



## PART 6

# DISCIPLESHIP & DISCIPLE-MAKING



*The Adinkra symbol “GYE NYAME” which translate “EXCEPT GOD” and signifies the supremacy of God.*

# THE URGENT CALL FOR DISCIPLESHIP IN THESE TIMES

J.F.K Mensah

**A** disciple is anyone who is committed to the process of obeying and imitating Jesus until one is like Him. I take that from Luke 6:40: it says, 'a disciple is not above his teacher or master, but if he is fully trained, he will be like his master'. 1 John 3:2 says, 'when we see Jesus, we shall be like Him, for anyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure'. So, discipleship is the process of being discipled, and a disciple is a student, an apprentice; a learner (from the Greek word, 'mathetis'). Mathematics and 'mathetis' come from the same 'root word'.

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With that definition, it is clear that when we say we are producing a disciple, it means we are in for a person that, at the end looks like Jesus, lives like Jesus, talks like Jesus, and ministers like Jesus. This now brings us to what I call 'checklists for discipleship'. My first one (and you would have guessed by now) is the goal of discipleship. In discipleship, unless the person arrives at permanent, stable and consistent Christ-likeness in character, in doctrine, in ministry in fruitfulness, and in intimacy with God, your job is not done.

It is important to check the following five points.

## 1. The selection process.

You can see in John 1:39 that the first disciples of Jesus who early on were disciples of John met Jesus after John pointed to Jesus and said, 'this is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world'. Jesus asked them, 'what do you seek?' And they answered, 'Rabbi, where do you live?' Jesus said, 'come and see'. So they went to Jesus, it was about 4:00pm and they stayed overnight. The next morning Andrew found his brother, Peter and said, 'we have found the Messiah', and brought him to Jesus.

But in Matthew 4:19, when Jesus met them fishing in Galilee, he told them, 'follow me and I will make you fishers of men'. Finally, in Mark 3:14-15, which agrees with Luke 6:12-13, we are told, 'in those days, Jesus went to the mountains to pray. He continued the whole night in prayer to God and when it was day, He called his disciples to Him and He chose twelve, whom He named apostles, that they should be with Him'. So the selection process was not haphazard. Jesus took a period of over one year before He finally selected His 12 disciples.

When you look at it, Jesus' ministry was side-by-side with John the Baptist's ministry up to the time He chose the twelve to be with Him. You can see that He observed them, and He prayed all night about them. When you read John 17, three times, Jesus told the Father, 'the men you gave me, these men you gave me, they were Yours, You gave them to me'. He was sure that it was God who

handed those people to Him, and He gave account of that, because he said, 'those you gave me I have kept them. None is lost except the son of perdition'.

For many of us, we choose disciples haphazardly, and we are surprised that they are not faithful. We are surprised that they don't last. We are surprised

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that they are not fruitful. The number one place we need to watch is the selection process.

## 2. The content of our discipleship.

If we do not have the end in mind, we will expect our disciples to produce fruit which we never put into them. When I left secondary school and came to the university, some of my friends branched into the Medical School, others into the Law School, and some went to KNUST and studied Architecture.

After the years, those who went to Medical School became doctors. Those who went to the Law School became lawyers, and those who went to the School of Architecture, became architects. Why? The content of what is taught in those schools produced the results of a doctor, a lawyer, and an architect. One of my classmates, our school prefect, flew one of the flights. When they mentioned his name, I thought, I think I know this guy. When the plane landed at the Kotoka International Airport and he got out, and here was my school prefect. He flew the airplane just because when we all left school, he went to a place where the content of the school made him a pilot. Many times, we are surprised, ‘this disciple of mine cannot cast out demons, he cannot heal the sick, he is not able to overcome pornography’, etc.

The question is, what did you put in them? The content or curriculum for discipleship is what gives you the end-product. Our churches and members are like this because of the kind of sermons we preach to them. In computer language, they say garbage in, garbage out—what you put in is what comes out.

## 3. The kind of training, character building and knowledge that we model before them.

This is important because, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:1, ‘be imitators of me just as I am of Christ’. In Galatians 4:19, he says, ‘my little children in whom

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I travail till Christ be formed in you.’ The disciples we produce look at our character and the kind of coaching and training we model before them. This is why it is called discipling. If you want your disciples to pray, you must pray. If you want your disciples to memorize Bible verses, you must memorize Bible verses. If you want your disciples to win souls, you must actively win souls. The discipler is the model for the disciple.

If you tell them to memorize Bible verses while you comfortably do not partake of any memorization, you are shooting the message in the leg because in Matthew 23:2-3, Jesus said, ‘the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat therefore everything they tell you do, but don’t do what they do for they say and do not do’. In Acts 1:1, it says, ‘Theophilus, in the last treatise, I told you what Jesus begun to do and to teach’. So the model we hold before the disciples is critical because it speaks volumes, it shouts louder than what you are telling them.

## 4. The duration of our discipleship.

I have interviewed a lot of churches and church members and for most churches, a discipleship class is like one month, two months, three months, then afterwards, you leave the discipleship class and join the main church—discipleship is done. They treat discipleship as if it was a new converts’ class. Now let me ask you, if you finish discipleship class in three months, then what is the main thing you have now come to do? A disciple is not above his master. If he is fully trained, he will be like his master. Discipleship does not end until you are like Jesus. So, with the way we have given one month, two months, three months to discipleship, in order to continue with the main church activity and more mature things, what is the more mature thing than discipleship?

Jesus said in Luke 14: 25-26, when the great crowds were following him, that, ‘if any man follows me and

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cannot hate father, mother, brother, sister, wives, children, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple'. He said in Luke 9:23, 'if any man wants to follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily'. In Luke 14:33, He says, 'if a man cannot forsake all he has, he cannot be my disciple'. The kingdom of God, according to Matthew 13:44-46, is like a treasure somebody found in the field and afterwards went and sold everything he had to buy it. The kingdom of God is like a merchant searching for precious pearls and when he found one of great price, he went and sold all he had to buy it. God's kingdom will cost you all. Jesus will not accept a Lordship which is 90%, He doesn't even take 99%, and He demonstrated it in the rich young ruler.

So, in allocating a month, two months, three months for discipleship so that we can go on and do other things, we are making the average church member think that, discipleship is kindergarten, but according to Acts 11: 26, when Paul and Barnabas gathered the church in Antioch together, for a whole year, they taught them. It is in Antioch that the disciples were first called, 'Christians', because they were looking like Christ.

## 5. The issue of reproduction.

I read the 20th anniversary reprint of Dr. Bill Hull on the discipleship movement in the United States of America and he was saying that the failure of discipleship in America is that, disciples are not reproducing. Discipleship is going on but reproduction is not going on. When there is no reproduction, there is no discipling because Jesus said in Matthew 4:19, 'follow me, I will make you fishers of men.' In Mark 1:17, He said, 'follow me, I will make you become fishers of men.' In John 15:16, He said, 'you did not choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and bear fruit that your fruit should abide'. In John 15:2, He says that, 'any branch in me that does not bear fruit, my father cuts it off and any branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it can bear more fruit'.

In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul says, 'the things you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also'. If there is dis-

cipling going on, reproduction must happen. Jesus said, in the John 17 high priestly prayer, 'I'm praying for them and I'm praying for those who will believe on me because of their word'. Jesus saw multitudes believing on him through the message of those he had disciplined. There is nothing like a disciple who is not reproducing, and we need to watch it. If your disciple is not standing, if your disciple is not reproducing, it means that there's something wrong in your discipling process.

## Why is discipleship critical in missions and particularly for Africa?

### 1. The language and culture problem in Africa is a big issue.

Africa is still just about 17% of the world's population, at most 20.5%, depending on which statistics you are leaning on. But 30% of all the languages in the world are in Africa. This means that in a nation like Ghana, taking the ethno-linguistic people groups, plus the foreigners who are in the country, we are already up to about 110 different ethno-linguistic people groups. You're talking about the Basare, the Frafra, the Nzema, and the Akpafo, name them.

Nigeria alone has over 500 ethno-linguistic people groups. With so many languages, it is difficult in Africa to just decide that you are going to use the traditional missionary method of going to live five, ten, fifty years among the people group and learn the language before you start preaching and teaching and discipling. The whole of the USA, with over 230 million people is using only English. You cannot do that in a typical African country. You cannot use any of the tribal languages to speak for the country.

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From my own experience, when the Navigators missionaries came to Ghana, I was one of the first people they disciplined because the University Christian Fellowship, donated myself and the team to the missionary, Dave Hall and his wife, Sherry to disciple. We met with him for one whole year, week after week. He taught me my first 60 Bible verses which I memorized. During that time, he could not speak Twi, Ewe and any of the Ghanaian languages. The common language was English between me

and himself and the other students who were with him. But you know what? When I left the university, it wasn't long before I became the Volta regional pastor for our church. I speak my native language, Ewe fluently. I read Ewe fluently. So with the 60+ Bible verses memorized in English, I travelled from Aflao and Denu to Kpasa, and I organized over 77 crusades. I pastored in Hohoe for twelve years and spoke my native language.

This is critical because after being discipled, you are in a position to carry Christ to your culture and to your language. This is different from when the person is just a church member. I have gone to many places to preach and I call people who have been going to church for 20 years, some of them for 30 years. I call them to the front and I ask them to give me 20 Bible verses and they are not able. After 20 years in church, when such a person goes back home to his village, he cannot transform the village because he does not have enough of Jesus's words in him to make a difference.

## 2. Missionaries don't last in the field forever.

Even Jesus, after three and a half years, he went back to heaven where he came from. So, the missionaries will go. One of the reasons why our churches in the North close up and die is because a banker, a teacher, lecturer, a nurse from the southern Volta region was transferred to Nyankpala or Savelugu, and among other things planted a church, but did not disciple anybody. So by the time they are transferred back to the South of Ghana, there is nobody to handle the church and the church dies. I was very saddened when the first headcount of Christians in Ghana was done in 1989. I was at that conference and they said over 5,000 villages in Northern Ghana, Upper East and Upper West did not have any evangelical church.

So all the churches, all of us who were pas-

sionate for church planting, the gospel and missions started moving out to the North and churches were planted. Over a five-year period, the statistics came back, that over 1000 churches had been planted and several of them had closed up. It was closed because the Southerners who went to open the church did not disciple anybody and they were transferred back

home and that was it. We need to disciple the people in such a way that when you are with a Frafra, a Dagomba or you are in an Nzema land, when you are leaving, there is somebody there who has been so discipled that he too can pass on the discipling process to another person. He can make disciples who make disciples, who make disciples.

## 3. Disciple-making is critical for missions because there are certain philosophical issues, theological issues and challenges in every culture that only discipled sons of that culture can unlock.

My father's brother was the Paramount Chief of our hometown for 60 years and then he died. For 20 years, they could not find a Paramount Chief to replace him. They grabbed my brother's son and he became the Paramount Chief. There are things around the throne of the paramount seat, which no foreign missionary will ever be told because they are tribal secrets and gems, which are guarded almost with the lives of those who know them. Only the sons of the soil, only the indigenes, those who belong to the tribe can analyze those things and know whether this kind of drum is a social drum, a demonic drum, a drum for fornication or a drum for executioners. Sometimes, some of our white missionaries even go and buy necklaces made of cowries and put them on and they think it is African

culture, but you and I know what cowries are used for. Certainly, no pastor in Ghana will put on a necklace with cowries because we understand our culture and once we are discipled, we can easily discern what is not Christlike. Therefore, if the missionary makes a mistake of just churching the people and not discipling the people, he cannot break into the culture. This is the reason why after almost 200 years of Christianity in Ghana, our chiefs, our linguists and the whole chieftaincy body is untouched by

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the gospel.

Also, I want to raise the issue of poverty in Africa. The disciple-making method we use, the church planting methods we use, the evangelism methods we use must take cognizance of the fact that the average African lives below \$2.00 a day. How much

are our pastors paid? If we want to use expensive methods of evangelism, disciple-making and church planting which have failed because we cannot raise up chapels and expensive clergy to man the influx of new souls that are coming to the church in Africa, we cannot handle it. The church in Africa will continue to remain a baby church if we don't change the way we are doing missions, because multitudes are entering the church, 50 million in one year. How do you handle that? If there's no discipling, you can just gather them in a church and there is very little change.

I don't want it to be said aloud, but as a Ghanaian, even though we all champion the fact that we are 71.2% Christian, 50% of Ghanaians are nominal. On the average, only about 20% of Ghanaians actually go to church. And of those who do go to church, Monday to Friday in the offices, they are the same as people who don't go to church. Bribery, corruption and the evils of society are not being caused by Muslims. Let us be honest about it. If there are ten people in the village and seven are Christians and three are Muslims and that village is full of bribery and corruption, full of social evils, exam malpractices and etc, is it the three people who are causing it or the seven people who are in the village? The church in Africa is receiving the gospel and growing but the personal character of the average Christian is lamentable. I doff my hat for the Africans here and there who are men and women of integrity. You cannot challenge the fact that they know Jesus, but the great majority of church-going Ghanaians are nothing to write home about—I can tell you story after story.

I normally go casually to places and when they later find out that I am a pastor, their attitude towards me changes. I am ashamed of that type of hypocrisy. Without discipling the people, we are doing African Christianity a great disservice. Now that the whole world has to look up to Africa for Christian leadership because we are in the majority, and the church here is growing while it is dying in the West, we must give them a Christianity that is truly Biblical and truly African.

This is why we need to disciple. I won't spend time on Islamic militarism. Militant Islam can make all our Christianity nonsense if we don't disciple the people for them to know that, to suffer for Jesus, to

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die for Jesus, to endure for Jesus is what is required of a disciple. This is why the missionary and missions must major on discipleship and disciple-making.

I will conclude with a few of the challenges that the 21<sup>st</sup> century is introducing.

### 1. The hatred for absolute truth.

Society is becoming more and more accommodating, so the socio cultural landscape cannot see why Jesus says in John 14:6, 'I am the way the truth and

the life, no one comes to the father, but by me.' Why do you say that? Do you want to eliminate every other religion? They cannot bear it that, the Christian says the Bible is the only word of God and that certain things are bad before God and certain things are right before God, because the Bible says so. The recent release by the United Nations is that, the church is its worst enemy as far as carrying out the freedom and human rights they want to propagate is concerned.

These are the times we live in. If we don't produce disciples with conviction, people who know the truth, stand for

the truth and are ready to die for the truth, we shall lose the market. 1 Timothy 3:15 says, 'the church is the pillar and ground of truth in the universe'. In John 17:17, Jesus says 'sanctify them in Thy truth, Thy Word is Truth'. In John 8:31-32, He says, 'if you believe in me and you continue in my word, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free'. Today's generation doesn't want to hear that.

If you are coaching a disciple in these times, and you don't build people of conviction, people who are persuaded by truth and prepared to stand for the truth, like Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and Daniel, your disciple will be washed away in no time.

### 2. We have come face to face with gay pride.

The LGBTQ fraternity is calling us people who have

homophobia, because we are saying it is wrong for you to be a homosexual, to be a lesbian, to be involved in pedophilia and to be queer or bisexual.

We are saying no, that is an abomination to God, and society doesn't want to hear that. In fact, as for the US now, if you will not allow LGBTQ, you can't win their votes. This is where society has come. These are the times we live in, the reality of the times that we are in.

### 3. The rise of atheists and agnostics

These people say, 'I was a Christian, I was born in a Christian home, I was bred in a Christian home, but I don't believe in God again. I don't believe there is any God, even if He is there, I don't know. I choose to believe in evolution and I don't believe in judgment, eternal life and resurrection.' Europe is filled with them, not to mention China and all that is going on around us from Japan to even the U S. The George Barna report, from the Pew research doesn't have a good story to tell us. Even for those who go to church once a month, some of them responded that Sodom was the wife of Gomorrah when they were asked, what is Sodom and Gomorrah? The church is in a very sorry state. What used to be a mission sending force has become a place in need of missionaries.

Now, Proverbs 24:10 says that, 'if you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small'. And Jesus has told us about the two men in Matthew 7:24-27, who built their houses; one on the rock, one on sand. The rain came down, the storm, the flood, and the one on the sand fell. We need to pay a little more attention to our children. Many times, I included, many parents do not know their children. Character is not built overnight. It is a set of habits that become character. Therefore, you cannot have a child who will fall over night. It never happens. Even for Judas Iscariot, John 12 says he was already stealing money from the money bag, which Jesus entrusted to him. We need to do a lot more thorough work on our Christian children. If after that, something happens, we are not surprised because we can already begin to see the trends, and in all grace plus parenting, that's all we can entrust ourselves to. Jesus himself took time with His disciples. He worked on them.

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So even after Satan shook them and they all run away, when they came back, they died for Him.

A Christian can be a believer in word and an atheist in action because we see Christians who speak boldly but when it comes to acting their faith, they act differently from what they speak. This is the reason discipling is critical. The fallen man, even after accepting Jesus as his Lord and personal Savior, has his heart operating

at two levels. In Romans 7, Paul was saying that, 'I know that no good thing dwells in me. The good I want to do, I am not able to do. The evil I don't want to do, I find myself doing. I know that it is no longer I; it is sin dwelling in me'. Even for myself (I use myself because I have been a Christian for about 47 years now and by the grace of God, I have not backslided) but any time I relax on myself, I am still tempted by girls.

This means everlasting watchfulness. If you cannot do this, you will be a Christian for a long time, but you will fall to your own dismay. Luke 4:13 says, 'Satan left Jesus for an opportune time'. Even with Jesus, after 40 days of fasting, Satan got near and tempted Him. When he didn't succeed after three attempts, he left Jesus, not forever, but for another opportune time to engage him. Every Christian is vulnerable. Jesus says, 'he that endures to the end will be saved'; Matthew 24:13. Nobody should take anything for granted. None of us is beyond being tempted. 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 says, 'anyone who thinks he stands should take heed, lest he falls'. We are all are vulnerable. We are depending on the grace of God, we are depending on the Holy Spirit, we are depending daily on God's promises and putting in all the hedges and things we need in order that we will run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. May it be that, none of us will relax and get home safely. Amen.

For the African Christian, if there is no Holy Spirit fellowship and empowerment in their discipling process, you are joking. Africa is full of 'Mami Wata', witches, 'Chakpana', 'Lebiezo', 'Nana Tungu', 'Antoa Nyamaa' and you name them. The evil spirits are not dreams in Africa. They are realities we live with in Africa. Till today, the world president for Voodoo is from Benin. Benin is the only country in the world that has a voodoo national holiday. So, if you are

discipling somebody in Africa and you do not bring in the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, fellowship with the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, you are joking, because so many things happen, and the disciple is not able to face them because they are spiritual issues. If you are not able to handle them, he leaves the faith and he goes to pour libation. That is the place of the Holy Spirit in discipling. He must be included and have His place.

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to bend it, it is easier than an old adult oak. If you want to bend a twisted adult oak, you will just break it. Fortunately for us the Scripture Union, GHAFES, The Navigators, the Campus Crusade and various groups are working on campuses and it is time to highlight discipleship and disciple-making in such a way that even if the churches are not prepared to embrace it, the para-church organizations will capture our youth for us. If they can get a good enough

The best time to disciple a human being is in his youth. Our Junior High Schools, Senior High Schools, and the Universities are critical because, if they are not disciplined by that time, they grow up to be caked adults who hear the gospel but find transformation very difficult. Just like a young tree, if you want

curriculum to work on them, we shall not lose them because they will be the oaks for the future of the church, but with undisciplined youth, when they get into position of power...

If Ghana needs doctors, we have the Medical School. If Ghana needs lawyers we have the Law School. If Jesus says, go and make disciples, the church must set up discipling schools, which can produce disciples, who will make disciples. Amen.

**Rev. JFK Mensah** and his dear wife Georgina have been in ministry together for more than thirty years.



Their greatest passion is working to produce fully functional Christlike disciples. JFK serves as General Overseer of the Great Commission Church International, headquartered in Ghana, and recently ended a term as the Area Leader for Northwest Africa in Pioneers Africa, a missions organization.

JFK is also the President of the Christlike Disciplemakers Movement, an interdenominational initiative for making Christlike disciples worldwide. The disciples he is raising use their calling and gifting for finishing the task of the Great Commission and preparing the body of Christ for His Second Coming. He is also the Rector of the Movement's accredited Bible School, which offers Certificate and Diploma courses in Missions and Discipleship.

*He shared this message at GEMAFEST 2020.*

# Disciple-Making: Active Learning, Adopting and Practicing

Saviour T.H. Daitey

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.

**Daitey Saviour Tulasi Humphreyson** is a field Missionary actively involved in Disciple Making Movement (DMM) and Church Planting Movement (CPM) amongst some of the unreached and unengaged people groups of West Africa. Born and raised in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, he holds a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Pharmacy Technology from the Kumasi Technical University, Ghana; Certificate in Theological Studies from Wycliffe Hall,

University of Oxford, United Kingdom and Certificate in Christian Apologetics from the OCCA Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics, United Kingdom.



He currently partners in ministry, within the 10/40 Window, with The Discover Network (TDN), UK; Operation Serve (OS), Ghana;

Excellent Youth Outreach (EYO), Ghana and OneWay Africa, Ghana.

## THE FORGOTTEN ONES; MUSINGS OF AN MK.

By Ophilia Nartey

Missions is said to be "the heartbeat of God". In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus gave His disciples the assignment we've come to know as the great commission. He told them, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen". In the bid to obey this command of taking the gospel to all the corners of the world, missionaries emerged. We see the Apostles, being the earliest missionaries, and their journeys and stories recorded in the book of Acts. As the Gospel was being taken to other countries and continents, the need for more labourers was greatly felt. Also missionaries needed their immediate families with them since they were staying on mission fields for years at a time. This led to missionaries taking their families along with them to the mission fields, to serve as labourers in God's vineyard and to reduce incidences of loneliness and depression for missionaries. Missionary kids, or MKs for short, had to move along with their parents to whichever mission field God was leading them to. They mostly have no choice in the matter.

Missionary kids (or MKs) are the children of missionary parents, and thus born and/or raised abroad (that is, on the "mission-field"). They form a subset of third culture kids (TCKs). Third Culture Kids (or TCKs), a term coined by US sociologist Ruth Hill Useem in the 1950s, is a term used for children who spend their formative years in places that are not their parents' homeland, raised in a culture other than their parents' or the culture of their country of nationality, and also live in a different environment during a significant part of their child development years. They typically are exposed to a greater volume and variety of cultural influences than those who grow up in one particular cultural setting. This includes Missionary Kids, military children, children of diplomats, among others.

Missionaries' kids (MK or third-culture kids, TCKs) are extremely important members of the missionary team although often not recognized as such. Some are born on the mission field, others not. But most spend their formative years on the mission fields. They get involved in their parents' ministry from a tender age, mostly with no choice. Due to this, most missionary kids do not remember specifically when they came to Christ. There is no dramatic "come to Jesus" moment. In recent times though, missionaries are making the effort to make their children accept Christ rather than just assuming they're Christians because of their background.

Some MKs do not know their extended family members. Most missionary kids don't go to their home countries or even towns till they're done with high school.

The problem with having to grow up in a different country is the continuing trauma of not quite belonging anywhere. When the MK is serving with his parents, he is singled out as a foreigner, but when he returns to the home country he may not feel at home and may have difficulty fitting in. A 16year old MK I spoke to said, "We're often given an extra title whenever we're introduced as the kid who grew up in that country or village" or "the child of this missionary". Sometimes, all we want is to feel normal, to feel we belong, not a specimen on show especially when we return to our sending church". Most people don't realize this and they sometimes think the MK is just not trying to fit in. The culture-shock sometimes is extremely great. The MK has to accept or at least tolerate different ways and customs and be willing to adapt. Language may also be a problem. A 26year old MK who was asked why he couldn't speak his native language said, "learning new languages every time our parents move makes it difficult to learn our native language. I can speak 5 different languages fluently, but I'm now trying to learn my native language". Most MKs are fluent in

several different languages but cannot speak a word of their mother-tongue. Being able to cope with a new environment and culture is a great challenge to the MK. "It took me two years to realize my parents had no plans of returning to our home country anytime soon and I had a bad attitude for a long time after that. I had no friends there and I didn't like the foods we were given. I remember once rejecting food I was given by a boy who was trying to be my friend and how the boy ran away crying. To my little mind, I wasn't a beggar. But in his culture, I had insulted him in a great way. The differing culture was a lot to take in, but after a while, I got used to it and didn't want to leave when my parents wanted to." This was from a 34year old MK.

When asked if we'll follow in our parents' ministry footsteps, many of MKs will awkwardly stammer our way through an answer before looking for the nearest exit. We feel pressured to say yes, and inexplicably guilty if we give an adamant 'no' but we also know that a weak maybe just doesn't cut it. Travelling a lot and experiencing different cultures make some MKs adventurous and love travelling. Some others though are just plain tired of travelling and adventures. Also, living, eating and breathing missions for most parts of our lives makes MKs either deeply interested in missions or wanting to have nothing to do with missions. For those interested in missions, most of them have no interest in serving on a mission field. Majority just want to support missionaries on the field because they believe they have a better understanding of the needs of missionaries and their families. The problem though is that when MKs interact with other missionaries or Christians, the question of whether or not they want to be a missionary almost always pops up. "I'm tired of the looks I get when I say I don't want to be a missionary. I haven't betrayed God or my parents. No, I don't have a reason for wanting to be a doctor rather than being a missionary. People find it difficult to understand that and they try to make me feel as if I'm running away from God's calling for me", said a 23year old MK. A 17years old MK said, "I have no problem with being a missionary if God wants me to be one. I just have a career I want to go into. I'm not running away from missions. Even now, professionals are needed more in missions as they can easily enter into some closed countries. God might use my career for His work". An 18years old MK said, "you have every right to ask us what career we're interested in, but, please, try to avoid making us feel like missions is the only correct answer. Every calling from God has

dignity and purpose. You don't need to add missions into the future career question. If we truly do want to go into ministry, have no doubt that we will tell you!". Some MKs have no problem with short term missions and even working administratively for a missions' organization. Most just don't want to be full time missionaries on the mission fields. In recent times though, most MKs are becoming missionaries and this is becoming a source of encouragement to the parent missionaries that their children are taking over from them.

Due to the nature of the missionary work, some MKs feel their parents' ministry is more important than them. Thankfully, this isn't an issue I've ever encountered in my own home. But I have known many MKs that do struggle with a sense that, when it comes to their parents' ministry, they take the backseat. Many MKs have seen ministry take precedence over family dinners, vacations, sporting events, even illnesses. They feel guilty asking for more time from their parents, even though that's all they really want. They feel like they're asking their parents to choose between God's calling and their own kids. Oftentimes, this guilt leads to MKs resenting their parents' ministry. A 34year old MK had this to say "If you are the parent of an MK, show us that family comes before ministry whether by simply asking us the hard questions or visibly putting your work aside for us. You may not like the honest answers we give, and it may be hard to say 'no' to ministry at times; but it will prove to us that we really do take top priority". A 13year old MK I spoke to said "I just want to know that I'm more important to my parents than their ministry. I'm not trying to make them choose between me and God, because God will surely win. I just need their time and attention. Sometimes I rebel just to get their attention, but they often times do not even notice it". A 15year old MK said, "Sometimes I struggle to remember I have a life of my own. Everyone associates me with my parent's ministry, not as a person on my own. I have my own interests, hobbies, dreams and plans, outside of my parent's missions. I just want to be treated like a regular teen, not treated in the light of my parent's work. I'm tired of having to answer questions on my parent's work when I just want to talk of other things".

On the issue of marriage, though some MKs have no qualms about marrying a missionary, a vast majority are just not interested in marrying missionaries. "I have no problem with marrying a fellow MK. In

fact, I'll prefer that since he'll understand me better due to our similar upbringings. As for marrying a missionary, it will be very difficult for me to agree to that", said a 19year old MK. Another MK said, "missionaries are the only uncles and aunties I know. Their children are my cousins. Since I can't marry my cousin, I can't marry an MK. For a missionary, I might consider it because they are very stable and are content with Christ, and that's enough for me". A 26year old MK said "Growing up, I didn't want to marry a missionary but now, I'm open to the idea". "I never wanted to marry a missionary or an MK growing up. I was running away from everything and anybody related to missions but hey, I'm married to a missionary and serving as a missionary now, and I wouldn't ask for anything different". Some MKs also said they'll like to marry missionaries, but only if things are put in place to give their children who will also be MKs, a life other than the one they had growing up.

Even though missionary kids grow up in a Christian atmosphere, it's not uncommon for them to struggle with their faith. When it comes to reaching the lost, few people think of missionary kids. After all, their parents are the ultimate Christians, right? The MK status as super Christian offspring can be exactly what hinders them from becoming devout believers themselves. They've gotten used to burying things, because it looks bad for their family if they're obviously having a problem with something. And what could look worse than an MK having doubts about God? When MKs struggle with their faith, many would rather pretend than reach out for help. "Growing up on a mission field and seeing the sufferings of some people, I had lots of questions about God. Was He real, does He really love everyone? If He did, I wasn't seeing it that well. I stopped believing in God at a point but I kept up the religiosity because I didn't want my parents to know. I just didn't know how they'll take it. God reached out to me though in my early 20's and my faith is stronger now due to that experience", said a 40year old MK. "Losing my mother on the mission field made me question the existence of God. If after all she was doing for God, He couldn't answer our prayers and keep her alive, He really didn't exist or love my family. I couldn't tell anyone how I felt, most especially not my dad. It was years later after I had rebelled and walked away from the Christian faith, proclaiming myself an atheist, that God made me see the clear picture and I realized He loved me and had my family's best interest at heart. I'm now a

missionary myself and God keeps showing me the bigger picture as I walk closely with Him each day", another MK, 34years old, said. "I know firsthand, how easy it is for MKs to fall away from the faith. I've also seen the statistics. So that's the thing I pray most, that they'll be rooted and established and be able to weather the storms that are coming without giving up their faith", an MK, now missionary said.

Due to constant changes and moves, MKs may 'lose' friends and have to cultivate new friendships much more often than their peers at home. Some grow reluctant to establish meaningful relationships and withdraw in despair. Some become self-proclaimed loners and some have commitment issues in relationships. "I realized I had no friends, not because people didn't try to include me or befriend me. It was because I had shut myself off to friendships. After moving 5 times in 12years, I didn't see the need to make any more friends since I will be told to move before I knew it", a 15year old MK said. "I was in a boarding school for missionary kids from the time I was 3years old. I had a lot of friends who were MKs. Joining my parents on different mission fields from the time I was 11years old made me lose touch with my friends. It was difficult making new friends and I mostly kept to myself especially when we moved to new locations. Within the past 3years, I've been able to reconnect with my old MK friends and it's been great. I'm learning to open up more, rather than bottling up all my feelings" said a 25year old MK.

Many MKs have been raised on limited financial resources (by home-side standards), yet may have lived in very undeveloped countries where they may even have felt rich. This has an effect on the MKs view of wealth. For me, growing up, I remember asking my parents for things and being told to pray about it. That deepened my faith in God. It was amazing praying for a need or even a want sometimes, and seeing how God miraculously provided it. There were times though that I didn't get what I wanted, but I believed He had something better for me. "The hardest part about being an MK to me was not having everything I needed when I needed it. There was almost always little money at home so needs were prioritized in order of deadlines. Things like new clothes, phones and others just didn't meet the cut. Having to wear people's used clothes which they donated was one thing I didn't like. I was wearing clothes that were out of season all the time. I sometimes just craved for something

new" said a 23year old MK. "I was bitter at the lack of 'things' while growing up; and financial limitations as a kid caused me to make personal wealth my life goal. I just wanted to be rich and have nothing at all to do with missions because that meant poverty. I'm a missionary now, and God has taught me to be content with whatever I have, even though He is always faithfully providing for my needs", a 34year old MK said. "The most embarrassing moment for me as an MK was going to a church in my "brand new clothes" only to hear a child ask another if that wasn't his clothes" said a 13year old MK.

In conclusion, MKs, though not missionaries, are largely involved in their parents' work. They actively take part in reaching out to the lost from a tender

age. When praying for missions and missionaries, don't forget to say a word of prayer for their children. Pray that they'll be deeply rooted in their faith, and won't stray from God. Aside praying, you can also encourage them and support them in any way you can.

Reference: Some MKs from Africa

**Ophelia Nartey** is a Missionary Kid (MK) who interacts with lots of African MKs across the globe. A graduate of the University of Ghana, Ophelia is a prolific writer who recently joined the Voice of Mission Team.



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