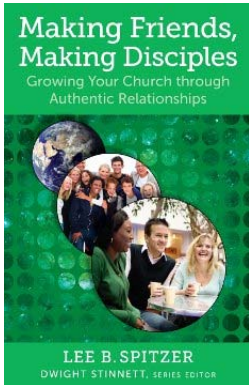


## Friendship as a Transformative Paradigm for Church Growth



Valley Forge, PA – For centuries the Christian church has led the way in creating communities of people. In his new book *Making Friends: Making Disciples: Growing Your Church through Authentic Relationships*, Rev. Dr. Lee Spitzer celebrates that leadership role and proposes friendship as a transformative paradigm for church growth, not only in terms of the number of people who join but in regard to the maturity of disciples who participate in the life of the Body of Christ.

Spitzer establishes a foundation for his friendship-based theory by exploring the challenge of loneliness and its implications for the church. He examines how Jesus understood and practiced the art of friendship, and from there develops a theology of friendship based on the totality of biblical teaching. By defining friendship within the context of the church's life and mission, Spitzer considers how we move beyond friendliness to deep friendship as the people of God. And finally, this practical resource introduces the Friendship Circles model and explores how we may practice friendship as a personal and corporate spiritual discipline. *Making Friends, Making Disciples* concludes with nine key friendship circles exercises for personal and church group use.

*Making Friends, Making Disciples* is the first title in Judson Press's new "Living Church" series, edited by Rev. Dr. J. Dwight Stinnett. Each of the books in the "Living Church" series will consider the needs of today's churches and offer constructive critiques and creative strategies for addressing the issues.

**About the Author:** Lee B. Spitzer, MDiv, DMin, is Executive Minister of American Baptist Churches of New Jersey, a multicultural, multiracial, and theologically diverse fellowship with more than 70,000 members. He is the author of several books, including *Endless Possibilities: Exploring the Journeys of Your Life*, *A Summer's Journey: The Journal of a Pastor's Sabbatical in Israel*, and *Jesus Christ from Cover to Cover: Tracing the Messianic Journey from Genesis to Revelation*.

**About Judson Press:** Founded in 1824, Judson Press – a publishing ministry of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies – produces Christ-centered leadership resources for the transformation of persons, congregations, communities and cultures.

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<b>Format:</b> Trade Paper	<b>Size:</b> 5.5" x 8.5"	<b>Pub Date:</b> September 2010
<b>ISBN:</b> 978-0-8170-1645-6	<b>Pages:</b> 160	<b>Distribution:</b> Spring Arbor/Ingram Book Co.
<b>Category:</b> Church Resources	<b>Price:</b> \$16.00	Anchor Distributors, STL Distribution, Baker & Taylor

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