



Wholistic Disciple Making

Multiplying Churches and Transforming Communities

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Over 85% of frontier people groups live in South and Central Asia. Not only are there fewer than 1% believers in most of these areas but we also see significant poverty. Key poverty indicators include malnutrition, child mortality, years of schooling, school attendance, cooking, fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing, and assets. When people suffer, they often feel helpless and lack hope. In addition, oppressive governments, war, persecution, and disasters, such as floods and earthquakes, may lead to people migrating to different locations and becoming refugees or internally displaced peoples (IDPs).

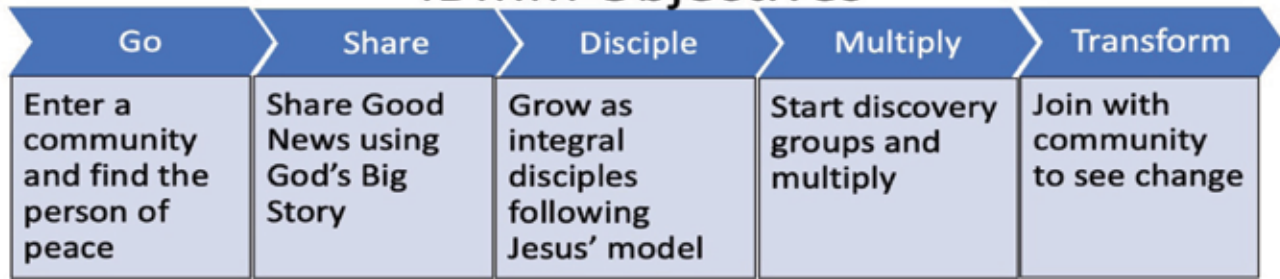
In the Gospels, we see the heart of Jesus for the needs around him: “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he

said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest’ (Matt 9:36–38).

As disciple makers, we cannot ignore the physical, emotional, and social needs of those we want to reach. As disciples obey God’s commands, they will see a restored relationship with God, improved physical health, stronger relationships with others, and emotional healing. This is Integral Discipleship. “Integral” here means wholistic.

In recent years, a ministry called Integral Disciple Making Movement (IDMM) was launched and is growing on multiple continents. IDMM brings the best of Community Health Evangelism (CHE) and disciple making movements (DMM) together into

IDMM Objectives



a now-proven church planting and community transformation strategy. Combining CHE and DMM effectively communicates the message of God's transformative love in a culturally relevant way. R.W. Lewis explains the opportunity, "It is not enough merely to identify people groups who don't yet understand God's love. We need to help their communities see Jesus as a messenger of peace with God—not a threat to their families—a healer of diseases and relationships, a deliverer from evil."¹

One of the biggest challenges in frontier missions is to share the good news of Jesus Christ intentionally in a way that effectively resonates with hearers. Jesus sent his disciples to minister not only spiritually but also physically and emotionally. As we pray earnestly, God works in the spiritual and physical realms, giving us his authority just as he gave it to his disciples when he sent them out.

When we enter a community, we talk with people about their history, problems, and strengths. They may be successful farmers. They may have enmity with neighboring groups. Their worldview might not allow them to seek medical care for women or send their girls to school. We pray for "persons of peace," influential men and women who want change in their community. Working with the person of peace and other community members, the IDMM team seeks to bless families in practical ways. Women learn how to sew together. Men learn about new agricultural methods. Bored youth gather to play sports. Affinity groups meet to build friendships around common interests. We see God's heart for families and communities in his command to Abraham: "I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors

you I will curse, and in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:3).

We desire to see families following Jesus, staying in the community as salt and light to their neighbors. God's blessing on families will extend to their health, vocations, and engagement as leaders in their communities.

There are five key objectives for IDMM:

- 1) **GO**—Disciples are challenged to go into communities, praying for people and finding the person of peace. They pray, as Jesus prayed, that key felt needs (what a person perceives is necessary or important) are met.

BLESS (an acronym) helps us to remember these needs.

B—Belonging Needs—We all desire to see restored relationships with family, friends, and other community members.

L—Livelihood Needs—Every person needs shelter, food, physical health, and finances for the needs of the family.

E—Emotional Needs—Everyone needs peace in their relationships and emotional health within themselves.

S—Safety Needs—All communities periodically face natural and social crises, whether economic, political, or religious. Vulnerable members experience stress, suffering, and even death.

S—Spiritual Needs—Every person is separated from God because of sin and needs to find the way, the truth, and the life that is in Jesus.

¹ Lewis, RW, "Family-Blessing Advocates: Blessing Families by Filling the Gaps," in *Mission Frontiers* 44, no. 6 (2022): 24.



- 2) **SHARE**—Ministry workers and volunteers are equipped to share God’s big story from creation to consummation with the person of peace.

They share four fundamental relationships in life (i.e., with God, others, themselves, and their environment). In the beginning, all was in harmony (shalom), but sin brought brokenness into all four relationships. As the person of peace expresses a desire to see restoration in all these areas, they are invited to study the Word of God in a discovery group with others from their family or community.²



Sarah grew up in a Muslim home. A friend invited her to a sewing club, where she enjoyed learning

² Anderson, Cynthia and Martine Fritsch. 2022, “4 Principles of Integral Mission and DMMs.” www.dmmsfrontiermissions.com/4-principles-of-integral-mission-and-dmms/

new skills. The club also served as a discovery group. She especially loved the stories from the Injeel (New Testament). She and her friends created dramas from the stories. Sarah’s friend, Esther, had a peace and joy that Sarah did not have. One day, Esther shared God’s big story with Sarah. Sarah was touched to hear about a loving God who wanted good, not evil, for her life. She heard that Jesus was sent to live and die for her sins and brokenness. Sarah believed in Jesus and was encouraged to start her own group.

- 3) **DISCIPLE**—New believers are encouraged to grow as integral (whole) disciples, restoring health in all areas of their lives.

Jesus poured into his disciples, teaching them about prayer, servant leadership, family, and work relationships. What they learned, they modeled and taught others. We see examples in God’s Word of disciples with different vocations. In Acts, churches started in homes and in communities with no known believers.

We continue to learn from these models today. In a discovery group, each person grows in their faith in God. Sharing their journey of obedience with others is very important for discipleship. They also grow in healthy physical and social behavior, building skills that will help them earn a living. The leader asks three simple questions as they learn from Scripture together:

- 1) What do I learn about God?
 - 2) What do I learn about myself and people in the story?
 - 3) What will I do?
- 4) **MULTIPLY**—Disciples are encouraged to start new groups following the model they experience. The local hub leader equips the discovery group leaders with suggested Scriptures to study and relevant health or social lessons based on felt needs.
- 5) **TRANSFORM**—Discovery groups and churches become agents of transformation in their community.

As discovery groups lovingly reach out to neighbors and take ownership of community problems, transformation begins to happen in the community. Families send their boys and girls to school, where they learn new livelihood skills. Health issues are prevented before they spread through the community. Simple picture books and dramas are powerful ways to share how to prevent diseases.

Brother David was trained in IDMM in India and prayed earnestly for his village. God led him to Amar, a Sikh, and a discovery group began in Amar's home. Amar's family and friends listened to God's Word and discussed what they learned about God and themselves. They blessed their neighbors with acts

of love. Amar and others took steps of faith to follow Jesus in obedience. Within six months, the village had four discovery groups. During the pandemic, the discovery groups distributed food to families. Believers gathered for worship, fellowship, prayer, and communion. This church continues with over 25 regular attendees.

Integral Disciple Making Movement (IDMM) is biblically based, simple, and sustainable.

The IDMM training is facilitated by trained leaders over three days. As local churches and ministry organizations embrace IDMM to make disciples, plant churches, and foster transformation in unreached areas, we expect to see thriving families, churches, and villages. 