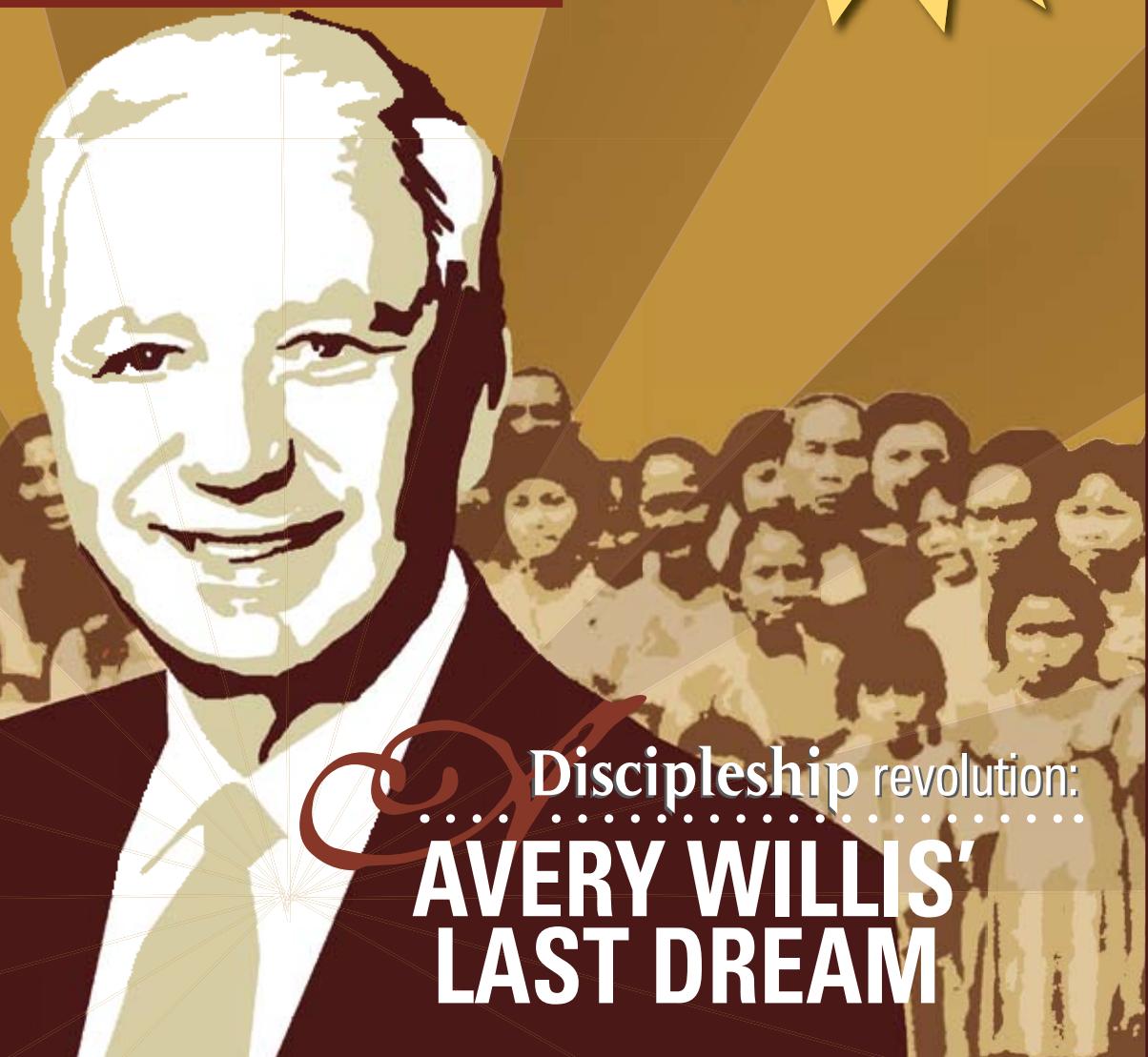




# MISSION FRONTIERS

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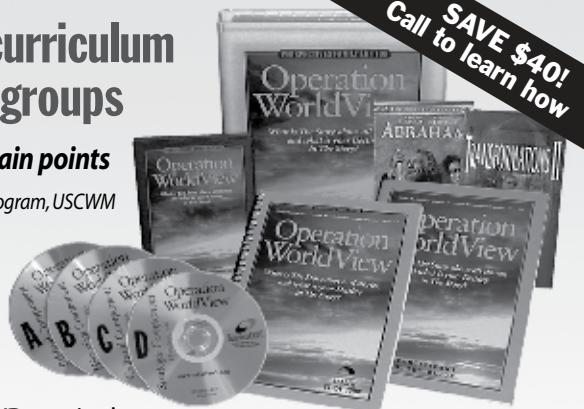


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# Discipleship revolution: **AVERY WILLIS' LAST DREAM**

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# EDITORIAL COMMENT



## A Discipleship Revolution: The Key to Discipling all Peoples

Rick Wood, Editor, *Mission Frontiers*

In the 2000 years since Jesus came to Earth we have made great strides in technology. Our ability to communicate the gospel to huge numbers of people all over the planet has never been greater. We have a greater wealth of resources than ever before for proclaiming the gospel to every person, tribe and tongue. Yet many unreached peoples still await a fair opportunity to know and follow Jesus. At the same time the Church in the West is at best stalled. In Europe the Church is in serious decline. We are forced to ask ourselves, "Have we missed something? What is keeping us from making the progress we would all like to see?"

For 32 years now *Mission Frontiers* has been identifying the systemic problems and obstacles that hinder us from bringing the gospel to every tribe and tongue. We have sought to highlight the mission strategies that can help us overcome the obstacles and bring the love of Christ to every person regardless of their location, language or culture.

In this issue of *MF* we focus on one of the most troubling obstacles to world evangelization facing us today: the failure of the Church (especially in the West) to equip most followers of Jesus to reproduce their faith in the lives of others. The vast majority of Bible-believing followers of Jesus are not regularly sharing their faith nor investing their lives in helping to bring others to maturity in Christ. And those who are concerned about this don't seem to know what to do about it. We are not simply pointing fingers here. Both the guest editor for this issue and I are convicted that we need to figure out how to be more successful in this area ourselves. Tom Nelson of Denton Bible Church in Texas wrote (see p. 21 of this issue),

If we as a church succeed in every area, but fail to make disciples who can spiritually multiply, then

ultimately we have failed. Yet if we fail in every other area, but succeed in spiritual multiplication, then ultimately we have succeeded.

Our churches in the West seem to be succeeding at lesser things while failing at Jesus' core strategy for world evangelization. We are succeeding in collecting tens of billions of dollars each year to gather large crowds into beautiful and expensive church buildings on Sunday. We have succeeded in putting on a great show and developing programs that attract people to our churches. In the process we have put an unbearable burden on our pastors to do nearly all the ministry while failing to activate the laity. As a result many pastors are skating on the edge of burnout, while the majority of church members do not see that God has any other role for them except as spectators.

In short, we are largely failing to develop mature followers of Jesus who are able to make disciples who can make disciples. The people in our churches are not growing to spiritual maturity where they are able to carry on the work of spreading the gospel within our own culture, not to mention cross-culturally to every tribe and tongue. This is having a devastating impact on our ability to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth.

The dirty little secret of missions is that we are sending missionaries all over the world who have not demonstrated the ability to make disciples who can make disciples. Most have not seen or participated in effective models of church-planting or discipleship at home, but we send them out in the hope that going cross-culturally will turn them into effective church planters and disciplers. This is wishful thinking at best, and it has to change.

We must learn from and refine effective biblical models of doing church

and discipleship, both at home and abroad, where the focus is on spiritual reproduction and multiplication of mature disciplers and discipleship teams. The often overlooked secret of Christian maturity is that we learn and grow the most when we are involved in sharing our faith and discipling others. Until believers have demonstrated their ability to produce reproducing disciples, we must provide mentoring and peer coaching aimed at helping them learn to succeed in this fundamental task as we deploy them into ministry here or abroad. Otherwise we are only sending people out to replicate a failed model of doing church. Overcoming this failure of the church to equip believers to make disciples who can make disciples is one of the most critical needs in the church today. What we need is a "Discipleship Revolution" that transforms the way we do church and mission, and vastly multiplies the number of disciplers who can disciple all peoples both near and far. This will require effective disciplers to go cross-culturally to every people to begin a discipleship movement within each people.

In this issue we present some foundational principles and models of discipler multiplication that have shown great promise for equipping people to make disciples who can make disciples. The *Discipleship Revolution* starts on page 6 with the story of Avery Willis and his last dream to change the way we do church. His dream has become reality in the discipleship model of Real Life Ministries. They are effectively transforming thousands of average Americans into *disciples who are making disciples*.

On page 17 of this issue, Jim Downing, a close friend of Navigators founder, Dawson Trotman, explains why he feels Real Life Ministries is the best model of

church-based discipleship he has seen in his 75 years of discipleship ministry: "Real Life Ministries has identified the stages of Christian growth, from *infancy* to *maturity*, and has innovated a plan and resource to meet the need at each stage of growth. They have mastered *spiritual parenting*." See the chart on page 8 describing this process by which disciple-makers move people forward towards spiritual maturity. Real Life Ministries makes the personal fruitfulness of each person a priority, and has trained and equipped a large portion of their members to lead others in learning to be fruitful. With this model, spiritual growth is not a haphazard process but one that is deliberate and focused on maturity and spiritual reproduction. For more information on their monthly training in their model, go to [RealLifeMinistries.com/immersion-one](http://RealLifeMinistries.com/immersion-one).

The good news is that all of us have the potential to become "reproducers." On page 11 we present the incredible discipleship training model called T4T (Training for Trainers), which started just ten years ago from the passionate dream of one church-planting couple to reach a people of 20 million. To date T4T has baptized *1.7 million people*. And this model has proven its reproducibility in a dozen similar movements it has stirred and informed.

The models we present in this issue demonstrate that all of us have the potential to become disciple-makers and to have multiple generations of spiritual descendants. We just need the conviction that this is God's will, and the determination to learn together how to do it.

Simply working harder at the current model of church will not succeed in bringing the gospel to the ends of the earth. God's strategy for fulfilling the Great Commission requires reproducing disciples.

### **Why Not Use the Model Jesus Gave Us?**

Jesus preached to crowds, but didn't leave the fruit to rot. He balanced public ministry with roughly equal attention to the development of 12 individuals, rather than simply attracting larger crowds. During the latter part of his ministry, He withdrew increasingly from public proclamation to change the lives of 12 men. Eleven of them would go on to change the world, even without modern technology. Jesus was intentionally relational in discipling the Twelve. He shared His life with them and used stories and parables to embed the truths of His Kingdom in their hearts. His focus was not on simply communicating a message or filling their heads with knowledge, but on guiding them to maturity as spiritual reproducers. That should be the focus of our churches today as well.

We will never bring the gospel to every tribe and tongue if we continue to rely on professional clergy to do "discipling" as a transfer of knowledge. As followers of Jesus, we must all aim to become disciples who can follow Jesus' example in making disciples. None of us is excused from active duty in the service of our King.

### **A Special Note:**

I want to extend a special word of thanks to our Guest Editor, Robby Butler, for all of his help in putting this issue together. His efforts were invaluable to me as I have prepared for cornea transplant surgery. Your prayers for my recovery would be appreciated. Also please take note of our greatly expanded website with many new features that will allow you to interact with us more effectively. Come join the discussion, at [missionfrontiers.org](http://missionfrontiers.org) 

## **Race for Limited Treasure: A Free Book to A Few Alert MF Readers**

In the last *MF* we arranged bulk discounts on three books for potential Christmas gifts. *MF* has once again worked out special deals for *MF* readers. This time the "early reader" gets the book.

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# Discipleship revolution: AVERY WILLIS' LAST DREAM

Lisa Sells

**D**r. Avery T. Willis, Jr. (1934-2010) viewed discipleship through the eyes of a missionary.

He was president of a seminary in Indonesia during the 1970s when a work of the Holy Spirit among the Indonesian missionaries led them to train leaders to go out to the villages and do “theological education by extension” rather than bringing potential pastors back to the seminary. Inspired by the discipling he had received from Navigator Skip Gray, Avery developed the discipling materials for this work.

Upon returning to the U.S., Avery went to work for the Southern Baptist Convention (and the publisher

that eventually became Life Way Christian Resources) with a missionary’s heart burdened for the American church. He wrote and published *MasterLife* from the discipleship material he had developed in Indonesia. *MasterLife* has been used in more than 100 countries and published in more than 50 languages. That alone would be enough to define a career.

But there would be more.... Later, Avery worked to develop and promote Henry Blackaby’s *Experiencing God*—a great example of Avery’s keen eye for seeing where God was at work in someone’s life and ministry and helping bring that ministry to the forefront of the kingdom. Avery would eventually return to the Southern Baptist International Mission Board as a

WHAT AVERY DID AS A MISSIONARY IN INDONESIA, IN THE PROLIFERATION OF *MASTERLIFE*, AND THROUGH HIS OVERSEAS LEADERSHIP WITH THE IMB PALES IN COMPARISON TO THE GLOBAL IMPACT [HE] MADE IN BECOMING AN ADVOCATE AND LEADER OF ORALITY STRATEGIES. — JERRY RANKIN



*Lisa Sells served as development editor for Real Life Discipleship and Real Life Discipleship Training Manual. She and her husband, Ben, served at the USCWM and the SBC International Mission Board.*

*To discuss this article with me and others related to RLM and DNA21, join us at the new interactive MF website: [MissionFrontiers.org](http://MissionFrontiers.org)—Lisa*

senior vice-president to lead the strategy and work of 5,500 missionaries, a role he would fill for 10 years.

## The Discipleship Revolution

In 2009, on a pleasant, summer day in Colorado Springs, this “retired” pastor, missionary, author, and mission agency executive was in meetings at the Navigator’s Glen Eyrie, working on his latest projects. He sat across from me at a restaurant, eating breakfast while happily spinning off rapid-fire ideas about multiple subjects. He was in Colorado because God had given him another vision: a vision he came to call DNA21: A Discipleship Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

Avery talked energetically about his vision to see 21st-century churches and disciples making disciples the way Jesus did in the first century, enhanced with all the tools and technology of our era. Over the next months he would develop this idea further. He envisioned a rapid revitalization and multiplication of churches, focused on the Great Commission mandate of making disciples. As he saw this revolution, the Word of God applied by the Holy Spirit represents the DNA “double helix” upon which discipleship is built from four basic components:

- small group transparency,
- intentional discipling,
- Bible storytelling, and
- multiplication.

As he talked that morning about discipleship, the American church, missions—and the significance

of Bible Storytelling for all of them—neither of us would have guessed that the projects that had brought him to Colorado Springs would be the last great effort he would throw himself into this side of glory. That particular morning, he was simply laying the groundwork for what he passionately hoped would be a sea change in the way the American church did discipleship. It was a change he earnestly felt was needed to keep the American church from falling under the judgment of God.

## Developing Discipleship for Oral Learners

This turn toward the American church was a shift in Avery's recent focus. After his retirement from the SBC International Mission Board, he had thrown his heart and his untiring efforts into the International Orality Network (ION). At the IMB he had interacted with missionaries around the world and had observed that the most unreached peoples also had the least access to the Bible as well as the strongest oral learning traditions. In fact, oral learners make up 70% of the world's unreached people groups. These people, even if there is a written Bible in their language, prefer to learn by oral methods.

Jerry Rankin, recently retired president of the IMB, writes,

Some field workers had developed chronological Bible stories as a method of evangelical witness among these peoples, but no one had found a way to disciple them, train leaders and plant churches without literacy tools. Avery took this gap in global evangelization as a personal challenge and devoted himself to work with others in developing an orality strategy. What Avery did as a missionary in Indonesia, in the proliferation of MasterLife, and through his overseas leadership with the IMB, pales in comparison to the global impact [he] made in becoming an advocate and leader of orality strategies.<sup>2</sup>

## Real Life Ministries

But that morning in Colorado our talk was not about the use of Bible Storytelling in unreached people groups. Instead, we talked about the use of Bible Storytelling in one of the United States fastest-growing churches. In 1998, two families in Post Falls, Idaho had convinced Jim Putman and his family to help them plant a church. He joined them, and Real Life Ministries (RLM) took off.

Avery met Jim Putman at a Finishing The Task conference, where he overhead Jim talking energetically with Brandon Guindon, RLM's executive pastor. They were disagreeing strongly with a conference speaker's assertion that the American Church was dying and should focus on casting her seed to the nations. Avery joined their conversation and was intrigued by what was happening at their church.

Weekend services draw 8,500 to this small town of 26,000, but that's not the most exciting part of their story. About 6,400 of RLM's members meet weekly in 600 small groups where they are intentionally discipled by trained leaders to become reproducing disciples. Small group members commonly "do

life together" outside their weekly meetings, strengthening relationships and connections throughout this church body.

And most of the

"shepherding" in this large congregation is done by these small group leaders under the coaching of a large network of community pastors who were drawn from group leaders who showed leadership gifting. It is a church where disciples are made and leaders are developed.

RLM's impact isn't limited to spiritual matters. More than 400 attend weekly recovery programs through the church, and RLM is financially the largest provider of services in the county—bigger than the government. As a result, the community was very supportive when RLM sought its second building permit.

Additionally, several members have relocated to start other churches using the same model, and some of

WEEKEND SERVICES NOW DRAW 8,500 TO THIS SMALL TOWN OF 26,000, BUT THAT'S NOT THE MOST EXCITING PART OF THE STORY.

these churches have also grown rapidly to disciple thousands of members in small groups. And their church discipleship model is bearing similar fruit in Ethiopia and Mexico, and drawing interest from non-English-speaking sub-populations in the U.S.

## Making Disciples Who Make Disciples

Post Falls doesn't readily fit the profile for a place to establish a successful church plant. The largely unchurched Pacific Northwest is not an easy demographic to win over, and this city is strikingly blue-collar and non-urban. But from its inception, Real Life Ministries built into its DNA key principles to make it a church where real life transformation consistently happens. Among its distinctives:

1. Understand that Jesus gave the church just one game plan: make disciples who can make disciples. Measure everything by this disciplemaking yard-stick. If we make disciples who make disciples, our church will succeed.
2. Make the definition of disciple clear and central.
3. Follow the model Jesus used when he made disciples: be an intentional leader, disciple in a relational environment, and use a reproducible process.

With these core principles, even in a place where church-planting success was not a given, Real Life Ministries has flourished. Avery went to see firsthand what God was doing and found a church that was discipling people in a way that was church-based, relational, and incredibly effective. They had built a church that was succeeding at the most important level of doing church: they were making disciples who were able to make disciples.

Unlike many other models of discipleship, the RLM model is not based on a fixed core of knowledge. Instead, it uses a simple grid for helping believers learn where they are in the spiritual growth process, as well as where others are. This grid helps disciples see how to move people along in the spiritual growth process. Their model also emphasizes relationship: do life with people, learn where they are in their spiritual growth, and develop an individual plan to move each person forward.

RLM uses readily understandable biblical stages: spiritually dead, infants, children, young adults, and parents. The inspired linkage of understanding these stages with a practical process for moving a disciple from one stage to another gives disciple makers a common language and understanding for how to disciple someone at each stage. The Share, Connect, Minister, and Disciple (SCMD)

grid overlays the stages of spiritual growth and provides a road map for the disciple-maker.

HE TOLD PUTMAN THAT THE AMERICAN CULTURE WAS BECOMING MORE ORAL IN LEARNING STYLE AND THAT HE WAS AFRAID THE AMERICAN CHURCH WAS GOING TO BE LEFT BEHIND.

## Getting Everyone in the Game

Putman was a wrestler and a coach before he became a pastor, so it is no surprise that the church discipleship model his team developed is based on insights gained from coaching—a model that insists every disciple be a coach, coming alongside the people in his or her sphere of influence and moving them off the bench and into the game. Though RLM has indeed drawn a crowd, it operates from the conviction that the Sunday morning worship service is only a gateway for getting people into small groups where discipleship can start, with the intention of discipling relationships extending outside the small group time. Thus, they give relatively little energy to what Putman calls the “Sunday morning show.” Small groups, with intentional leaders trained to make disciples, are at the core of their church program.



The share, connect, minister, and disciple (SCMD) grid overlays the stages of spiritual growth and provides a road map for the disciple-maker.

Besides providing an effective church-based model for discipleship, RLM's model offers a way for pastors to get their life back. Many American churches focus their energies on attracting both visitors and members to weekend services so the pastor can minister to them. In that context the pastor is expected to both nurture the mature and win the lost through a one-way monologue. Then through the week the pastor is expected to satisfy member needs for personal love and concern.

In this model of church, members are urged to be active (in church and outreach), but given little or no coaching to make disciples. The result is often a membership that watches the pastor try to do all the ministry as well as a pastor that is overextended and skating on the edge of burnout. Meanwhile, more mature members drift off in search of some place to be more useful (which all too often means using their gifts and talents outside the church).

Many churches employ small groups primarily to "close the back door" by tying new members into relationships when they come into the church through the Sunday services. RLM uses their small groups as a "front door" through which members intentionally and effectively draw unsaved family, friends and neighbors to faith in Christ. These groups assist in providing spiritual parenting for these new believers. There have been periods in RLM's history when they have had more people in their small groups than they had attending their worship services.

Rather than being overwhelmed with individual member care needs of a large and growing congregation, RLM's senior pastoral staff spends time developing and strengthening a system for making leaders who can disciple others, finds time for personal relationships and recreation, and gives time to other churches who want to learn from their model. All of these pieces of the RLM story were already in place when Avery met the RLM team.



Real Life Ministries campus, Post Falls, Idaho

RLM'S DISCIPLESHIP MODEL OFFERS A WAY FOR  
PASTORS TO GET THEIR LIFE BACK.

## Effective Discipleship Meets Bible Storytelling

As Avery continued developing a relationship with RLM's leadership, he naturally talked about oral learners, pointing out that our own Western culture is filled with people who prefer to learn orally. He was a vocal proponent of storytelling: "God wired us for stories. We like stories. We remember stories. They penetrate beyond our heads and get down into our hearts." He

told Putman that the American culture was becoming more oral in learning style and that he was afraid the American church was going to be left behind.

The more Avery talked about Bible Storytelling, the more intrigued the RLM leadership team became. After a couple of years of discussion, they decided to try Bible Storytelling in a few small groups.

The experiment was so successful that they trained all their pastors, community pastors, and small group leaders to use Bible Storytelling. Some were reluctant at

first, but soon found that Bible Storytelling....

- helps people learn the Bible,
- makes it easier to recruit small group leaders,
- facilitates real learning,
- equips members for ministry,
- empowers parents to disciple their kids,
- helps small group leaders understand the spiritual needs of those they are discipling,
- keeps small groups from becoming boring, and
- encourages transparency and real relationships.

## Serving the Discipleship Revolution

A steady stream of people from around the U.S. now trek to the church's campus to see what God is doing there and to learn about their church-based model for making disciples. So many, in fact, that the RLM staff was overwhelmed. In response they have

distilled a two-day *Immersion*<sup>3</sup> for anyone who wants to experience their model. As part of their service to the Kingdom, *Immersion* is hosted monthly at roughly the cost RLM incurs to host it. Attendance is capped at 70–90 people per session. It is always full. RLM also hosts a “boot camp” for church planters and other opportunities for those wanting to learn from this proven model of church-based discipleship.<sup>4</sup>

Avery spent the last months of his life actively promoting Real Life Ministries as a working model of his vision for the “Discipleship Revolution,” but found it difficult to draw attention as so many leaders thought they already knew what he had to say about discipleship and Bible Storytelling.

## The Cost of Non-Discipleship

The leukemia with which Avery was diagnosed near Christmas 2009 gave him new insight into a disease that plagues too many churches today. Avery wrote,

What happens in leukemia is an abnormal development of the DNA in the body, so that the body produces large numbers of immature cells that do not fulfill their design function. I think that is almost a direct parallel to the church today.

We produce a lot of members but they are not carrying out their functions because we have an overabundance of underdeveloped, abnormal cells.

With two millennia of build-up in its structure, the church has accumulated much unhealthy DNA.

If he were here today, Avery would urge all of us to join this discipleship revolution, to restore the healthy DNA of the early Church. He firmly believed that the American Church needs to change—has to change, really, for her own sake as well as for the sake of the Kingdom. When Frank Decker of *The Mission Society* experienced RLM’s *Immersion*, he said,

What RLM is doing is a good example of what we seek to teach our missionaries to do. A major challenge we face is that American Chris-

tians who apply for service as missionaries have rarely experienced this level of intentional discipleship in their home church.

Jim Putman and Real Life Ministries are relentless about one message: Sitting in a pew watching the paid staff put on a Sunday morning show is all too often the American view of discipleship; this view is not biblical, and it is killing the Church. Their experience in Post Falls is an encouraging demonstration that it doesn’t have to be that way.

## A Lasting Legacy

Years ago in Indonesia, Avery understood the need for missionaries to effectively disciple people on the edges of the expanding Kingdom. Leveraging RLM’s working

model and working in partnership with them, Avery’s son Brett and other colleagues of Avery continue to serve a DNA21 discipleship revolution.<sup>5</sup> This is a fitting last chapter to Avery Willis’ long and fruitful career. It is possibly his most important legacy.<sup>6</sup> ●



Avery and Shirley Willis, with the church they attended in Indonesia in the 1970s. (Photo Courtesy of IMB)

1 Two books came out of this week’s meetings in Colorado Springs between Avery, Jim Putman and Bill Krause, RLM’s family life minister: *Real Life Discipleship* by Jim Putman, and *Real Life Discipleship Training Manual* by Putman, Willis, Guindon, & Krause. In 2009 Avery co-wrote *Learning to Soar* with his grandson Matt Willis. Before his death in July 2010, Avery also managed to finish a book about the use of Bible Storytelling to make disciples: *Truth that Sticks* by Avery Willis & Mark Snowden. All are published by NavPress.

2 rankinconnecting.com/2010/08/tribute-to-avery-willis

3 reallifeministries.com/immersion-one. Note the 20-minute audio interview of Jim Putman at this link, describing RLM’s discipleship model. Also see navpress.com/dna21platt and navpress.com/dna21putman for 50-minute videos of Jim Putman and David Platt, recorded at a special *Immersion* that Avery Willis arranged at The Navigator headquarters in August 2010.

4 reallifeministries.com/association

5 For more information on DNA21, contact Brett Willis at: brettwillis1@gmail.com.

6 For other helpful resources developed by Avery Willis, visit learningtosoor.org and averywillis.org.



# Discipleship revolution: TRAINING FOR TRAINERS PROCESS

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Steve Smith

ADAPTED FROM THE FORTHCOMING BOOK BY STEVE SMITH  
(WITH YING KAI)—T4T: A DISCIPLESHIP RE-REVOLUTION<sup>1</sup>

## Beyond Ministry-as-Usual

*Ying Kai, a Chinese-American church planter and pastor, served with his wife Grace as a missionary in an Asian city where they were able to start a new church every year. In the year 2000, though, Ying's assignment changed. He was asked to reach 20 million people in a corner of one of Asia's many crowded countries. Ying's new assignment was of such magnitude that ministry-as-usual would never succeed in reaching the teeming millions who were flooding into the cities and factories.*

*In October 2000, as Ying sat in CPM (Church Planting Movements) training, his eyes and mind were fixed on a poster in the room: "How many of my people will hear the gospel today?" Ying knew that ministry as he had practiced it was not sufficient to win the millions of lost in this new area. Something had to change.*

*As he prayed and meditated, the Lord brought the Great Commission to Ying's mind:*

*"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"* (Mt 28:19–20, NIV, emphasis added).

## The Lord gave Ying these insights:

**Go, not come:** The Great Commission says we are to go, not invite people to come to us. We must go to where the lost are, and train the new believers to also go to the lost, into factories, homes, shops and neighborhoods.

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*Steve Smith planted a church in Los Angeles and then helped initiate a church planting movement (CPM) among an unreached people group in East Asia. The last ten years he has trained believers in CPM and currently oversees the work of the International Mission Board (SBC) in reaching Southeast Asian Peoples.*

*To discuss this article with T4T practitioners and me, join us at the new interactive MF website, at [MissionFrontiers.org](http://MissionFrontiers.org)—Steve*

**Everyone, not some:** We must make disciples of all, not just a few. We typically choose whom we want to share the gospel with, trying to pre-judge who might accept it. But God said to share with everyone. We cannot predict who will believe and whom God will use to birth a movement.

**Make disciples (trainers), not church members:** We must not satisfy ourselves with making converts and church members. Jesus commanded much more. He wants true disciples. And what do true disciples do? They obey Jesus' commands, including witnessing to others and training these new believers to do the same. So every disciple must be a trainer.

Ying and Grace engaged their new assignment determined to see people in only one of two categories: **lost or saved**. If someone was lost, then Ying and Grace witnessed to him. If he was saved, then they offered to train him. As they met believers, they scheduled times to train (disciple) them every week. Ying expected his trainees to reproduce what they had learned by witnessing to others and training those who believed.

Ying called this process of training, Training for Trainers (T4T). T4T trains believers to witness to the lost and then to disciple and train them in a reproducible way. The discipleship training process includes new group and church formation along with leadership development. T4T is training trainers to train trainers to train trainers, reproducing themselves generation by generation.

In an average week, Ying and Grace might invest in 20-30 different training groups. As the number of groups continued to grow, Ying and Grace began to meet with groups only once every two weeks. This enabled them to add another 20-30 groups on the second week of their training cycles.

As Ying and Grace trained these believers to be trainers of trainers, they found that many would witness, some would start new groups, and a smaller number would go on to train their new group members to repeat the process. By living out this spiritual principle of training people to be trainers of others who would in turn train others, hundreds and then thousands began to come to

faith according to this New Testament pattern:

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (2 Tim. 2:2, NASB)

In the most recent survey of the Kais' ministry, more than 1.7 million people had come to faith and baptism. On a monthly basis, around 2,000 house churches and small groups are being started in villages, urban high-rises and factories.

## T4T Around the World

Over the last few years, many people have been emulating the T4T process around the world. Once they understand the process and adapt it for their context, they often see significant growth in their ministry. On the other hand, when believers have just copied the method without understanding the process or adapting it to their context, the results have been mixed or even dismal. It is the process of training trainers which must be understood and adapted appropriately for each cultural context that enables believers to implement the kingdom principles of T4T.

In 2009 we convened a meeting of practitioners from nine urban CPMs. The criterion for attending this summit was that the work in the city had to have at least one hundred new churches at the level of at least the third generation. [Third generation means that the outsider (missionary) started the first church (1st generation) and trained them to start a new church (2nd generation) which then started a new church (3rd generation).]

Of the nine Asian urban movements represented at the summit, each of the missionaries was seeing significant numbers of conversions, baptisms and new church planting. As these urban missionaries reported the common factors contributing to their respective movements, perhaps the most revealing was this: Each one of them had learned T4T, adapted it to their own context, and were training believers using the T4T process.

T4T has birthed new CPMs within Hindu, Muslim and tribal/animist contexts among both literate and non-literate peoples. We have even seen T4T beginning to bear multi-generational fruit within churched cultures in the USA.

T4T is not a silver bullet to give you a church planting movement; only the Holy Spirit can produce a CPM, but when understood and applied appropriately, the principles and tools of the training process can help position your ministry to live out the Kingdom principles God delights in using.

For CPM practitioners witnessing these significant results, it has been a discipleship re-revolution harking back to the first-century discipleship movements of Acts. It has been a return to the original discipleship revolution of Jesus calling all people to 1) follow Him and 2) fish for men (pass it on)—Mk 1:17.

## The Fruit of T4T

Since Ying and Grace first launched their T4T discipleship re-revolution in November 2000, the Kais and their band of trainers have multiplied into hundreds of streams of multiplying disciples and churches. These streams have produced more than 1.7 million baptized believers in a decade of obedient witnessing and discipling. Along the way, these brothers and sisters have left more than 140,000 new house churches in their wake in what is likely the fastest-growing Church Planting Movement in the world.

## Come Journey with Us

Beyond having a heart and desire that people come to know the Lord, we must put discipleship into action. Jesus taught His disciples not only to baptize but also to “teach them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Mt 28:20, NIV). For this reason, each of us must have a way to witness, disciple, start groups or churches, develop leaders, and mobilize other believers to do the same. Otherwise our ministry consists only of theories that may or may not get implemented. T4T offers a clear process to effectively apply kingdom principles that often get neglected.

In Training for Trainers, practitioners intentionally use the word “trainer” instead of “disciple” because of the many misconceptions associated with the English word “disciple” that might hinder our understanding of the biblical mandate. The biblical idea of discipleship includes the idea of “passing on” what has been received, not just personally growing in Christlikeness. Too often, our understanding of “disciple” and “being discipled” carries the idea of receiving but not giving. Jesus taught His followers to pass on all they received:

Freely you received, freely give (Mt 10:8, NASB).

“Trainer” conveys the idea of someone who both grows in his loving obedience of Jesus and passes on what he learns to others through his witness and training of others.

## An All-Inclusive Process

In ministry, many of us use one tool for evangelism, another for discipleship, maybe one for church planting or starting new groups, another for equipping leaders, etc. There is nothing wrong with that, but

what we have found with T4T is that it can be an all-in-one process of accomplishing all of these things well. It helps to bring all of these together in a balanced process that builds sustained church planting movements. It helps believers to know what to do at each stage when people say “yes”—yes to listening to the gospel, yes to following Jesus, yes to baptism, yes to becoming church, yes to witnessing to others, etc.

T4T is not a set of lessons, though T4T does include lessons. T4T is not a six-week outreach, though it does include outreach. Instead, T4T is an all-inclusive process of training believers over the course of 12–18 months to witness to the lost and train new believers to form reproducing discipleship communities generation by generation. T4T truly is a discipleship re-revolution—a return to the original discipleship revolution of the New Testament.

## The All-in-One Process of T4T

[Jesus said,] “A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go work today in the vineyard.’ And he answered, ‘I will not’; but afterward he regretted it and went. The man came to the second and said the same thing; and he answered, ‘I will, sir’; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first” (Mt 21:28–31, NASB).

As T4T reports began to surface in 2004 and 2005, we originally thought it was just an evangelism tool. But we couldn’t understand why it was seeing such growth in new believers and churches. Then we realized that it was also a discipleship tool. As we examined it further, we realized it was also a church planting tool and a leadership development tool. In fact, T4T was accomplishing all the basic parts of a CPM plan well, developing new believers from one stage to the next as they were being discipled/trained.

Gradually we came to see that T4T was more than just a multi-purpose tool, like a Swiss Army knife. Rather, it was a process that moves the disciple from saying “yes” to doing “yes.” The T4T process gives these disciples confidence and competence to move from one stage to the next.

## A Discipleship Process

Repeat it out loud three times: “T4T is a process, not a set of lessons!”

As Training for Trainers has spread around the world, this is probably the most misunderstood aspect of T4T. Many people think that T4T is a six-lesson discipleship program that will somehow result in CPMs. They say: “I finished T4T [meaning six lessons]. Now what?”

T4T is an ongoing discipleship process that cascades for generations, and the challenges at each new stage

are an ongoing part of that process. It includes good biblical content wrapped up in a dynamic, life-on-life, loving process of following Jesus and fishing for men. Each training meeting includes several important elements shaped by the central goal:

To build multiplying generations of trainers

Time-wise these are divided roughly into three “Thirds”:

### ***First Third (Look Back)***

1. Pastoral Care: Ask “how are you doing?” and take time to minister to one another’s needs in prayer, biblical counsel and encouragement.
2. Worship: Time spent praising God.
3. Accountability: Mutual loving accountability about how they were followers of Jesus (obeyed the Bible lesson last week) and fishers of men (bore witness and trained others) since the last meeting.
4. Vision-casting: sharing a vision of what God has designed them to become and what He plans to do through them.

### ***Second Third (Look Up)***

1. New lesson or Bible study—enough biblical content to obey and pass on to others

### ***Final Third (Look Forward)***

1. Practice: spend time practicing what was just learned to gain confidence and competence to pass this on to others
2. Set goals and pray: set goals for how to obey the lesson and to take the next steps in witnessing and training others; then re-commissioning each other through prayer.

God’s heart is for bringing in a harvest. He is looking for workers who are willing.

Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest”—Mt 9:37–38, (NASB).

The problem throughout history has never been with God—He is willing and passionate for His people to be reached. The problem is not the harvest—the Spirit is doing His part to prepare a harvest even among hard peoples. The problem is with us—we need to recapture the first-century discipleship revolution that turned the world upside down. We need a discipleship re-revolution. 

<sup>1</sup> WIGTake Resources, 2011. For ordering information, or to learn more about T4T, visit churchplantingmovements.com/t4t.

# JOINING THE Discipleship revolution

Robby Butler

*He who does the work is not so profitably employed as he who multiplies the doers.* —John R. Mott (1865–1955)

From the time Jesus selected the twelve, His continuing public ministry was filled with lessons for his disciples as He prepared them to produce future generations of disciplers.

In our urgency to complete the assignment He gave us, have we neglected the wisdom of following His method under the empowering of the Holy Spirit?

## Generations of Disciplers

In 1902 Andrew Murray widely publicized the observation that one discipler, winning one person to Christ each year and building them up to do the same in successive generations, would win the whole world in just 32 years.<sup>2</sup>

In the 1950s, Navigator founder Dawson Trotman noted that, if this spiritual reproduction happened every six months, such generations of disciplers would win the whole world in just 16 years (see page 19).

## How do Generations of Disciplers Develop?

Jesus' strategy for revealing Himself to the whole world was through successive generations of disciplers. Rather than being consumed with meeting every need He could in His own generation, He foresaw that the greatest fruit for all generations would come from the faithful spiritual reproduction of the small community He was discipling.

Discipleship Generations	
1	1
2	2
3	4
4	8
5	16
...	...
10	512
...	...
15	16,384
...	...
20	524,288
...	...
30	536,870,912
31	1,073,741,824
32	2,147,483,648
33	4,294,967,296
34	8,589,934,582

Light gray = range of est. Practicing Christians  
Dark gray = range of est. World Population<sup>1</sup>

Jesus did not simply use the twelve as assistants to service ever-increasing crowds. Mk 3:14–15 tells us that He chose them “that they might be with Him,” “that He might send them out to preach,” and “to have authority to drive out demons.”

Neither did Jesus focus solely on:

- bringing the twelve to maturity,
- giving them deeper understanding, or
- teaching them to love Him and one another.

From the outset they understood that they were also in training to carry on a mission: “I will make you fishers of men” (Mt 4:19).

What I find fascinating is that Jesus didn't just pick individuals and disciple them in isolation from one another. He started with four friends—two sets of brothers—and built a community to practice and prove His teaching.

## “I Was Never Discipled”?

My friend Dave Browning leads a global network of churches which aim to stay small and simple so they can multiply.<sup>3</sup> A year ago, in discussing the need to be intentional in making disciples, I complained, “I was never discipled.” Reflecting on the insights I had already shared with him from Dr. Winter, Dave replied immediately, “It looks to me like you were discipled by Ralph Winter.”

Dave's reaction stirred me to realize that Dr. Winter's pattern of discipleship with peers around a task, was much richer than my superficial stereotype of discipleship as a weekly meeting focused on my own spiritual growth.

I had joined the U.S. Center for World Mission (USCWM) shortly before graduating from Caltech in 1980. During my 24 years at the USCWM, many people invested in me and I learned and grew through a wide variety of assignments and meetings. In working alongside Dr. Winter and others, I grew to love Jesus more deeply, pursue His Kingdom ahead of my own interests, and enlist others in discipling all



*Robby Butler served at the USCWM from 1980 to 2004, and is presently focused on deliberately multiplying increasingly effective, Kingdom-minded, collaborative disciplers.*

*To discuss this article, or access supplemental materials, join me at [MissionFrontiers.org](http://MissionFrontiers.org)—Robby*

peoples. Eventually I wrote a booklet detailing 34 important lessons I learned under Dr. Winter's discipleship and modeling.<sup>4</sup>

### "Hit and Run" Ministry

At the USCWM, even after marrying and having children, I naively lived a self-induced, sleep-deprived scramble to take advantage of every opportunity to learn and serve. I remember misquoting Lk 10:2: "The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few, so we have to work extra hard to make up for what others aren't doing that they should be doing."

My first interest in alternate ministry models came when Dr. Winter described the USCWM as a "hit and run" ministry, typified by my own long-standing practice:

- Meet someone.
- Fill their available time with every insight and resource I thought could benefit them.
- Then part without expecting further contact.

This ministry model isn't bad, but it is very different from Jesus' use of passing ministry opportunities in His focus on developing the twelve into "fishers of men."

Dr. Winter's comment provoked me to wonder:  
**Is there a more fruitful way to minister than simply giving all I can to as many as possible?**

### Slowing Down to Bear Greater Fruit

When I first heard about the book *Margin*,<sup>5</sup> my reaction was "What heresy is this, to encourage laziness in discipling all nations?"

It wasn't until our third child was born with Down Syndrome that the Lord slowed me down enough to take a serious look at Dr. Swenson's work, and to repent from my own chronic busyness. Eventually I came to the conviction that I have an addiction to pursuing exciting opportunities ahead of taking care of basic responsibilities.

As a result I was often running ahead of God to do things He may have planned for others to do, misusing the resources He had entrusted to me, and missing out on "walking" with Him. I was also simply raising my kids, rather than discipling them.

As personnel director for the USCWM I led our staff through a discussion of *The Overload Syndrome*<sup>6</sup> and invited Dr. Swenson to speak at our annual staff conference. I concluded that God does not value our busyness, but desires instead our sensitivity and obedience to His voice.

Our "world" presses us to conform to productivity standards, but we can overcome this pressure by the

renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2), which frees us to work in God's leading under the empowering of His Holy Spirit.

Chronic busyness comes when we are ruled by expectations we place on ourselves and accept from others. This yoke invariably reduces our time in prayer and in God's Word to token offerings, unworthy of our King.

We will only escape by listening better, not by working harder. And we will only engage in discipling when we walk by faith (in God's wisdom and sovereignty) rather than sight (scrambling to meet all the needs we can see).

When by faith we consistently make adequate time in God's word and His presence we can then live out the reality that He is bigger than the needs and expectations pressing on us. As we focus on listening to and obeying Him, we rediscover the abundant life He promises, in which His yoke is easy and His burden light.

The cycle of chronic busyness can only be broken with God's help and the support of spouses and other relationships of mutual submission.

### Rediscovering Our Role

Occasional busyness is unavoidable, but chronic busyness is driven by a flawed view of God and our role in His purpose. This flawed view is often represented and reinforced in the way we challenge others to mission involvement, as we present God as having gotten Himself into a jam from which He needs our help to escape.

God is still able to make the rocks cry out in praise to Him; He is *NOT* wringing His hands, waiting for us to finally awaken to the fact that He needs our help.

God doesn't wait and engage us in His plan because He "needs" us, but for the same reason we enlist the "help" of our children: He enjoys our company and wants us to mature by working with Him in witnessing to and discipling others.

Andrew Murray's *The Key to the Missionary Problem*<sup>7</sup> offers a brilliant analysis of the missionary movement of 1900, how it was slipping toward busy reliance on human efforts, and what to do about this trend. His analysis is just as applicable to today's mission effort as when he wrote it, and we are fortunate that this small volume is back in circulation.

### Discipleship Must be Reproducible

Greg Ogden's *Transforming Discipleship*<sup>8</sup> further showed me that:

- Labeling a classroom presentation of basic doctrines "discipleship" doesn't make it discipleship. Discipleship must be reproducible by the recipients.

- We can intentionally structure our ministries to produce generations of disciples.
- And discipling others yields far greater long-term fruit than any other ministry.

## Finding an Effective U.S. Church Model

Jim Downing of the Navigators<sup>9</sup> taught me that information transfer alone is inadequate; guided experience is also necessary to impart the skills and motivation for disciples to reproduce.

Jim and I attended an experience in the church discipleship model developed by Real Life Ministries (RLM), a church in northern Idaho.<sup>10</sup> There we experienced firsthand what a useful tool Bible storytelling<sup>11</sup> can be in the right context, even here in the U.S.<sup>12</sup> Jim and I subsequently visited RLM's headquarters to learn more about their model.

RLM has a masterful structure for coaching small group leaders (spiritual parents) to multiply reproducing disciples. They have discovered the critical importance of engaging each member in growth to reproducing maturity, and of providing coaching (spiritual grandparenting) to those who are leading this process.

## Learning from One Another

David Platt's sermon series *Follow Me*<sup>13</sup> explores the practicality and benefits of laying down our lives to work with God in making disciples.

Among many gems in Dr. Platt's series, I appreciate these in particular:

- In John 17 Jesus assessed His life solely by His investment in the twelve, not by the standards we often use to measure our ministries (see p. 21).
- An illustration of how two disciples, working together in the same outreach, can help each other to grow faster.
- A detailed analysis of how our investment in the growth of others accelerates our own growth.

We learn and grow even more as we tackle the additional challenges in making disciples in other cultures.

## Aiming Beyond a Single Generation

The *Training For Trainers* (T4T) church planting movement has, in the last decade, started an estimated 140,000 new house churches and baptized 1.7 million new believers, keeping pace with Dawson Trotman's theoretical potential in the opening table.

Many mass-produced materials are available for those wanting to shift from *ministering to the masses* to *making disciples*, but the kind of fruit T4T and RLM are producing does *not* result from simply

adopting these few discipleship principles and hoping God will take it from there:

- Spending more time with fewer people,
- Focusing on leaders who can pass on information (2 Ti 2:2),
- Communicating basic spiritual truths.

Yes, all of these are important, but Jesus didn't focus His time solely on these things. He engaged the twelve to become effective disciplers, teaching them to do for others what He was doing for them.

Jim Downing calls this "guided experience." RLM calls it "coaching" with "opportunities to play." T4T calls it "training."

Whatever we call it, amidst our other work or ministry involvements, we must learn from and follow Jesus' example to be intentional in bringing others along, enlisting and coaching them to become disciplers who, amidst their own work or ministry, will also enlist and coach others.

I wasn't discipled by exposure to important insights but by peer coaching through decades of opportunity to "get in the game."

## From Fixed Curriculum to Coaching

One common weakness of discipling models is a "content only" approach—bringing someone through a curriculum which they are then to bring others through. Whatever this gains in apparent efficiency, it loses far more:

- in adaptability to the Spirit's leading and the needs of those involved, and
- in modeling and coaching through unexpected developments.

Doctrinal correctness will not ensure a person's fruitfulness. However as we coach people to become disciplers, they will grow in

- Hungering for and abiding in God's word.
- Hearing and obeying God's voice.
- Living to please Him rather than others.
- Trusting His provision and empowering.
- Embracing His purpose and His Body.

We don't learn to drive by hearing a lecture or reading a book, but by getting behind the wheel. With coaching from another, we get better.

Coaching doesn't require knowing everything in advance, just a willingness to learn together. As we coach others who are discipling and then coaching others (both peers and disciples), we and they both learn new dimensions of things we may have previously assented to without really understanding.

...Continued on page 30



# 75 Years as a Disciple-Maker: AN INTERVIEW WITH JIM DOWNING

## **MF: What are your thoughts about the Great Commission?**

- First, according to Matthew 24:14, God's timetable awaits our obedience to the Great Commission. What Christ meant by His words, "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations" is a matter for continuing study. One gathering of Christian statesmen concluded that it will be accomplished when 30 percent of every nation has been evangelized and there is a growing church movement among them.
- Second, through acting as a special consultant for Dr. Ralph Winter for several years, I concluded that his *people group approach* made the Great Commission *definable, measurable, and accomplishable*. By this I mean the Great Commission is **definable** as establishing a witness in every people group (nation), **measurable** as to how far along we are in establishing this witness, and **accomplishable** as we prioritize obedience to this command. In the 100-year period beginning about 600 BC, God made the world aware of His Presence three times as the result of the uncompromising testimony and heroism of six persons by way of a fiery furnace, a lion's den, and a reversed decree intended to slaughter the ancestors of Jesus to prevent His ever being born. With the approaching tidal wave of evangelism and disciplermaking by Story Telling for reaching Oral Learners (estimated to be 70 % of the world's population), and the growing availability of recorded and broadcast messages

of Bible fact and truth, a giant leap is in progress.

- Third, since Christ commanded it, it is possible to accomplish.
- Fourth, any ministry not intentionally in support of Mt 28:18–20 may lack God's full blessing.

Acts 1:8 **mandates** us to provide a witness of Himself to the entire population of the earth. Matthew 28:18–20 reveals discipleship as the **method** by which this is accomplished. God's strategy for fulfilling the Great Commission requires reproducing disciples.

## **MF: What is a disciple, and what does he do?**

Some Bible scholars give special attention to the etymology and popular usage of the Greek *mathētēs* (disciple). This puts more emphasis on the idea of learner/follower than Christ's two-minute sermon in Luke 14:26–35, in which He lists these requirements of a disciple:

- love Him more than *family* (I believe Christ was referring to an adult child choosing to follow Him even if family opposes),
- love Him more than *career*,
- love Him more than *material things*, and
- *identify* with Him daily.

The Bible also tells us what a disciple does:

- continues in the Word (Jn 8:31),
- loves other disciples as Christ has loved His own (Jn 13:34–35), and
- bears much fruit (Jn 15:8).



*Now 97 years old, Jim Downing continues discipling others from his home just outside the Navigators headquarters. He has also resumed a heavy travel and speaking schedule (about a third of his time) since the February 2010 death of Morena, his wife of 68 years.*

*To discuss this article with me, access an expanded audio form of this interview, or read my essay "How to Know God," join me at the new interactive MF website: MissionFrontiers.org—Jim*

## **MF: How did Christ make disciples?**

In Luke's Gospel we find recorded 11,000 of the words Jesus spoke while on earth. At an average speaking rate of 200 words per minute, these words of Christ in Luke can be repeated in 55 minutes.

If we allow reasonable time for all of Christ's recorded activities, plus 12 hours off per day, we can only account for about three percent of His time during His last 3 1/2 years on earth. From John 17 and elsewhere, I would suggest that Jesus majored in three activities:

- He imparted *knowledge* by *teaching*.
- He imparted *skill* by *guided experience*.

- He imparted *character* by *example/modeling*.
- Different levels of information depend on an appropriate context to be effectively received:
- General information can be delivered to large groups orally or in writing.
  - More complicated information requires an interactive setting, such as a small group.
  - Intimate life-changing information requires **one-on-one** interaction in an atmosphere of mutual trust, transparency and confidentiality.

Learning and subsequent growth occurs as we receive answers and solutions to the questions and problems *that most intensely concern and interest us*. **One-on-one** is best suited to meet these needs.

Barred from the synagogue and public meetings, one of Paul's greatest successes was in Thessalonica, where he provided spiritual parenting to individuals. "As you well know, we dealt with you **one by one**, as a father deals with his children..." (I Thess 2:11 NEB).

### **MF: How does a disciple bear fruit?**

Genesis chapter one strongly emphasizes that everything God created, "contained the seed to reproduce after its kind" (Gen 1:11-12). This must be true spiritually also. The process is not complicated. The potential disciplemaker recalls the steps in the process by which he or she became a disciple and repeats the process with others. They are familiar with the process and know it has been successful in their own lives. This is done using their own particular gifts in imparting knowledge and skill. Early in the process, those becoming disciples are guided into passing on to others that which has been imparted to them, including participation in active evangelism and exhibiting the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). If those being discipled have questions and problems not encountered by their mentor, they may need to consult the one who originally discipled their mentor or some other resource.

### **MF: What is spiritual parenting?**

Just as a newborn child needs a parent to survive and mature, every new Christian and every Christian whose growth has stalled can be helped by a parent's nurturing.

**Maturity** must be our goal. In the physical world, maturity occurs when a plant, tree, or animal reproduces. Those brought to maturity *will* reproduce, continuing the chain of spiritual generations which is the key to fulfilling the Great Commission.

### **MF: After attending a Real Life Ministries<sup>1</sup> Immersion, you declared it the best church model you have seen for making reproducing**

### **disciples. What is distinctive about RLM?**

Real Life Ministries has identified the stages of Christian growth, from *infancy* to *maturity*, and has innovated a plan and resource to meet the need at each stage of growth. They have mastered spiritual parenting.

### **MF: In your essay "How to Know God" you distinguish between *knowing God* and *knowing about God*. Explain this difference.**

In Matthew 7:22-23 Jesus tells those who claimed to have served Him that He never knew them. How well we know a person is relative to the number and depth of our **shared experiences**. Your parents, spouse or a friend know you best because of your shared experiences.

Our first shared experience with God is when we exchange our sinful past for His forgiveness and gift of eternal life. He responded. Then He shares a spiritual task He wants us to do such as witnessing to someone or helping someone in their spiritual journey. We obey and He shares His joy.

Of my acquaintances, those who seem to know Him best are those who trust Him to meet their needs on a day-by-day basis. A few years ago a friend drove me to the airport. I felt led to give him \$60. The next day he sent me a letter saying his gas tank had been empty, he had needed to pay for a prescription for his wife and for some groceries, and the \$60 was the exact amount he had needed. Such was a daily experience with him and his family. They knew Him well from the daily mutual sharing.

As with a human friend, intimacy seems to fade when we are not sharing experiences regularly.

### **MF: What else do you feel strongly about?**

As previously stated, Christ's method for raising up men to change the world was to impart **knowledge** by teaching, **skill** by guided experience, and **character** by modeling and example. We have become far too knowledge centered, as though every problem can be solved by more knowledge: read a book, attend a class, etc.

Our great spiritual teaching institutions would do well to supplement knowledge with guided experience as a medical school and other skill imparting institutions do. When a pastor or Christian leader asks what suggestions I have for strengthening their ministry, I reply with a question: "Do you have a department of **guided experience** for taking potential disciples from the knowledge stage to the reproducing stage?"

The making of disciples is not an end in itself. The end result is evangelism, and disciples are the means.

*...Continued on page 30*



# PASSIONATE CALL for MATURITY THAT REPRODUCES

• •

Dawson Trotman

## A distillation of Trotman's message "Born to Reproduce"

Navigator founder Dawson Trotman (Daws, 1906–1956) trained a young Navy Christian to win others. That sailor discipled another, and God used these two sailors plus three others under Daws' influence to bring Jim Downing to Himself. (See Jim's interview on p. 17.) At one point Navigators were ministering on 1,000 U.S. naval ships and stations. Billy Graham said, "I think Daws has personally touched more lives than anybody I have ever known."

In 1956, shortly before he drowned saving someone else, Daws gave a powerful message detailing his discipleship insights. This message influenced discipleship strategy around the world, and epitomizes the Navigator ministry in particular. Jim Downing reordered Daws' original message into a written form, which is condensed below. Daws' full audio presentation and Jim's written restructuring of it are both worthy of review and reflection by any serious follower of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

### God Desires Multiplication

**G**od told Adam and Eve, our first parents: "Multiply. I want more just like you, more in my own image." A person is born again when he receives Jesus Christ. It is God's plan that these new babes in Christ grow. All provision is made for their growth into maturity, and then they are to multiply—not only the rich or the educated, but all alike. Every person born into God's family is to multiply.

Soul winners are not soul winners because of what they know, but because of the Person they know, how well they know Him, and how much they long for others to know Him.

### Infants Need Parents

After leading someone to Christ, I used to leave him with Philippians 1:6: "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Then I came across one such fellow a year later and found no evidence of the new birth. I began to go find some of my "converts" and became sick at heart.

This led to fewer converts but more time with the converts. Soon I could say with Paul,

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now (Phil. 1:3–5).

### Biblical Emphasis on Follow-Up

Paul was a busy evangelist, but the New Testament is largely made up of his follow-up letters to the converts. All the writings of Peter, Paul, James and most of John's are food for the new Christian.

Nothing under heaven can keep one newly born-again from going on with the Lord *if he has a spiritual parent* to care for him and give him the spiritual food God has provided for his normal growth. When things are right between you and the Lord, regardless of how much or how little you may know intellectually from the standpoint of the world, *you can be a spiritual parent*, even when you are very young in the Lord.

### The Potential and Pitfall of Multiplication

Suppose someone desires to be a spiritual father. He asks God to give him a man to teach. As he teaches this first man, they each start praying for another man. By the end of six months, each starts teaching another. At the end of the year, they are just four. Each may also teach a Bible class or help in a street meeting, but their main concern is their man and how he is doing. They encourage one another "let's not let anything sidetrack us. Let's give the Gospel out to a lot of people, but let's see at least one man through."

At the end of two years there are 16 men. At the end of five there are 1,024. After fifteen and a half years there are more than two billion, the present world population of over three years old.

But wait! Suppose the first man trained gets side-tracked, washes out and does not produce his first man. Fifteen and one-half years later you can cut your two billion down to one billion because the devil caused B to be sterile.

## How Spiritual Parenting Works

Twenty-three years ago we taught a born-again sailor how to reproduce spiritually. We spent time together and took care of his problems. We taught him not only to hear God's Word and read it, but how to study it. We taught him how to fill the quiver of his heart with the arrows of God's Word, so the Spirit of God could lift God's word to the bow of his lips and pierce a heart for Christ.

He approached a number of boys on his ship, but none would go all out for the Lord. They would go to church, but when it came to doing something, they were "also rans." He came to me after a month and said, "Dawson, I can't get any of these guys on the ship to get down to business."

I told him, "Ask God to give you one. You can't have two until you have one. Ask God to give you a man after your own heart." He began to pray.

Soon he said to me, "I think I've found him." Those two began to grow and spiritually reproduce. On that ship 125 men found the Saviour before it was sunk at Pearl Harbor. Men off that first battleship are in four continents of the world as missionaries today.

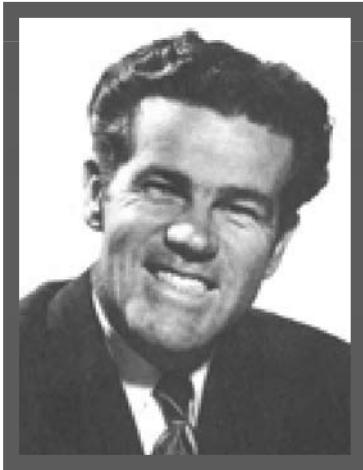
The devil's great trick is to stop anything like this if he can before it gets started.

## The Importance of a Victorious Spiritual Life

When interviewing missionary candidates I ask "How is your devotional life? Do you feel it is what the Lord would have it to be?"

In one group of 29 only one person said, "I believe my devotional life is what it ought to be." The others excused their devotional life on the basis of temporary busyness, but as we looked back they had never had consistent victory.

Then I asked "How many have you won to Christ who are living for Him today?" The majority had to admit that they were ready to cross an ocean and learn a foreign language, but they had not won their first soul who was going on with Jesus Christ.



Dawson Trotman

One reason for sterility is lack of communion with Christ.

These questions do not apply to missionaries and prospective missionaries only. They apply to all of God's people. Every one of His children ought to be a reproducer.

## Scripture Memory is Essential

Load your heart with this precious Seed. God will then direct you to those whom you can lead to Christ. There are many hearts ready for the Gospel now.

In the early days, whenever sailors were with us for supper, I would say

Quote a verse you have learned in the last 48 hours if you have one. Otherwise just give us a verse.

## Five Reasons Christians Do Not Reproduce

### 1. Unconfessed Sin

Impairment to some essential organ can prevent physical reproduction. In the spiritual realm sin is the disease that can keep one from winning the lost.

### 2. Fear of Man

"Oh, but I am afraid" someone says. "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe" (Proverbs 29:25).

### 3. Lack of Spiritual Purpose

Some Christians desire to be spiritual parents, but their lives run in circles:

I have to buy a house or pay the rent so I will have a place to rest up, so I will be fit to work and earn some more money.

### 4. Busyness in Religious Activity

Satan puts his efforts into getting the Christian busy, but not producing. I am not talking about earning money, but being busy doing Christian things. We have spiritual activity with little productivity.

### 5. Faithfulness in Church but not in Reproducing

We have a lot of pew-sitters—people think that if they are faithful in church attendance, put good-sized gifts into the offering plate, get people to come, and serve in some way they have done their part. All this is incidental to the supreme task of winning a man or woman to Jesus Christ and then helping him or her to go on. ☽

<sup>1</sup> Visit MissionFrontiers.org for links to the originals.

# The MEASURE of A MINISTRY

Chris Adsit

**A**mist in the pulpit is a fog in the pews,” Dallas Theological Seminary pillar Dr. Howard Hendricks once observed. If our church and mission leaders are unclear or confused about their objectives and priorities, then those they are leading will be even less focused, less effective and less satisfied with their lives in the Kingdom.

Prayer? Evangelism? Youth programs? Senior adults? Bible translation? Feeding the poor? Worship services? Fundraising? Bible studies? Home fellowships? Are our congregations drowning in options, spread too thin? Do church leaders often feel like the juggler on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, trying to keep two dozen plates spinning simultaneously, not willing that any should perish? No doubt. But this broad spectrum of unfocused activity often contributes to the fog in the pews more than anything else.

The question every leader must ask is: “How does this ministry fit into the primary imperative of the Great Commission to *make disciples*?” If a ministry doesn’t dovetail with Christ’s foundational contextual command for ministry—disciplemaking—then we have marginalized His desires. Any ministry can devolve into nothing more than impressive religious activity that helps Christians feel good about themselves but does not result in personal transformation.



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*To discuss this article with me, or access web-exclusive bonus material I have provided, join me at the new interactive MF website: [MissionFrontiers.org](http://MissionFrontiers.org)—Chris*

- fundraising
- prayer
- evangelism
- Bible study
- Discipleship**

Tom Nelson, pastor of Denton Bible Church in Texas once wrote,

If we as a church succeed in every area, but fail to make disciples who can spiritually multiply, then ultimately we have failed. Yet if we fail in every other area, but succeed in spiritual multiplication, then ultimately we have succeeded.

*This is the measure of our ministries.*

## **Begin with the End in Mind**

For church leaders to sharpen their focus on disciplemaking, they must first understand the “finished product.” As I have queried church leaders around the world in my travels, asking for a biblical definition of the word *mathetes* (disciple), I have been amazed at how few can supply one. Mist in the pulpit. Most definitions are born of personal bias or a prejudiced reading of the Scriptures reflecting earlier training. But what did Jesus mean when He told His disciples to make disciples? A literal translation of the Greek word would be simply, “a learner,” but when Jesus used the word, there were far more nuances. Here’s a good start:

A disciple is a person-in-process who is eager to learn and apply the truths that Jesus Christ teaches him, resulting in ever-deepening commitments to Christ and to a Christlike lifestyle.

This definition takes in the elements of process-orientation as opposed to instant spirituality; intentional learning; the necessity of application instead of the mere accumulation of knowledge; obedience to Christ; relationship to Christ; imitation of Christ, and—springboarding off that last element—servanthood, centrality of love, self-feeding, fruit production and **multiplying all of the above to the next generation of believers**.

Assess where your church or mission organization is currently putting its efforts. The activities that are clearly contributing to the production of *the above elements* must be retained and enhanced. The ones that don’t should be adjusted or eliminated.

To dispel the mist, this mindset must permeate the thinking of the entire leadership of a church or

mission organization. Intentional multiplication of the life of Christ in each of our members must be tattooed on the foreheads and pervasive in the DNA of even the rank-and-file. As Paul wrote in Colossians 1:28, “We proclaim Him, admonishing **every man** and teaching **every man** with all wisdom, so that we may present **every man** complete in Christ” (emphasis added). We must abandon the “program” mentality and embrace the “every man” mindset.

## First Things First

When shopping for a new church, most young couples ask the pastor “Do you have a youth program?” If not, they move on because one of their primary concerns is how this church is going to care for their children. I think this is the first question God asks a church too—concerning *His* children. “If I bring My babies to your church, will you take care of them? If not, I’ll take them someplace else.”

There are at least two reasons why any ministry must be intentional and aggressive about initial follow-up of new believers:

- the enemy the new Christian has just acquired, and
- the pattern that must be set early.

John Wesley speaks eloquently to this first point:

Preaching like an apostle without joining together those that are awakened and training them in the way of God is only begetting children for the murderer.

How many new Christians were never “adopted” into a Christian family, but left out on the doorstep to perish? I am not referring to loss of salvation, but to a life sentence of confusion, failure and defeat, with no clue how to plug into the life and power of the Kingdom.

Secondly, as the twig is bent, so grows the tree. A child’s basic personality is formed by the time he or she is four or five years old. Disciplemaking ministries have observed for decades that the attitudes, habits and priorities that a new Christian adopts within the first six months to a year of their conversion will usually set their sails for the rest of their lives. This fact must not escape our attention or our intentions.

## Need-oriented vs. Program-oriented

Here’s a challenge for you: In keeping with the “every man” mindset, encourage your disciplers to “personalize” their approach. That is, rather than simply herding new Christians through a program, form groups of three to five led by a more mature Christian. Use a curriculum as a road map, but allow the needs of the young disciples, their ability to grasp and apply new concepts, and the direction of the Holy Spirit to determine the pace, sequence and depth of your

times together. In this rich small-group context, each member will gain a sense of true, biblical fellowship, establish relationships with their peers, and—in their cross-talk—learn how to teach others, to encourage and be encouraged, and to hold accountable and be held accountable.

As a growing disciple understands and applies the basic principles of the Christian life, it becomes even more important to employ a need-oriented approach, lest disciples become demotivated by a cookie-cutter system. Never forget 1 Cor. 3:7, “So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.” You may be following a curriculum that dictates a study on stewardship. But God may be hammering the disciple in the area of lust! It would be far more productive to team up with the Holy Spirit in this matter. How will you know? Through two complimentary means:

- constantly looking to God for discernment, and
- asking questions of the growing disciple out of a relationship that is growing in trust, love, loyalty and truth.

## Get Some Help

A warning accompanies this approach: Don’t subscribe to “single-relational discipleship.” That is, don’t assume that you, with your vast treasures of wisdom, knowledge and experience, are the only trainer your disciple needs. If you do, you will indeed duplicate your strengths, but you will also duplicate your weaknesses. We all tend to emphasize our assets and minimize our deficits as we minister to others. For this reason, Christ established His Church to provide a wide variety of gifted men and women “for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:12). As we count on and invest in *this* system, we are working together to reproduce *Christ*, not ourselves. Conduct a survey of the spiritual gifts, natural talents and acquired skills of your church, and encourage disciplers to connect their disciples to appropriate “experts” as needed.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer tells us that “Christianity without discipleship is Christianity without Christ.” We must make clear that Christianity is not simply a Get-Out-Of-Hell-Free card or a set of philosophical propositions about Jesus, but that it involves the mandatory choice to take up our crosses and follow Him in an ever-deepening relationship of discipleship, and that *this ministry of multiplication isn’t only the pastor’s job*, but the collective job of the entire church. Only then will the mist rise, the fog disperse, and the light of the gospel truly shine from our churches around the world. 



## The Lost Aspect of Disciple-Making

**A**n old Navigator once told me, “Laborers are like manure. It stinks when they are all in one place. You have to spread them out to do any good.” Probably no one reading *Mission Frontiers* would argue with the idea that laborers need to be spread out. However, some may question the claim that “*You* have to spread them out.” After all, isn’t making disciples *our* part, and sending them out *God’s* part? Let’s wrestle with this question and unpack how we might recapture the biblical practice of *exporting* disciple-makers.

### Does Something Smell Wrong to You?

To illustrate the urgency of better understanding our role in sending laborers, let’s compare two areas of the world. Alabama, where I now live, has a population of 4.7 million. Sixty-seven percent of those meet the criteria to be considered “born again” by the Barna Group. If just 10% of those actually labor for Christ, the number of workers in Alabama would still be a whopping 315,000! That’s one laborer for every five Alabamians who are not born again. Part of me says, “Praise God for what He has done in Alabama.” But another part of me says, “Something doesn’t smell right here when there are 132 million Shaikh of Bangladesh and none of them know Christ.”

Our churches and ministries have worked hard to *Evangelize* the lost, *Establish* them in their faith, and *Equip* them to labor. But have we ended the intentional discipling process too soon? Have we failed



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*To comment on this article, visit the new interactive MF website: [MissionFrontiers.org](http://MissionFrontiers.org)—Bob*

to finish the job by not *Exporting* (mobilizing, deploying, sending) more of those we have equipped? Or is that overstepping our role in the Great Commission?

### The Biblical Basis for Exporting

Jesus commands us in Matthew 28:19 to “make disciples” and in Matthew 9:38 to “pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers.” A quick reading of these two commands, without consideration of the rest of Scripture, could lead to the conclusion that our job is to “make disciples” and it is God’s job to send them out. But let’s think about this for a minute.

Jesus didn’t say anything about praying in Matthew 28 when he commanded us to make disciples. Does that mean that we can make disciples without prayer? Of course not. I can’t think of any activity in the Christian life that we should attempt without prayer. Activity without prayer usually doesn’t end well, does it? What about prayer without activity? That doesn’t usually result in much fruit either.

1 Corinthians 3:6 illustrates the need for both human activity and dependence on God for fruit. “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.” If God doesn’t want us to *Evangelize, Establish* or *Equip* disciples by prayer alone, why would we think he wants us to become passive when it comes to the *Exporting* process?

After Jesus emphasized to his disciples the need for prayer regarding the mobilization of laborers (Mt 9:38), what did he do? Sit and watch to see what would happen? No, the very next thing he did was to send out his disciples. If we want to follow the example of the master disciple-maker, what are the exporting activities in which we are to engage?

### Exporting Activities

When we do make an effort to send out disciples, our involvement is usually limited to making disciples aware of the needs of the world and challenging them to go. But is there more we should be doing? Let’s look to the Scriptures for our answer.

### **1. Challenging to a missional life**

Challenging someone to a missional life is not an event that takes place once a disciple is mature. It is a process that should begin at the start of the discipling relationship (Mt 4:19) and continue indefinitely (Mt 9:36–38, Mt 28:19, Jn 21:15–17). We can't stop here, though. We need to challenge people to not just give their lives to evangelism, but to the evangelization of every people group. They must come to the point that they see this as central to the heart of God and as the "grand narrative" of Scripture and history. It is usually not until someone is gripped with this realization that they develop a life-changing conviction and ambition for all nations to be reached. *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* is a great tool that many disciple-makers use to build this conviction into their people.

### **export: [v. ek-sport]**

to send or transmit (ideas, institutions, etc.) to another place, esp. to another country.

### **2. Commissioning with a specific mission**

When most of us think about commissioning someone, we imagine this scenario: A church member feels God may want him to serve on the mission field. He investigates different sending agencies and maybe talks with his pastor. After making his decision, he comes to the church and asks if they would commission him. This is the "Volunteer seeking the church's blessing" model. While there is nothing wrong with this, we more frequently see a different model in Scripture: the "Faithful laborer gets conscripted model." In this model, a volunteer doesn't approach the church leadership; the church leadership approaches someone who is faithfully laboring, and his future location of ministry is determined more by ministry leaders than by personal leadings. Here are a few examples:

2 Tim. 4:11: "Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry."

Titus 1:5 "The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you."

Acts 15:27 "Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing."

Acts 15:40 "but Paul chose Silas..."

Are we not seeing more laborers exported to the least-reached peoples because God is not doing His

part in answering our prayers? Or could it be that we are failing to fulfill our responsibility of actively identifying and selecting laborers and challenging them to specific missions? A successful veteran missionary friend of mine says that when he heard the voice of God telling him to go to the mission field, "It sounded a lot like the voice of my mission pastor." I have heard quite a few other missionaries tell stories of how they ended up on the mission field as a result of a phone call from that same mission pastor telling them "We need someone like you in country X."

### **3. Connecting to other laborers**

After years of watching multiplying disciples leave the college campus and bear little fruit in the "real world," I concluded that you can't take a multiplying disciple out of a disciple-making movement and expect him or her to continue to multiply.

God didn't design us to function well independently. This was confirmed by a quantitative research study I did in 2006 which surveyed several hundred disciple-makers. Unfortunately, churches that function as disciple-

making movements are hard to find. The good news I discovered is that the size of a church doesn't matter. A few people meeting in a living room can be just as much of a disciple-making movement as a megachurch. The *culture* of the church is more important than the *size* of the church.

Since getting graduating seniors connected to the right multiplying movement is often more of a process than an event, campus ministers who need to stay focused on the campus might want to partner with ministries that specialize in this, such as Every Ethne, The GoCorps or a local mission pastor. For those looking for a disciple-making movement within the USA, a phone call to a local Navigator representative might be a good place to start.

### **A Final Challenge**

A remote village is under attack. Women and children are in danger of being slaughtered by a vicious enemy. The need of the hour is for a platoon of Green Berets to deploy and do what they have been trained to do. The Commander-in-Chief says, "Go." What will happen if the commanders at the Green Beret training camp don't actively mobilize those whom they have worked so hard to train? That's right, nothing. Will you follow the example of Christ and accept the call to add action to your prayers for the exporting of laborers? ☽



# MARGINALIA

## “Discipleship Déjà vu”

Dave Datema, General Director, Frontier Mission Fellowship

Where have I heard this discipleship theme before? My bookshelves remind me why this all seems so familiar. *The Training of the Twelve*, by AB Bruce, is a classic from 1871. Closer to our time, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* by Leroy Eims was popular in the 1970s. Things really kicked off in the 1980s with the *Discipleship Journal* of NavPress. Other discipleship books from the 1980s include Win and Charles Arn's *The Master's Plan for Making Disciples*, Robert Coleman's *The Master Plan of Discipleship* and Bill Hull's discipleship trifecta (*Jesus Christ Disciple Maker*, *The Disciple Making Pastor* and *The Disciple Making Church*). In the 1990s there was SonLife's *Growing a Healthy Church* training. And just this past May 2010, the underlying theme of the Tokyo 2010 Global Mission Consultation was "making disciples of every people in our generation."

This, of course, is but a small sampling from my personal interaction with this theme over the last three decades. Over and over Evangelicals emphasize that in order to grow believers and churches spiritually and numerically, we need to get serious about discipleship—about training others who will train others, etc. And over and over it seems we fail to learn the lesson. With each new decade come new discipleship gurus with new models for changing times. Some of the most recent are highlighted in the previous pages. This all begs the question: Why aren't we getting it?

It appears to me that our present "ministry system" (for lack of a better phrase) doesn't easily accommodate discipleship practices (this is also true for evangelism, without which there is nobody to disciple). In other words, the problem is as much systemic as it is personal. Many

of us do want to be disciplers, but find we are locked in a system that discourages it. Breaking free of this "ministry system" is possible, but it comes at a price. Forgive me for focusing on those of us in ministry, but if discipleship doesn't happen in our context, it is doubtful that it will happen elsewhere.

Let me illustrate the problem with the ministry system. I am writing this sentence at 11:44pm on a Tuesday evening. Why? Well, perhaps if I was more disciplined or better at time management, I would be in bed by now. Fair enough. But it may also be true, as it is for many people in ministry today, that we are juggling too many duties to prioritize the very time-consuming process of raising spiritual sons or daughters in the faith. Our days are filled with meetings, ministry, deadlines and problems, and we are often found at home in the evenings buried in email and projects that never saw the light of day during office hours. The "ministry system" evaluates me by what I do, not whom I disciple. And did I mention that I have a family?

In Robby Butler's excellent article, he says,

Amidst our other work or ministry involvements we must learn from and follow Jesus' example to be intentional in bringing others along, enlisting and coaching them to become disciplers who, amidst their own work or ministry, will also enlist and coach others.

Now that is a very tall order for those who can find no "amidst" to work with. Discipling takes time—time we don't feel that we have, time that will be evaluated by other criteria.

This system is not just a job description or a set of expectations. It is, in my perception, part of an Evangelical culture where the emphasis is on getting things done. While youth pastors may be allowed to

"just hang out" with teenagers, many in ministry find it difficult to disciple others. There is always something else to do. The same is true for missionaries.

The logic of discipleship is irrefutable. Deep down we know that it is the right thing to do. But the inertia of the "ministry system" which many of us are in is going in another direction. The only way out for many of us is something systemic, something that changes the system itself. I am sure that there are churches and ministries that have done just that, but I am not aware of many of them.

I recently heard of a YWAM base that has now required all of its members to spend two hours a day in prayer. That is what I call a systemic change. It doesn't leave conformity up to individual conviction or conscience. It is mandated organization-wide. Now imagine what would happen if ministries around the world mandated such a thing with regard to discipleship. Most ministries mandate something, but it is rarely discipleship. It is usually things like prayer, quiet time, accountability and meetings. These are good, but can tend toward an inward, cloistered lifestyle. Many ministry systems could use a complementary outward focus on discipling others.

Perhaps this column is offering a poor excuse for why so many in ministry are not personally involved in making disciples. It could be argued that, regardless of the system, we should feel compelled to make disciples and we should find a way to "make it happen." I accept the rebuke. At the same time, I see nothing wrong with making obedience a little easier. Those who are ministry leaders should take a long look at systemic changes that might need to be made in their organization to make disciple-making more common. If we don't, we can expect more books on discipleship right around the corner. ☽

# Discipling the Nations & the “Insider Movement” Conversation

Kevin Higgins

This issue of *Mission Frontiers* is devoted to keeping the attention of mission practitioners focused squarely on disciple-making. I welcome the opportunity to address discipleship from the perspective of the so-called “insider” paradigm. I am not going to describe a strategy for multiplying disciples and disciple-makers. I have two far more modest ambitions: The first purpose is to clarify terminology; the second is to close what I think might be a gap in communication.

## Terminology

There has been a good deal of discussion and even heat surrounding the controversial topic of insider movements. Briefly stated, those of us who write about such movements are seeking to describe contexts in which groups of people have come to faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord while remaining in their social and some aspects of their religious culture. This attempt at description has also led to a great deal of collaborative inductive Bible study and biblical reflection about the Kingdom, God’s ways of reaching and saving people within their *ethne* (nations), and what authentic discipleship looks like.

In the process of this ongoing discussion and reflection, many of us who advocate that such emerging movements are an authentic part of what God is doing in mission have also realized that the term “insider movement” is unhelpful for a variety of reasons. “Insider” can smack of something secretive, even questionable (as in “insider trading” for some westerners). It has struck some as an elitist term.

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*Kevin Higgins is the International Director of Global Teams, which is devoted to equipping teams from many nations to multiply disciples of Jesus within cultures least aware of the Gospel. Kevin has been used to initiate discipling movements among several Muslim peoples, and is currently working on a PhD in Bible translation.*

*To discuss this article with me, join me at the new interactive MF website: [MissionFrontiers.org](http://MissionFrontiers.org)—Kevin*

So-called “insiders” themselves have criticized the term as it seems to them to speak of yet another separation into “us” (for example, outsiders, bridge-people, the missionary) and “them” (the “insiders”).

Because of this, at a meeting in Bangkok 2010 a proposal was made that we begin to work at changing our terminology. This meeting included practitioners from several organizations working among Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists. It also included key leaders from several different insider movements in several different countries. While we did not settle on a detailed common terminology, we agreed wholeheartedly that we needed to move towards language such as:

- “Movements to Jesus within Islam” (or Hinduism, or Buddhism)
- “Kingdom movements to Jesus”
- “Jesus movements that multiply disciples obedient to the Bible within different religious traditions”

While some of the expressions differ, a common theme has been a shift from an emphasis on the word “insider” to an emphasis on the word “Jesus.” This is not a new emphasis in our thinking and philosophy. We have always assumed such a focus on the Lordship of Jesus. But it does seem to bring to the fore something we may have allowed to go unstated exactly *because* it was assumed.

I want to state as clearly as possible here the core conviction that this shift in terms truly seeks to bring to the fore: *Jesus and Jesus alone is the Savior, and Jesus and Jesus alone is Lord*. If we have not been clear enough in this for our critics, it is because we have assumed this was understood.

## Communication Gap

Part of the communication gap in the insider/non-insider discussion may be that “we” in the insider “camp” have not clearly articulated how devoted to making disciples we are. And this may have suggested to some of our critics that we are not interested in discipleship.

The two largest insider movements of which I am aware are both devoted to the ongoing inductive study of the Scriptures in group settings aimed at fostering obedient disciples who allow the Word to constantly reform their lives, behaviors and beliefs. These movements are aimed, in that context, at fostering the multiplication of groups where this can take place.

How does this impact discipleship? As believers in community engage with Scripture regularly and over time, the Holy Spirit uses the Word and mutual admonition to enable disciples to grow in obedience. As such, and like any disciple in any context, they begin to see things in their culture, worldview or behavior that they must reject. They see other things that can be re-interpreted and given new biblical meaning. They discover other things which need to be re-valued in their lives (given either greater or lesser importance than before faith in Jesus). And they can also discern things that can simply remain.

I would suggest that this biblically-centered discipleship process is actually the mission paradigm we most care about. In fact this is the paradigm that allows *all* paradigms to stand under the Word. And it is exactly at this place that I believe it is possible for us to share common allegiance with even our sharpest critics.

## Conclusion

There is another way to describe the paradigm I have sketched above. I have touched on the “Jesus alone”

dimension above. And just now I have touched on the place of the Word in discipleship.

Such convictions have been expressed before in another age, an age in which God reformed His church and enabled a recapture of central truths. I speak of the Reformation, of course. And in the vocabulary of the Reformation we could describe “Kingdom movements to Jesus” as discipleship rooted in the classic *solas*, or “*alones*” of that age:

- Christ alone
- Faith alone
- Grace alone
- Scripture alone

It is my confidence in the sufficiency of Christ and the Word that frees me to believe such a discipleship movement can happen within almost any cultural-religious context. I believe thoroughly that grace alone, received through faith alone, placed in Christ alone, is fully sufficient for salvation. And I believe thoroughly that discipleship sustained and shaped by Scripture alone is sufficient to foster and sustain authentic movements of His Spirit.

Over the years, in my training and coaching of missionaries, I have coined the phrase, “the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to correct and lead the People of God.” This is a foundation and a model for “Kingdom movements to Jesus.” It is also a place where it seems possible for us to stand together, advocates and critics alike. ☽

### MBBs and MBs

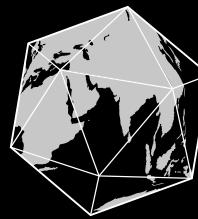
*The following, by a friend, captures well what I and others have seen:*

Muslims coming to Christ fall into two broad categories:

**MBBs** is commonly used to mean “Muslim Background Believers”—those who choose to leave their Muslim identity and often their Muslim community and family as well. *Their family and friends either do not know about their faith (many are secret believers in relation to their families of origin) or see them as having rejected their family and joined a foreign religion and community. They frequently live outside of their birth countries or communities, having become believers in another context or having*

*moved due to persecution.* Muslim communities often see MBB family members as lost to them, resulting in increased community resolve not to let others be exposed to the message of Christ. If MBBs try to remain in their birth country as Christians, Christian communities within the Muslim countries may resist incorporating them because they fear persecution of their churches by the surrounding Muslim community. On the other hand, MBBs are sometimes praised by Western churches for leaving their families for the sake of their faith, while those who remain in their communities experience as much or more persecution.

**MBs**, or “Muslim Believers” is a term increasing used for Muslims coming to Christ who choose to remain in their birth communities and retain their birth identity. Many see their faith in Christ as a radical reinterpretation or reformation of their faith in Abraham’s God. Most are not “secret believers” and *their family and friends see them as Jesus Muslims, or a sort of new sect within Islam. Some are beaten or persecuted for speaking about Jesus and for using the Injil (New Testament). Their transformed lives and ongoing witness to their families has proved to be quite effective in many instances, in some cases leading to movements to Jesus.* ☽



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the Perspectives team

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## Drawing Strength from Others

On our own we may find it difficult to pursue disciplemaking in the face of cultural pressures to simply be productive, but we can find strength in community. In just a few hours a month we can start meeting with colleagues for peer coaching to be disciplers.

Each of us has spheres of influence where we can become intentional about sharing tasks and enlisting and coaching others to become disciplers. We can also engage intentionally as catalysts for peer coaching as we learn together to enlist and coach generations of disciplers.

At its heart, discipling individuals is about loving, enjoying and caring for those God has given us—our family, colleagues and friends—and coaching these to fruitbearing maturity as the path to greater fruitfulness rather than simply expecting them to support us in our “more important” ministry.

## Solving the Manpower Problem

In the Western church today, we generally pursue great achievements ahead of generations of disciplers. We thus perceive our primary need to be increased staffing to service our ministry vision.

If we would follow Jesus’ lead in discipling those He has given us, and in coaching them to produce generations of disciplers, this problem might disappear.

## Next Steps

Bearing fruit in generations of disciplers won’t happen by accident. Let me suggest three steps you can take:

1. On a weekly or daily basis, enter the King’s presence and stay there until you sense that His agenda is covered. (Too often we check in and let Him know what we need without taking time to hear from Him.)
2. Meet once a month for three hours with family, two or three colleagues or friends, or two other couples. Plan and pray together for how you will each become intentional in winning and discipling others, and training them as disciplers. Adapt the T4T format described on p. 13. Rotate leadership and have each report on a different article from this *MF*.
3. Invite three or four other friends to follow your example of starting a monthly discipleship training strategy team, then gather all these teams once a month to learn from one another and compare notes on how God is leading you. Again, rotate leadership.

If you follow some adaptation of this plan, pray and expect each participant to start one or more such groups, then join me at MissionFrontiers.org to share your experiences so we can learn from one another.<sup>14</sup> 

1 Table shading reflects estimates in Ralph Winter and Bruce Koch’s article “Finishing the Task,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, William Carey Library Publishers, Fourth Edition (January 2009).

2 *The Key to the Missionary Problem*, Morrison and Gibb Limited, 1902.

3 *Deliberate Simplicity: How the Church Does More by Doing Less* (Zondervan, 2009).

4 See on-line bonus material at MissionFrontiers.org.

5 *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives*, by Richard Swenson, NavPress, 1995 (re-released in 2004).

6 *The Overload Syndrome: Learning to Live Within Your Limits*, by Richard Swenson, NavPress, 1998.

7 CLC Publications 1979, 2007 reprint in modernized English.

8 *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time*, InterVarsity Press, 2003.

9 See Jim Downing’s interview, on p. 17 of this *MF*.

10 See Lisa Sells’ article on Avery Willis, DNA21, and Real Life Ministries, on p. 6 of this *MF*.

11 See SimplyTheStory.org and OralBible.com (International Orality Network).

12 The two-day experience Jim and I had in RLM’s model is available most months at RLM’s facility in Idaho (near Spokane, WA). See ReallifeMinistries.com/immersion-one for the schedule and other details.

13 Available free at BrookHills.org/media/series/follow-me.

14 For an interesting exploration of what more may be involved in discipling “peoples,” see Landa Cope’s book—*An Introduction To The Old Testament Template: Rediscovering God’s Principles for Discipling All Nations*, (The Templete Institute Press, 2006). Note: a new 2011 edition is now available from YWAM Publishing. To find the entire book on-line, visit MissionFrontiers.org

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## MF: Can spiritual reproduction really complete the Great Commission?

If Adam’s listed descendants each produced only 10 offspring during his lifetime, Adam would have had more than 10,000,000 descendants when he died at age 930. In *The Key to the Missionary Problem*<sup>2</sup> Andrew Murray quotes the appendix of the 1900 Student Missionary Conference:

IF there were only one Christian in the world, and he worked and prayed a year to win one friend to Christ, and IF these two then continued each year to win one more, and IF every person thus led into the kingdom led another to Christ every year, in thirty-one years every person in the world would be won for Christ.”

This information gives credence to Dawson Trotman’s theoretical belief that the world can only be reached for Christ when human population growth is matched by spiritual reproduction. 

1 See accompanying article on p 6.

2 Modernized in 1979 by Leona Choy (CLC Publishing), 2007 reprint



# RAISING LOCAL RESOURCES

## OH, AN AMERICAN IS INVOLVED?

Glenn Schwartz, Executive Director, World Mission Associates

**S**ome time ago I accompanied a young Zambian church planter to Central Mozambique, where a self-reliance seminar was scheduled. We had been traveling together and doing similar seminars in Zambia and Malawi for the previous ten days or so. It is not unusual for a seminar of this kind to have attendance ranging from 30 to 120 or more. But on this occasion only six pastors turned up for the meeting.

When I inquired about the low attendance, I learned the pastors in that area were accustomed to seminars where an outsider provides the meals, accommodations, and sometimes bus fare to and from the seminar. In some places outsiders also provide "pocket money" following the meetings. We had not indicated that any of these things would be available. After all, this was to be a self-reliance seminar. We also learned that the local pastors had assumed that I was paying the Zambian church planter traveling with me, which was not the case.

Disappointed that the dependency mentality had reached this level in this area, as in many parts of the world, we conducted the seminar with the few who came and went on our way.

This story has an interesting conclusion. After we left, the local pastors discussed why the attendance was low and what kind of American was traveling with that Zambian church planter. They discovered I was not paying him, and that we were serious about the self-reliance we talked about. Several weeks later these pastors sent a message to the young church Zambian planter, apologizing for misinterpreting his motives and actions, acknowledging that he was serious about self-reliance, and inviting him to return to present a seminar on his own. He was pleased to do this.

Why do outsiders (especially short-termers) often bring all the funding for a conference or seminar?

- Outside funding ensures good attendance.
- Giving blesses the outsiders.
- High attendance creates the appearance that local people are genuinely interested.

Unfortunately, outside funding cannot ensure the content is relevant or that the long-term benefits will result. In fact, the long-term impact may become more apparent when attendance is low—as in this case.

### What is the alternative?

In another part of East Africa I was asked to conduct a self-reliance seminar. Again, I was asked to cover the expenses of the seminar. Believing that covering local expenses is the privilege of those who want the services, I asked that the local believers provide my lodging and cover the cost of the seminar, including local travel, meals, etc., for all who attend. I did not ask for my international airfare to be provided, although I look forward to the day when even that will be possible as the concept of developing self-reliance takes hold. In a sense, my suggestion was a test of whether they really wanted me to come, or whether they were looking only for someone willing to cover the costs with outside resources.

As a result of my requests, local creativity was released in a truly heartening way. Despite the lack of outside funding, they still wanted me to come. They arranged an African home for me to stay in. They held the seminar in a church in a commercial area where shops and restaurants lined the street. The only charge for the use of the church building was that they

leave it as clean as they found it. For meals, everyone attending could go out on the street and buy what they wanted at their own expense. For my transportation, they found a church member with a vehicle and asked him to drive me from the house to the seminar each of the two days. The one out-of-pocket expense they had was providing a noon meal for me and the other speakers, something they could also purchase along the street. I also told them that I did not want to be the only presenter, and they complied by inviting several other speakers from the area who gave excellent presentations on self-reliance.

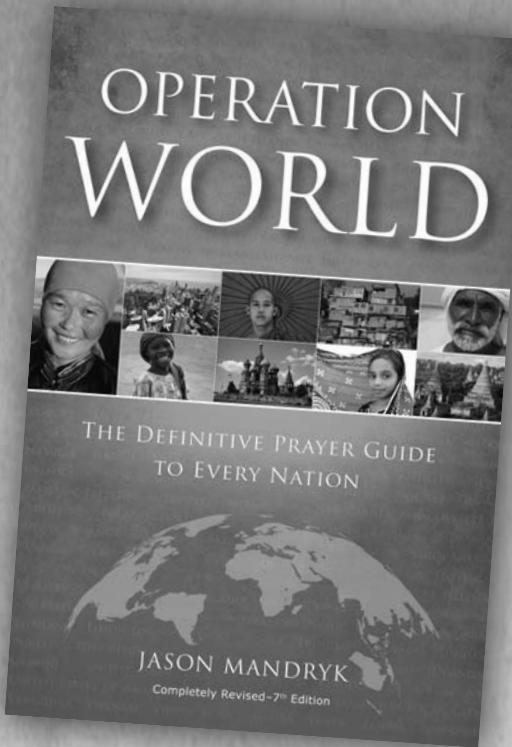
There is a risk in making the kind of requests I did for local funding of an event. Things do not always work out the way this one did. A Kenyan friend conducting marriage and family seminars tried something similar, and found her invitation cancelled in favor of others who provide their services free of charge. The reality is that, given a choice, locals will choose outside "specialists" who cover the cost of the seminars and conferences they conduct, and outsiders often get a good feeling from the increased attendance and the praise they receive for what they provide. These are practices and attitudes that those of us in the Global Self-Reliance Network (GSRN) are seeking to address.

My conclusion is this: If you think it feels good to be the outside provider, pursue helping local people discover for themselves the joy of giving to fund ministries that bless them. ☽

Author of *When Charity Destroys Dignity: Overcoming Unhealthy Dependency in the Christian Movement*, available on the WMA website [wmausa.org](http://wmausa.org)

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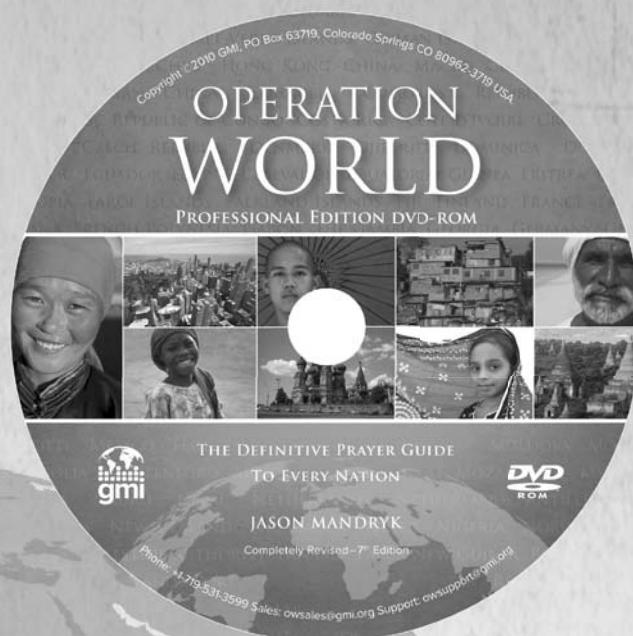
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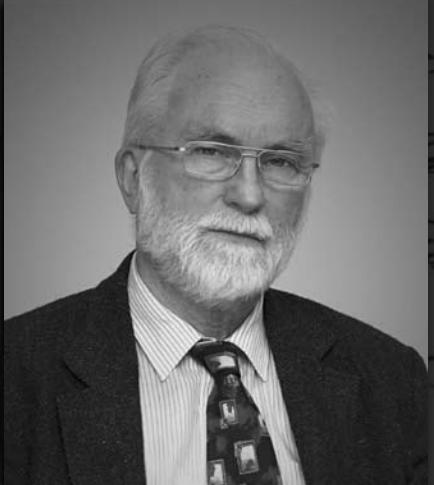
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# FURTHER REFLECTIONS



## Lausanne at Cape Town 2010

Greg H. Parsons, Global Director, U.S. Center for World Mission

I'm sure millions of words have been written about the third Lausanne congress, held in October in South Africa. My friend and co-worker Paul Emery (who is starting a Center for World Mission in Gainesville, FL) was there as a steward on the "data-mining" team—sifting through massive amounts of information coming from the event and from Web postings globally, not to mention other sources.

When you have 4,000 delegates/observers, 1,200 stewards, and hundreds of GlobalLink sites, you certainly have a range of opinions to consider.

I was able to observe the event with seven others in the Statement Working Group, who, like the full range of congress participants, were from around the world. The group, led by Chris Wright, produced the Cape Town Commitment. Part one was produced before the event. We are still working on the second part as I write this.

Seeing the event, often from a room with video feed, meant that we could interact with each other, then spread out to daily multiplexes, meals, seminars and discussion forums and come back to debrief. It helped me in thinking through issues and the focus of various sessions. We realized that we were trying to see and hear this event for everyone.

So what was the focus?

One way of describing it, in bullet points, would be to say that we in the global, evangelical Church need to:

- Deal with spiritual weakness within. Not only is there Bible "poverty" both within the Church and among

the least reached, but those who have the Bible and use it don't fully obey, which leads to the second point.

- Take seriously our commitment to Christ. For too many, faith doesn't match actions. Truth, Reconciliation, Integrity, Partnership...these were some of the themes at Cape Town.

AS YOU READ THIS ISSUE OF MISSION FRONTIERS, WHAT IS YOUR REACTION? SHARE YOUR IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES IN DISCIPLESHIP WITH US AND OTHER READERS. IF YOU ATTENDED CAPE TOWN 2010, SHARE YOUR IMPRESSIONS OR SUGGESTIONS.

- Confront the issues of our time in a much broader way than we have. These include human trafficking, poverty, environmental...it is a long list.
- Deal with the remaining frontiers of the gospel, where there is no viable church and little or no effective witness.

These were highlighted during two days in various ways.

The conference sought to model a way for believers to get into the Word and to get the Word out! By starting each day in small groups in the study of Ephesians, the underlying message demonstrated the significance of being in the Word. All 4,000 participants were around small tables in every main (plenary) session. Everyone was encouraged to read through and study Ephesians ahead of time. After study and discussion, someone presented on the section of the day for 20 minutes or so, then it was back into groups for application and prayer.

You could hear in the verbal and dra-

matic presentations, and in the videos, a clear underlying theme to each day: a call to serious discipleship. Many would say, "Good, but was that a surprise?" No.

John Stott, a foundational figure in the Lausanne movement, wrote his farewell book on this subject: *Radical Disciple* (InterVarsity Press). The last issue of *Mission Frontiers* highlighted the book *Radical* by David Platt. In this issue we pick up lessons on discipleship from people like Avery Willis and Jim Downing.

But the question remains: Can we do it? Will we?

What will it take to see people walking by faith rather than by sight?

Living (or walking) by faith is part of it. But *not* walking by sight seems wholly other. Most of us can't imagine not being able to see—especially in our visual world with instant information and opportunities all around. But isn't that what we are talking about here?

So I'll close with the questions Dawson Trotman used each day of his life: "Why am I doing what I am doing?" And "Why am I doing it the way I am doing it?"

He was not trying to be creative merely for creativity's sake. He was trying to get past patterns that might lead to dependence on his own gifting and ministry experience, or that might lead him away from a life of faith and "disable" him from hearing from the Lord in any moment.

Why not discuss those questions and your life patterns—good, bad and indifferent—with your family or small group? Let me know how it goes. 



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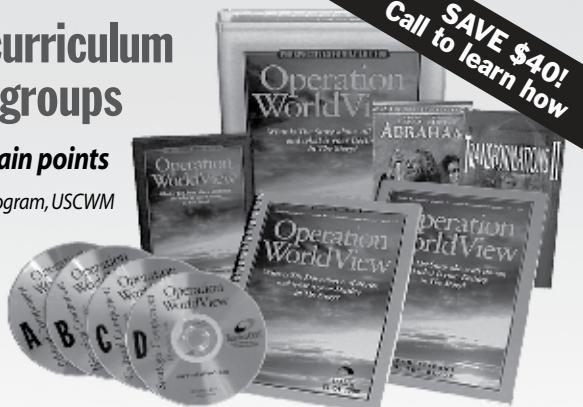
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