

# Disciple-Making: Active Learning, Adopting and Practicing

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The journey with Christ is truly a cross-bearing one. However, that may be experienced differently with regard to where He's called you to serve, how He called you to serve, when He called you to serve, and how you responded to the call to serve. As for why He called us to serve, it is the same for everyone—that as grateful souls that have been redeemed, we will be preachers and disciple-makers of Christ amongst the unevangelized, teaching them to obey what He has commanded us. We all know this in the three-worded phrase: The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). When we arrive at that truth with our gaze transfixed on the finished work of the cross, we become untamed obedient disciples of Christ who in turn make obedient disciples of Christ at our places of calling—whether within the 10/40 window (the most unreached area spanning across Africa and Asia from 10 degrees latitude north of the equator to 40 degrees latitude north of the equator) or outside the 10/40 window. He equips us with wisdom and strategic ideas to work effectively for His glory.

God Himself becomes the love-driven message in our hearts and on our lips as disciple-makers, so that we are willing to give our time, energy, resources and life to the message of the cross. With my few years of being involved in disciple-making, I have come to understand three things: (1) it is God who starts His work amongst the people we want to reach; (2) the need to mobilize people to pray is crucial; and (3) focusing on reproducing, replicating, or multiplying indigenous disciples, indigenous leaders and indigenous churches is what the work is about. With this, I have come to love the principles of Disciple Making Movements (DMM) and Church Planting Movements (CPM) which opened my understanding into the Acts-of-the-Apostles kind of ministry. I have joined in it with a passion for His name, since the day I left the polytechnic as a Pharmacy Technician in 2016 and went on to train as a Christian Apologist in 2018, asking Him on a daily basis to make me a tool in His hands as He

pleases. Now an active practitioner of these DMM principles, I would like to highlight a few biblical protocols I have learned, adopted and practiced within the scope of DMM and CPM that I found very effective. They are neither magic bullets nor the only protocols to adopt in disciple-making, but they definitely work in almost every context of disciple-making. They intentionally demand our attention in an ongoing way to see a movement of disciples emerge.

Firstly, *our attention to God's word* is a crucial invitation. We all come from different Christian denominational backgrounds that influence our view of ministry. As important as that may be, we definitely don't want to put our denominational cultures in front of our work amongst cultures that are not our own. Even the traditions of the organizations we work for must not come first. Our traditional culture is another aspect to be humbled within the culture we're reaching. The ultimate is God's word. It is the only way we can be sure of the message we carry. God's word is not culturally biased; it is not denominationally biased, organizationally biased, nationally biased or racially biased. Every culture, race, language, people group, nation, etc., finds its place in the word of God and is able to relate well with how it communicates to them. It is biblical truth that makes sense of the real world for the lost, and putting the word of God before them helps them to discover God for themselves in a meaningful way that God reveals with respect to whatever background they belong to. In fact, you can't make disciples without focusing on God's word. Any disciple made with extra-Biblical traditions is made to follow you and not Christ. Don't confuse that with what it means to reproduce biblically obedient disciples like yourself in Christ—as Paul was confident enough to charge others to imitate him like he imitated Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Secondly, *extraordinary prayer multiplication* is another invitation every disciple-maker must

adopt and practice. This does not mean clever prayer verbiage or wording, how many hours you can pray in tongues or plain language, or how loud you can pray. It also does not mean standing in the public square to perform any prayer gymnastics no one has ever seen. It is all about developing a prayer network of friends, families, churches or ministries to be praying for you, and your work amongst the unreached. These are prayer partners you intentionally connect with to be praying for you, and whom you have encouraged to invite others within their circle of friends, families, churches and ministries to join in prayer—as many as the Lord of the harvest gives you. Extraordinary prayer is a driving force for disciple-making movements to happen, for miraculous encounters especially in places tagged as hard grounds, and for us to endure persecution and hostility and overcome spiritual battles. Usually, as a disciple-maker I need to know where I am going and call for prayer. I need to know ahead how to get to the targeted people that I want to reach and call for prayer. I need to know and understand what I am doing and request for prayer. I need to know who is praying so I can communicate with them regularly for updates and also factor in when to engage in prayer myself on a regularly basis. We all need to be prayed for by others regularly, that God would give us the right words so we can boldly explain His mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike (Ephesians 6:19).

Third is the adventure of *practical evangelism*. You already put your focus on what God's word says, and considered multiplying your prayer network. It is now time to go out amongst the lost for active evangelism. If that means going to your colleague at the workplace or at school, or to that next door neighbour, or the woman who sells beside you in the market, or the gentleman you bumped into during a sports game, that particular area in your city, the people group within your region, country, continent or across the ocean— it is time to reach out to them as the Lord leads.

Fourthly, it is very important to see the people you have reached *start the journey of discovering God for themselves* in the pages of the Bible. In a case where the disciple-maker is focused on movements, you want to see discovery groups started immediately. Families and friends begin to meet together to discover biblical stories and as they go on to share these stories with non-members of their groups, they make the effort to initiate discovery groups for

others. When that chain of multiplication goes four generations deep, you are sure that God is causing a movement amongst them. If these smaller groups begin to observe baptism, communion and regular fellowship with leaders from amongst them, then you know that a church has started. These smaller discovery groups or Discovery Bible Study (DBS) groups have been the basic blocks for the local and home churches we have planted in our journey so far amongst some of the Islamized tribal groups within West Africa.

Fifthly, it is very important to come up with a *vision for reaching the lost*. It is definitely God's vision that you want to see and go along with. In our journey as disciple-makers, we always make a conscious effort to help the people we are reaching to also cast the vision of reaching their own people or next door tribes. Vision casting is also important when you and your mission organization are mobilizing passionate believers to journey with you on the field. It also helps you to significantly assess your work. Vision casting puts us on the page of accountability.

Sixthly, as an outsider who was trained to reach the people you're now working amongst, it is now your turn to train other believers within that people group to go and reach other lost people that they can also obediently disciple and train for the work of the gospel. Paul writes, "*You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others*" (2 Timothy 2:2). This equally means training other believers within your culture, organization or denomination who would also go out to obediently reach the lost and train reliable believers.

Last but not the least, as a disciple maker, you have to consistently go on to intentionally *coach the people you are discipling*. You don't stop coaching other disciple-makers, leaders of DBS groups, leaders of local or home churches planted, etc. It may be time for you to move on but you don't leave or cut connections with the previous destination. No matter how difficult it may seem, you still have to find a way of staying in touch with them for as long as the Lord enables you. I feel on-going coaching is the part of disciple-making that I enjoy best. It gives us, both the mentor and the mentee, the opportunity to have a deep Christian fellowship that shapes our lives to reflect Christ.

I believe every disciple-maker should contextually

learn the biblical principles, adopt the biblical principles and practice the biblical principles of disciple-making. Journeying with the Lord within the biblical scope of disciple-making as a young man, I have celebrated, in Christ, the discovery groups started, the people baptized, the local and home churches started and the believers trained and coached. I have also mourned, in Christ, the frustrations and discouragements, the failures in other places, the hostile teeth that were gnashed at me and the rejections that I faced, the thought of disappointing my ageing parents by not working to support them after my schooling and the countless moments of battling attacks and temptations from the enemy of my soul. Yet, it is in my joy and mourning that I keep my gaze fixed the more on the finished work of Christ on the cross, so that by allowing Him to shine through me, others from different cultures, nations, races and languages may also know Him and experience the power of His resurrection. This is where our Lord Jesus Christ brings meaning to what it means to be loved by God, forgiven by God, justified by God, and redeemed by God for His eternal joy.

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