns how to do what Jesus said and did by living in constant companionship with him. As disciples follow Jesus each day, they become more and more like him (Matthew 10:25; Luke 6:40), finding his power to fulfill their respective callings to be agents of God's mission in the world.

For Super Christians Only?

Many believers today are under the mistaken impression that discipleship is for "super Christians" only. They suppose that discipleship is optional – that one does not need to become a disciple in order to become a Christian, and that one can remain a Christian without showing any signs of progress in following Jesus. And yet the word "disciple" occurs 269 times in the New Testament, whereas the word "Christian" is found only three times – precisely to refer to those who are disciples of Jesus (Acts 11:26). Make no mistake: Discipleship to Jesus is not optional; it's the very heart of what it means to be a Christian! And it's about far more than how many times certain words appear in the pages of scripture. More than anything else, when we arrange our lives around following Jesus, learning how to put what he taught and modelled into practice, the world will be drawn to Jesus through the loving character and quality he makes possible our lives (as one can see from a quick glance at the book of Acts). Again, discipleship is the engine that drives mission.

**Make no mistake:
Discipleship to
Jesus is not
optional; it's the
very heart of what
it means to be a
Christian!**

2014 Ministry Objectives

We agree with church planter and author Mike Breen, who says, "Any discussion about mission must begin with discipleship." To prepare for the many mission opportunities that Cornerstone Centre will afford us, our number one priority in 2014 and beyond will be on making disciples of Jesus. To this end, we have targeted two key ministry objectives for the year to come:

INTRODUCING A STRATEGY FOR MAKING DISCIPLES: Throughout 2013, we have been working diligently on a new **Discipleship Model** designed to integrate our whole approach to ministry, staffing, and church governance in the Cornerstone Centre era. The model consists of five integral components of discipleship, and will be connected with a specific strategy that will help everyone – from newcomers to long-time members – get a clear sense of the next steps they need to take in their development as disciples of Jesus. The Discipleship Model will be revealed at the beginning of the New Year, and its five components will frame our **sermon series** throughout 2014, along with several related **ministry initiatives and opportunities** designed to help you take next steps in your development as a disciple of Jesus – all for the sake of God's world-restoring mission.

NAMING AND ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO DISCIPLESHIP: If discipleship is to remain the church's priority, then for the sake of God's mission it will be crucial for us to be very honest and realistic about the many barriers that Christians often face when it comes to being and making disciples for Jesus today. Some of these barriers are *theological* – rooted in basic misunderstandings of what discipleship means and what being a Christian is all about. Other barriers are *cultural* – having to do with societal trends that subtly but deeply influence us in ways that are contrary to the lordship of Jesus. Still other barriers to discipleship are *emotional* – unless we experience Jesus' healing in those areas, we will find it hard to get traction in following him. We will name and address such barriers through our sermon series, as well as through various ministry initiatives and opportunities that will be offered during the course of the year.