

Evangelism, Discipleship, and Church Planting

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Introduction

This writing covers church planting, evangelism, and discipleship, presenting various methods for each. Knowledge of these options aid in planning. *For example, many do not know that there are eight or more forms of evangelism. How can we plan our evangelism efforts without knowing our options?*

While this book provides foundational insights, it's a starting point with more to learn beyond its pages.

Lastly, in the spirit of transparency, I used an online tool called ChatGPT to help gather information for this writing.

Behind the Pages: The Author's Credentials

Educational Qualifications:

1. Doctorate from Westminster Theological Seminary
2. Master of Arts degree in Cross-Cultural Communications, from Fuller Theological Seminary: School of World Missions
3. Bachelor of Arts degree in Biblical Studies, from Vanguard University

Professional Experience & Accomplishments:

Church Planting

- Planted and pastored a church in the United States
- Planted and pastored 3 churches in the Philippines
- Trained and equipped pastors in Mozambique to plant churches and grow in Christ

Evangelism

- Engaged personally in “Eight Evangelistic Approaches” described in chapter IX.

Church Planting Movements

- Actively participated in two significant church planting movements, with a continuing involvement in Mozambique

Public Speaking & Leadership Training (past and present)

- Serving as a guest lecturer at various training institutions
- Conducting seminars tailored for aspiring church leaders
- Facilitating pastors' retreats, offering guidance and mentorship

I. “If we fail to plan, we plan to fail” (Benjamin Franklin)

A good friend once said to me, "Give 15 minutes a day to any topic, and in a year, you'll be an expert." I knew I couldn't become a neurosurgeon or a nuclear physicist that way, but the message was clear: When serving the Lord, it's vital to be informed and grow in understanding. Before diving into any ministry, we should study it, learn from others, and seek advice. In all we do for God, let's aim for the best, not just the bare minimum.

Proverbs 15:22 tells us, “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.”

I've worked in many church roles in different countries and met a lot of Christian leaders. From these meetings, I've seen that many church groups don't know what others are doing in the same region or in the same type of ministry. I have been guilty of this. I was so focused on the things I was doing that I never looked beyond my own ministry.

I think if every missionary would just take a year to spend 15 minutes a day learning more about their field of ministry, we'd see some great changes.

This writing is primarily about evangelism, church planting, and discipleship making, but let me give you an example as if you were a missionary who wanted to fight human trafficking. Here are my three suggestions:

1. Read whatever books you can find on the subject. I typed in, “What are the best Christian books written on how to fight human trafficking for missionaries?” and got seven book recommendations from chat.openai.com.¹ That took about 30

¹ Terrify No More: Young Girls Held Captive and the Daring Undercover Operation to Win Their Freedom by Gary A. Haugen and Gregg Hunter

Good News About Injustice: A Witness of Courage in a Hurting World by Gary A. Haugen

The Locust Effect: Why the End of Poverty Requires the End of Violence by Gary A. Haugen and Victor Boutros - Though broader than just human trafficking, this book explores the systemic issues of violence (including trafficking) that perpetuate poverty and provides insights relevant for missionaries.

God in a Brothel: An Undercover Journey into Sex Trafficking and Rescue by Daniel Walker

seconds. Of course, I would need to do further research before reading these books, but it is an easy way to start.

2. Find out what other organizations are doing. Go and visit them. Learn what has helped make them effective and what obstacles to avoid. I did another search and found the following results, “What are the ten best mission groups that are fighting human trafficking overseas?” to chat.openai.com. You can see the results in the footnote.²
3. When gathering important information and looking at what works best, brainstorm together with your team. Let everyone share their ideas. If all team members spend time learning about human trafficking and support the plan, you'll all share a clear goal. This shared goal will help the team work better together to reach it.

This writing isn't about how to stop human trafficking. I've added these steps and this information to remind everyone that as missionaries, we need to be well-prepared.

Hands That Heal: International Curriculum to Train Caregivers of Trafficking Survivors by Beth Grant and David A. C. Grant

Boundless: One Woman's Heroic Fight Against Human Trafficking by R. Klug

Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development by Bryant Myers - Though not exclusively about human trafficking, this book from a seasoned Christian relief worker provides principles for transformational development, which can be applied to anti-trafficking efforts, especially in preventive measures.

² 1. International Justice Mission (IJM) - One of the most well-known Christian organizations focused on ending violence and injustice, including human trafficking, across several countries.

2. A21 - Founded by Christine Caine, A21 operates in over a dozen countries, working to fight against human trafficking through awareness, intervention, and aftercare.

3. Exodus Cry - This organization is committed to abolishing sex trafficking and breaking the cycle of commercial sexual exploitation while assisting and empowering its victims.

4. Polaris - While not explicitly faith-based, Polaris is one of the leading organizations in the fight against human trafficking and operates the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline.

5. Operation Underground Railroad (OUR) - A relatively new organization that gained attention for its operations to rescue victims of trafficking, especially children.

6. Not For Sale - Works to end exploitation and forced labor, providing support, intervention, and recovery programs for trafficking victims.

7. Destiny Rescue - A Christian-based organization dedicated to rescuing children from trafficking and sexual exploitation, offering them protection, healing, and restoration.

8. Shared Hope International - Founded by former Congresswoman Linda Smith, Shared Hope International aims to prevent trafficking and restore and bring justice to women and children who've been victimized.

9. Agape International Missions (AIM) - Focused primarily in Cambodia, AIM fights the ground war on sex trafficking through its holistic strategy involving prevention, rescue, restoration, and reintegration.

10. Love146 - An international human rights organization working to end child trafficking and exploitation with survivor care and prevention education.

II. Make Your Own Plan

When church planting, make your own distinct plan. Spend time thinking through your strategy carefully. Don't just copy what others are doing. Even if you like a plan that already exists, make sure it fits your own situation before using it.

Always ensure that your approach is rooted deeply in your understanding of God's Word. Take the Discovery Bible Study (DBS) movement as an illustration. David Watson, one of DBS's primary advocates, promotes the idea that those who aren't believers can lead a study. He makes it clear by saying, "Let the lost facilitate the Discovery Bible Study. But remember, I didn't say, 'teach.'" Watson's point is that it's God's Word itself that instructs, not the person leading the discussion. Some might be taken aback by this and reject the whole method, while others see the value in simply gathering non-Christians to engage with and reflect on the Scriptures. So, rather than dismissing an entire strategy because you disagree with certain aspects, tailor it to align with your beliefs and convictions. Mold the plan to resonate with your understanding and values.

There is no one size fits all methodology to reach the world. No one has found the one answer that is going to fulfill the great commission. But there are principles we can learn from and serve as the foundation of our work. As we research various approaches to church planting, discipleship making, and evangelism, we will find the right approach that best fits our goals and beliefs.

III. Abundant and Intentional Prayer

Across the globe, a spiritual revival is unfolding. The Lord is actively at work, touching hearts in regions once considered resistant to the Gospel. Thousands are embracing the transformative love and grace of Jesus Christ. While this is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, many Christians overlook a fundamental spiritual principle: God desires to partner with us in His mission. In His wisdom, God works with His children to fulfill His purpose on earth. One of the primary avenues of this partnership is prayer. As such, prayer must be the cornerstone of any ministry effort.

All strategy planning needs abundant and intentional prayer. Here are some crucial aspects of church planting that require deep and intentional prayer:

1. Discerning where to serve
2. Preparing to enter a new region
3. Understanding and praying against the spiritual strongholds that might hinder the people
4. Receiving guidance for every planning phase
5. Setting strategies in motion
6. Selecting the right individuals for the mission
7. Blessing and commissioning these individuals through prayer and the laying on of hands
8. Seeking a local ally to bridge cultural gaps—a "man or woman of peace"
9. Praying for wisdom when reevaluating our approaches and strategies
10. Upholding both the seekers and those who commit their lives to Christ in prayer

IV. The Church in China: A Strategy that Multiplied on Its Own

Obtaining precise numbers on the size of the underground church in China is challenging, due to the clandestine nature of these congregations and potential discrepancies in reporting. However, many scholars, religious organizations, and journalists have provided estimates.

Fenggang Yang, a sociologist from Purdue University who has been studying religion in China for decades, predicted in 2011: "By my calculations, China is destined to become the largest Christian country in the world very soon." He estimated that by 2030, China's Christian population "will reach 247 million", surpassing Mexico, Brazil, and the United States.

The Council on Foreign Relations mentioned in a 2015 report, "The number of Chinese Protestants has grown by an average of 10 percent annually since 1980."

Brent Fulton, as cited in a BBC report from 2011, mentioned: "Each year millions more believers are added, but this mostly happens in the unofficial churches, whether Protestant 'house churches' or the so-called 'underground' Catholic churches."

While specific numbers are hard to provide, what is clear is that all estimates show that the church in China is growing at a phenomenal rate.

During Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution, religious persecution inadvertently bolstered its growth. Churches went underground, making faith more resilient. Christians established house churches, which were harder to monitor and promoted strong community bonds, providing both spiritual and emotional support.

The Chinese church successfully trained indigenous leaders who understood the local culture, challenges, and strategies needed to expand the church. During the Cultural Revolution, most of the

professional leaders of the church were arrested. Lay leaders, especially women, became the new house church leaders and teachers. Ordinary folks facilitated the gatherings.

There are numerous testimonies about miraculous healings, signs, and wonders that have helped the church grow. Some Chinese converts report having visions and dreams of Jesus, even before being exposed to the Christian message. There have been several Christian books and documentaries that highlight miraculous stories from China. For instance, *The Heavenly Man* is a book about the life of Brother Yun, a notable Chinese Christian leader who includes several accounts of miraculous events. Similarly, the documentary, "The Cross: Jesus in China," offers accounts of signs and wonders that have reportedly accompanied the spread of Christianity in the nation.

Even amidst the chaos of the Cultural Revolution, stories emerged of Christians providing aid and support to their neighbors, whether it was sharing scarce food during times of famine or providing emotional support during the widespread societal upheaval. Rather than invite people to church, which would be quite dangerous, people helped and prayed for those in need in their community.

V. Lessons We Learn from the Underground Church in China

- A. House churches are more effective.
- B. Empowered believers can lead.
- C. The Church and its leaders are indigenous.
- D. Signs and wonders are a part of the Church.
- E. Persecution can strengthen the Church.
- F. Home churches offer emotional, spiritual, and physical support.

Let's look more closely at these six lessons.

A. Why House Churches are More Effective

1. **Flexibility:** These churches can be anywhere, like living rooms, backyards, or businesses, allowing for spontaneous and diverse gatherings.
2. **Low Cost:** Minimal financial investment is needed, freeing resources for outreach and community support.
3. **Rapid Multiplication:** Due to their simplicity and low cost, these churches can quickly multiply, especially when groups outgrow home settings.
4. **Intimate Setting:** Smaller, home-based churches foster deep relationships and accountability among members.
5. **Accessibility:** Informal locations like courtyards can be more welcoming and less intimidating for newcomers, as seen in the Philippines.
6. **Cultural Relevance:** Aligning with local customs, like using a "boma" in African cultures, makes these churches feel more integrated into the community.
7. **Persecuted Regions:** In areas where Christianity is suppressed, house churches offer a discreet option for worship and fellowship.
8. **Leadership Development:** As churches spread out and grow rapidly, new leaders are needed. This can be both good and tricky. It's good because it provides chances for people to step up and lead. It is also a fantastic place for leadership training

and spiritual growth. On the job training is usually more effective than hypothetical ministry. It's also challenging, because a clear plan is needed to teach and guide these new leaders of the rapidly multiplying churches. I talked to a missionary from the South African Assemblies of God who said they had to stop their church planting efforts because the churches were being added so quickly, they could not keep up with the discipleship. They felt their people had not yet made a break from the spiritism of their traditional African religion and therefore were not ready to step into leadership. They needed to slow down and properly disciple their members before giving them pastoral responsibilities.

B. Empowered Believers Can Lead

The role of everyday believers cannot be understated. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, every believer in the church is encouraged to play an active role right from the start. They're not mere spectators, but active participants in God's work. The teachings and methods used are often simple, allowing even new believers to easily share their faith and start new groups.

C. The Church and its Leaders are Indigenous

Indigenous churches are more effective for several reasons:

1. **Cultural Relevance:** They deeply understand and align with their culture, tailoring worship and outreach effectively.
2. **Community Trust:** Built on longstanding relationships, they communicate the Gospel more openly and effectively.
3. **Sustainability:** Relying on local resources and leadership, they're less dependent on external support.
4. **Authentic Representation:** They avoid being seen as foreign, aiding acceptance.
5. **Language and Communication:** Fluent in the community's language and cultural nuances.
6. **Local Solutions:** Well-equipped to address local issues relevantly and effectively.

7. **Flexibility:** Agile and adaptable, not restricted by external rules.

In summary, indigenous churches are effective because they're deeply rooted in their communities, understand local challenges and opportunities, and can engage in authentic, culturally relevant ministry.

D. Signs and Wonders

Praying for the sick and expecting God to do the miraculous helped the church to grow.

Why and how does this work?

1. **Tangible Demonstrations of God's Power:** When prayers result in healings, it serves as a visible and undeniable manifestation of God's power.
2. **Building Faith:** Witnessing healings can bolster the faith of existing believers.
3. **Evangelistic Opportunities:** Stories of miraculous healings can quickly spread in communities, drawing curiosity and interest.
4. **Addresses Real Needs:** In many areas in China there is limited access to medical care. Praying for the sick addresses an immediate, tangible need, showing that the Church is concerned about both their spiritual and physical well-being.
5. **Encourages Total Dependence on God:** Praying for the sick underscores the Church's dependence on God's power rather than on human effort or wisdom.
6. **Acts as a Catalyst for Further Planting:** As people experience or witness healings, they may be inspired to share their stories with others in different regions or communities. This creates opportunities for further church planting.
7. **Counteracts Opposing Spiritual Forces:** In many cultures, illness is often seen through a spiritual lens. Praying for healing can be a direct counter to local spiritual beliefs or practices. Throughout the world people go to the local shaman (witchdoctors). Until Jesus' power is clearly recognized as

stronger, many new believers will continue to go to these “healers”.

In essence, praying for the sick has provided the Church in China with a means to tangibly demonstrate God's love and power, leading to increased faith, unity, and evangelistic opportunities.

E. Persecution Can Strengthen the Church

Persecution, while inherently distressing and painful, has historically strengthened the Christian Church. Here are some ways in which persecution can lead to a stronger church:

1. **Faith Refinement:** Persecution tests and clarifies true faith, separating genuine believers from those less committed.
2. **Dependence on God:** It strengthens believers' reliance on God and deepens their spiritual practices, like prayer.
3. **Gospel Expansion:** Persecution often inadvertently spreads Christianity, as fleeing believers share their faith in new areas.
4. **Worldly Distinction:** Persecution helps the Church maintain its distinct values, separating them from secular culture.
5. **Lay Leadership Growth:** In places like China, targeting formal church structures has led to a rise in grassroots, resilient lay leadership.

F. Home Churches Offer Emotional, Spiritual, and Physical Support

In response to persecution, the Church in China developed the following various strategies to meet the emotional and physical needs of its members.

1. **A Haven:** The Church serves as a sanctuary where members can worship together, share their struggles, and offer each other emotional and spiritual support.

2. **Secret Prayer Meetings:** These gatherings offer a private space for believers to find emotional healing and spiritual strength through prayer.
3. **Sharing Resources:** During times of economic difficulty due to persecution, church members often come together to pool resources. This collective effort ensures that everyone's basic needs are met and extends support to the wider community in need.
4. **Supporting the Persecuted:** The church community actively supports the families of believers who are imprisoned, ensuring they have necessary provisions and emotional backing.

Why the emphasis on the church in China? The spread of Christianity in China in the last few decades is truly amazing. Many people consider it one of the biggest growth stories in the history of the Church. It gives us real-life examples that support many of the ideas that people talk about in modern church missions. By looking at China's story, we can learn lessons and see what works when trying to grow the Church in other parts of the world.

VI. What is Discipleship?

Matthew 28:18-20 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 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, 20 and **teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you**. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

A. Not Just Giving Information

When we delve into the biblical concept of discipleship, it becomes evident that it closely mirrors modern-day mentoring programs or apprenticeships. The first twelve disciples of Jesus did not merely benefit from spoken teachings. Instead, they were immersed in a holistic learning environment where Jesus served as both their teacher and model. This form of discipleship was experiential and hands-on.

Much like an apprentice learning a trade, they were taught not just the theory, but also the practical application of Jesus' teachings. They observed His interactions, His reactions, and His daily decisions. They also witnessed firsthand His compassion, His boldness, His dedication to prayer, and His unwavering commitment to God's will. Over time, these practices were not just things they observed; they became intrinsic parts of their own lives and character. This model of discipleship shapes not just the mind, but also the heart and actions. Like Jesus, we need to live out our faith and be an example to those we disciple. “Follow me, as I follow Christ” – Paul, the apostle.

B. Not Disciples of Men

While we have teachers and heroes today, we as Christians are not their disciples. We are disciples of Jesus. When someone says, “I was discipled by Bob,” we understand that Bob was involved in the process of bringing them closer to Jesus. Bob is not the one they primarily should follow, however.

Matthew 23: 8-10, “But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah.”

Within the pages of the Bible, discipleship is portrayed as a deep mentorship or apprenticeship directly under Jesus. The disciples weren't just passive listeners; they formed a deep and meaningful connection with Jesus, recognizing Him as their foremost Teacher and Guide. In the grand scheme, no one can rival the role Jesus plays. The original twelve were explicitly advised not to be addressed as Rabbi, Teacher, or Father. In Matthew 23:8-10, I believe Jesus says this to stress that no one can match His position as a Rabbi. This perspective is vital when considering our roles today. As highlighted in Matthew 28, our primary task is to lead others to become followers of Jesus. It isn't about rallying around a charismatic leader; it's about centering our lives on Jesus. This is the essence of authentic discipleship: guiding everyone's focus toward a deep relationship with Jesus.

C. Defining Discipleship?

In my years as a missionary, I've encountered people who've reduced the meaning of 'disciple' to merely someone who follows Jesus' teachings. Yes, obedience is vital, but walking with Jesus as His disciple encompasses so much more. Here is my description of a disciple: A disciple is someone who loves Jesus and longs for His presence. He or she anchors their whole life in Him. They also cherish His word and seek to imitate Him in every action and decision.

D. To know Him is to Love Him

When we truly understand and experience the depth of Jesus's love — His sacrifices, His teachings, His unwavering commitment to humanity — our desire to obey His teachings becomes a natural expression of our love in return.

Author Francis Chan wrote, “It's crazy, if you think about it. The God of the universe—the Creator of nitrogen and pine needles, galaxies and E-minor—loves us with a radical, unconditional, self-sacrificing love. And what is our typical response? We go to church, sing songs, and try not to cuss.”³

I've come to see that to Jesus, our heart is of paramount importance. It's not just our actions, but our hearts that He deeply cares about. Jesus didn't step foot on this earth merely because we stray occasionally into bad habits. No, He came with a greater mission.

³ Crazy Love: Overwhelmed by a Relentless God

VII. What is a Discipleship Making Movement?

A discipleship movement is a phenomenon where individuals or small groups intentionally focus on making new disciples of Jesus Christ. Here's a summary:

1. **Purpose:** The primary purpose of a discipleship movement (DM) is to fulfill the Great Commission given by Jesus in the Bible (Matthew 28:18-20), which is to go and make disciples of all nations, teaching them all that Jesus commanded them.
2. **Discipleship:** If it is done correctly, it places a strong emphasis on the process of discipleship, which involves nurturing and mentoring new believers to become more like Jesus in their beliefs, character, and actions.
3. **Multiplication:** Discipleship movements often prioritize the multiplication of disciples rather than just addition. The goal is for each disciple to make more disciples, creating a self-sustaining movement.
4. **Teaching and Training:** Discipleship movements provide teaching and training in foundational Christian principles, such as Bible study, prayer, evangelism, and living out Christian values.
5. **Evangelism:** A discipleship movement often involves active evangelism efforts, where disciples are encouraged to share their faith with others and invite them to become followers of Jesus. A prominent part of a discipleship movement is the use of Discovery Bible Studies (DBS).
6. **Leadership Development:** A strong discipleship movement prioritizes the development of leaders within the movement to ensure its sustainability and growth.
7. **Flexibility:** A discipleship movement can take various forms and adapt to different cultural contexts, making them adaptable to different settings and regions.

David Garrison, author of Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World, writes, "Church Planting Movements are acts of God, but it's amazing how often they develop where fervent

prayer, faithful evangelism, and fastidious application of God's Word are already occurring."⁴

⁴ Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World

VIII. Approaches to Discipleship

In the following pages we will look at four approaches to discipleship and their criticisms:

- The Lesson Approach
- The Story Approach
- The Discovery Bible Study Approach
- The Alpha Course Approach

A. The Lesson Approach to Discipleship

The "lesson approach" to making disciples refers to a structured, curriculum-based method of disciple-making. While various churches and ministries may have different specifics for this method, here are the general characteristics of the lesson approach:

1. **Structured Curriculum:** There's a pre-defined set of lessons or topics that are considered essential for spiritual growth. These might include foundational teachings about faith, salvation, the nature of God, the Holy Spirit, prayer, worship, etc.
2. **Progressive Learning:** Lessons typically progress from basic teachings to deeper theological and practical topics.
3. **Homework & Application:** Apart from teaching, participants might be given homework or assignments that require them to apply what they've learned.
4. **Evaluation & Feedback:** Teachers or mentors will often evaluate the understanding and application of the lessons by the disciples. This can be through discussions, quizzes, or just personal interactions.
5. **Mentorship:** Alongside the lesson-based instruction, one-on-one mentorship, or small group interactions play an important role. These settings allow for personalized guidance and addressing specific questions or doubts.
6. **Real-Life Application:** While the lessons provide theological and spiritual knowledge, an emphasis is always placed on how to live out these teachings in daily life.

7. **Reproduction:** The end goal is often not just individual spiritual growth but also preparing the disciple to disciple others. Hence, lessons might include teachings on leadership, evangelism techniques, and strategies for starting new disciple groups.

It's worth noting that while the lesson approach offers a systematic way to understand and grow in faith, disciple-making is also about relationship-building, personal transformation, and being led by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the lesson approach is often combined with other relational and Spirit-led methods.

B. Possible Criticisms of the Lesson Approach

Here are some possible criticisms associated with the lesson approach (Many of these criticisms can be answered by adjusting how the approach is carried out):

1. **Lack of Personal Engagement:** Some argue that structured lessons can be impersonal, not catering to individual needs or addressing personal questions and struggles.
2. **Overemphasis on Knowledge:** There's a risk of focusing too much on head knowledge at the expense of heart transformation.
3. **Rigidity:** A set curriculum might not be flexible enough to address timely issues or the specific needs of a particular group.
4. **Cultural Insensitivity:** Lessons created in one cultural context might not always translate well to another.
5. **Over-reliance on Human Teachers:** Focusing on a lesson approach can sometimes place undue emphasis on human teachers rather than encouraging personal study and reliance on the Holy Spirit.
6. **Potential for Misunderstanding:** Without adequate discussion or interaction, some participants might misunderstand the material but not have an opportunity to seek clarification.
7. **Accessibility Issues:** People with different learning styles or educational backgrounds might feel left out or struggle to engage.
8. **Loss of the Big Picture:** Focusing on specific doctrines or teachings might sometimes neglect the broader narrative of

Scripture, making it harder for people to see the big picture of God's redemptive plan.

Despite these criticisms, many believe that when used wisely and in conjunction with other methods, the lesson approach can be a powerful tool for deepening understanding and fostering growth in discipleship.

C. The Story Approach to Discipleship

The story approach, often called "storytelling" or "oral discipleship," is a method of evangelism and discipleship that prioritizes the use of stories—typically from the Bible—to communicate truths about God and the Gospel. This method recognizes that many cultures are orally focused, allowing stories to be powerful tools for conveying truth.

1. **Narrative Focus:** This approach uses stories from the Bible to teach moral and spiritual lessons.
2. **Relatability and Engagement:** Stories are engaging and can speak to the heart, especially in an oral culture.
3. **Memorability:** Stories are easier to remember, aiding long-term lesson retention.
4. **Discussion and Interpretation** encourages interactive learning through discussion and personal interpretation.
5. **Application to Daily Life** makes teachings practical and relevant to everyday life.

D. Possible Criticisms of the Story Approach

Like any method, the story approach has its critics. Here are some criticisms often levied against it:

1. **Theological Depth** may overlook complex theological concepts better explained through direct teaching.
2. **Misinterpretation Risks:** Listeners might misunderstand or misapply the story's message.

3. **Incomplete Picture:** Selected stories might miss broader biblical narratives or key doctrines.
4. **Cultural Misunderstandings:** Different cultures may interpret stories in unintended ways.
5. **Orality Overemphasis:** Focus on oral storytelling could neglect literacy and in-depth scripture study.
6. **Memory Limitations:** Oral stories can change over time if not anchored in written texts.
7. **Systematic Theology Gap:** Storytelling may not facilitate comprehensive theological study of the Bible.

Despite these criticisms, many proponents of the story approach argue that when used correctly and in conjunction with other methods, storytelling can be a powerful tool for making disciples. This is especially true in oral cultures or among people groups with limited access to written Scriptures.

E. The Discovery Bible Study Approach

Discovery Bible Study (DBS) is an approach to studying the Bible that emphasizes individual discovery and obedience to God's Word. DBS is often used in discipleship, evangelism, and church planting efforts, particularly in contexts where traditional church models may not be as effective or even possible. Here's a breakdown of the Discovery Bible Study approach:

1. **Scripture-Centered:** Focuses on reading and discussing specific Bible passages.
2. **Simple Format:** Uses a consistent, easy-to-follow question format.
3. **Reproducible:** Encourages participants to lead their own studies.
4. **Obedience-Based:** Stresses applying and sharing learned insights.
5. **Participatory:** Everyone engages in discussion and insight sharing.
6. **Discovery-Oriented:** Emphasizes personal discovery of biblical truths.

7. **Multiplicative Goal:** Encourages participants to start new DBS groups, thus spreading the gospel.

Discovery Bible Study has proven to be an effective tool, especially in cross-cultural contexts and places where traditional forms of church might not be feasible. The method leverages the power of God's Word, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the power of personal discovery.

F. Possible Criticisms of a Discovery Bible Study Approach

The Discovery Bible Study (DBS) approach, while celebrated by many for its simplicity and reproducibility, is not without criticisms. Here are some of the common concerns and criticisms raised by various individuals or groups:

1. **Lack of Depth:** Some critics argue that the DBS approach, with its reliance on simple questions, can sometimes lack theological depth.
2. **Potential for Misinterpretation:** Without trained leaders or facilitators, there's a possibility that participants could misinterpret or misunderstand certain passages of Scripture.
3. **Overemphasis on Reproducibility:** Focusing on easy methods may oversimplify Scripture and prioritize rapid multiplication over depth and growth.
4. **Absence of Trained Leadership:** Traditional church structures often involve trained and educated leaders. In the DBS model, leadership is more organic, leading some to worry about the potential lack of theological training or oversight.
5. **Cultural Sensitivity:** While DBS is lauded for its adaptability across cultures, critics might point out that certain cultural contexts could lead to readings of Scripture that are influenced more by local customs than by the text itself.

While these criticisms exist, it's important to note that many practitioners and advocates of DBS are aware of these potential pitfalls and work actively to address them. They would argue that when done correctly, DBS can be a powerful tool for discipleship and

evangelism, especially in contexts where traditional models of church and Bible study might not be as effective.

G. The Alpha Course approach to Evangelism

The Alpha Course started at London's Holy Trinity Brompton in 1977. Nicky Gumbel took it over in 1990, reshaping it for outsiders. Its growing popularity at Holy Trinity caught other churches' eyes, seeking a potent evangelism tool. It was launched globally in 1993. From then until 2022, over 28 million people have attended the course worldwide. The course is now in over 110 languages. We have many friends using the course effectively, particularly in Ukraine among those displaced by the war. It is a powerful tool in getting the gospel into the community.

The Alpha Course is an 11-week program designed to foster open dialogue about life, faith, and one's relationship with God. Set in diverse settings, from homes to coffee shops, each Alpha session is strategically structured to enhance connection and reflection. The course starts with a meal, promoting fellowship and unity among participants. Following the meal, attendees are presented with a thought-provoking talk addressing pivotal aspects of life and faith. The session culminates in small group discussions, emphasizing inclusive dialogue where every individual's perspective is acknowledged and appreciated. Rooted in fostering genuine conversations and deepening understanding, the Alpha Course serves as a bridge between questioning and faith, creating a safe space for exploration and discovery.

The Alpha Course covers a range of topics that explore the basics of the Christian faith. While the exact topics might have slight variations depending on the version or adaptation of the course, the core subjects typically include:

1. Is There More to Life Than This?
2. Who is Jesus?
3. Why Did Jesus Die?
4. How Can We Have Faith?

5. Why and How Do I Pray?
6. Why and How Should I Read the Bible?
7. How Does God Guide Us?
8. How Can I Resist Evil?
9. Why and How Should I Tell Others?
10. Does God Heal Today?
11. What About the Church?

Additionally, there's usually a Holy Spirit day or weekend halfway through the course. This segment delves deeper into topics like:

- Who is the Holy Spirit?
- What does the Holy Spirit do?
- How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?

Another similar course is “Christianity Explored.” This is an alternative to the Alpha Course for those who prefer a less charismatic view of Christianity.

The Alpha Course approach is characterized by the following key elements:

1. **Welcoming Environment:** Alpha is designed to be non-threatening and accessible, particularly for people who might not otherwise attend a church.
2. **Talks on Christian Basics:** Each session includes a talk (or video presentation in some versions) that covers fundamental aspects of the Christian faith. Topics range from "Who is Jesus?" to "How can I resist evil?" These talks are designed to be engaging, straightforward, and non-confrontational.
3. **Discussion Groups:** After each talk, participants break into small groups to discuss what they've heard. This is a space for open dialogue where participants can ask questions, express doubts, or share their thoughts without any judgment.
4. **Non-Pressured Approach:** One of the hallmarks of the Alpha Course is its non-coercive approach. Participants are not pressured into making a commitment or holding a particular set

of beliefs. Instead, the course encourages exploration and personal discovery.

5. **Weekend/Day Away:** Most Alpha Courses include a day or weekend away, usually focused on the Holy Spirit. This time allows for deeper exploration of topics and often provides opportunities for participants to experience Christian worship and prayer in a more intensive setting.
6. **It's for Everyone:** The Alpha Course has been adapted for various contexts and age groups, including youth, prisons, and different cultural settings. Its foundational principles are consistent, but the content can be tailored to best fit the audience.
7. **Relational:** The emphasis throughout Alpha is on building relationships—both between participants and leaders and among participants themselves. This fosters a sense of community and mutual discovery.
8. **Comprehensive:** While the primary focus is on evangelism and introducing people to Christianity, the course also touches on other aspects of Christian life, helping attendees understand what life might look like as a follower of Jesus.

The Alpha Course's approach to evangelism is invitational and relational, making it particularly effective in contexts where people may have little to no background in Christianity or might have misconceptions or negative experiences with the Church. The environment it creates allows for open dialogue and genuine exploration of the Christian faith.

H. Possible Criticisms of the Alpha Course Approach to Evangelism

Here are some possible criticisms of the Alpha Course method of evangelism:

1. **Over-Simplification:** Some argue that the Alpha Course can be too simplistic in its presentation of theological topics.
2. **One-Size-Fits-All:** While Alpha is adaptable, some critics argue that it can still come across as a one-size-fits-all solution. They

believe that evangelism should be more tailored to individual needs and cultural contexts. Even though the course has been adapted for various cultures, some believe that its origins in Western Christianity might limit its effectiveness in other cultures.

3. **Lack of Discipleship Focus:** Some critics believe that while Alpha is good for introducing people to Christianity, it doesn't offer enough in terms of discipleship and guiding new believers in their walk with Christ beyond the course.
4. **Ecumenical Approach:** Alpha's broad appeal to various Christian denominations has led to concerns among some groups about ecumenism. They worry that key denominational beliefs might be watered down to accommodate a wider audience.

It's important to note that while these criticisms exist, many people and churches have found the Alpha Course to be a valuable tool in outreach and evangelism.

IX. Approaches to Church Planting

A. Church Planting Movement

A Church Planting Movement (CPM) is a rapid and multiplicative increase of indigenous churches planting churches within a given people group or population segment. The concept is rooted in the idea of not just planting individual churches but catalyzing movements where new churches continually plant other new churches, which in turn plant even more churches, leading to exponential growth.

Key features of a Church Planting Movement include the following:

1. **Rapid Multiplication:** Churches are not just added; they multiply rapidly across generations (i.e., churches planting churches that plant more churches).
2. **Indigenous Leadership:** Local believers, rather than foreign missionaries, primarily drive the movement. This ensures cultural relevance and often leads to better sustainability.
3. **Simple Church Structures:** Often, the churches in a CPM are simple and can meet anywhere, from homes to workplaces.⁵
4. **Biblical Authority:** The Bible serves as the primary guide for faith and practice. This often includes obedience-based discipleship, where believers are encouraged to act on what they learn from Scriptures.
5. **Lay Leadership:** Ordinary believers, not just professionally trained pastors, take on leadership roles and actively evangelize, disciple others, and start new churches.
6. **Intentional Reproduction:** From the onset, believers and churches are taught and expected to reproduce—meaning

⁵ Note: Instead of focusing solely on home churches, as many do, our perspective should shift towards churches that can rapidly multiply without external aid. Drawing from our experience with numerous churches across Mozambique, traditional homes are too small to hold more than four to six people. People do not gather in homes, but rather in front of homes or under large trees. I've witnessed local believers construct a church building within a weekend, using grass for roofing and indigenous materials from the surrounding area for the walls. At other times, a group of shade trees make a good meeting point.

believers are to evangelize and disciple others, and churches are to plant other churches.

Further facts concerning Church Planting Movements:

The goal of a CPM is to evangelize an entire people group or population segment quickly by tapping into existing social networks and using indigenous resources. This method is seen by many as a return to the New Testament model of church growth and multiplication.

A church planting movement usually consists of 100 or more churches that were planted faster than most people thought possible. These churches grow not by adding one church after another but by multiplying.

The people leading these types of movements are the locals themselves – homegrown leaders who know their communities inside and out. We call these indigenous leaders the heart and soul of these movements.

These movements expand out to four generations or more. Here's how they work: Bill visits Pastor Fred's church and gets inspired. After soaking up the goodness at Pastor Fred's place, Bill decides to start his own church. Now, Mark comes along and joins the church where Bill is the leader. After getting disciplined and inspired from Bill's church, Mark gets that spark and starts his own church too. And the cycle continues as Ted, with a passion ignited by Bill's church, follows suit. So, in a nutshell, Fred passes the baton to Bill and others, Bill to Mark, Mark to Ted and Ted to a possible fifth generation. You get the idea.

Now, when we talk about a movement, whether it's about growing disciples or planting churches, we're talking about exponential growth. Exponential growth is rapid, consistent multiplication over time.

Depending upon how strictly you define a church planting movement, I've been profoundly blessed to be a part of two. First, there's the incredible story going on in Mozambique with Iris Global and their many churches, where my wife and I remain deeply involved. Before that, I had the privilege of being part of an extraordinary church planting movement in the United States with Calvary Chapel. In Southern California, I planted a third-generation Calvary Chapel church, where two of our remarkable members, driven by the same passion, ventured out and started fourth-generation churches! (We didn't officially label them as third or fourth generation churches; I'm using these terms to make sense within my description of a church planting movement.)

B. Possible Criticisms of the Church Planting Movement

The Church Planting Movement (CPM) approach, while celebrated by many for its effectiveness in rapidly multiplying churches, has also faced various criticisms.

1. **Shallow Theology:** Due to the rapid multiplication of churches, some critics worry that there might not be enough depth in biblical teaching. This lack of depth could lead to syncretism, where previous religious beliefs get mixed in with the new Christian doctrine.
2. **Leadership Concerns:** Rapid multiplication can sometimes result in immature leaders who might not be fully prepared for the challenges of pastoral care or might misuse their authority.
3. **Sustainability:** While rapid growth is impressive, there are concerns about the long-term sustainability of churches that are planted so quickly. Without deep roots and strong leadership, some churches might fade away as quickly as they appeared.
4. **Discovery Bible Study Concerns:** Some critics argue that the Discovery Bible Study method, often used in CPMs, can be too open-ended. This could potentially lead participants into making incorrect conclusions.
5. **Quality vs. Quantity:** The rapid growth prioritized in CPMs can sometimes focus more on quantity (number of churches or

believers) rather than quality (depth of faith, understanding, and discipleship).

It's important to note that while these criticisms exist, most all practitioners of the CPM approach are deeply aware of these potential pitfalls and work actively to address them. Advocates would argue that, when done correctly, CPMs can result in deeply committed disciples and resilient, multiplying churches.

C. Training for Trainers (T4T) Approach to Church Planting

Developed by Ying Kai and Steve Smith in East Asia, T4T is a church planting movement method that has seen significant success, especially in parts of Asia. The core components include:

1. **Intentional Evangelism:** Participants are trained to share their testimonies and the gospel story with non-believers, aiming to win them to Christ.
2. **Immediate Training:** New believers are immediately trained to witness to others, leading to rapid multiplication.
3. **Bible Study and Formation:** Groups of believers meet for Bible study, prayer, and mutual encouragement, often forming the nucleus of new churches.
4. **Reproduction:** From the outset, the goal is not just making disciples but training disciples to make disciples, leading to exponential growth.
5. **Leadership Development:** As new groups form, leaders are identified and trained, ensuring that the movement can continue to grow without outside intervention.

Note: While T4T can be a strategy used within a church planting movement, not all CPMs necessarily use the T4T approach. The T4T approach is obviously very similar to a church planting movement. Perhaps one of its greatest strengths is in the area of strong leadership development. However, because these two methods are so similar, their possible criticisms are nearly identical.

D. Possible Criticisms of Training for Trainers Approach

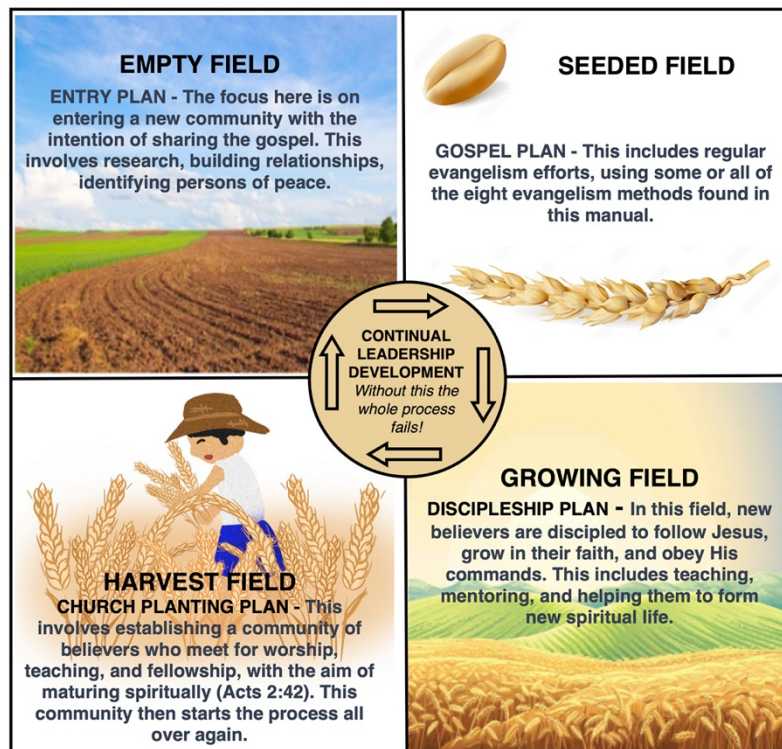
1. **Lack of Deep and Theological Training:** Due to the rapid replication model, there's a concern that there might not be enough depth in theological training.
2. **Potential Burnout:** The T4T model places a strong emphasis on continual evangelism and training, which can lead to spiritual and physical burnout.
3. **Lack of Emphasis on Worship and Communion:** Some critics feel that the structure of T4T doesn't place enough emphasis on the importance of worship, communion, and other vital elements of Christian community life.

While some criticisms exist, many practitioners have found T4T to be an effective tool.

E. The Four Fields Approach

Note: This is the method used by Iris Global in Mozambique, where hundreds of churches have been planted.

The "Four Fields" (4F) approach to church planting has been adopted by many mission organizations and church planters. It's a model that attempts to cover the entire process of church planting from entry to a new community to the establishment of a multiplying church. The name "Four Fields" is metaphorical, representing the process of finding a field, sowing the gospel, seeing the gospel take root and grow, and harvesting a crop (new churches). These new churches then look for a new field to plant. The circle in the middle, while not one of the four fields, is the critical tool to make this process work -- continual leadership development.



This method takes inspiration from Mark 4:26-29, where Jesus speaks of the Kingdom of God as a man scattering seed on the ground.⁶

Here's a breakdown of the Four Fields:

1. **Entry (Empty Field):** This represents the beginning of the work, where the church planter enters a new area. The focus is on building relationships, understanding the culture, and prayerfully seeking persons of peace (those who are receptive and can open doors into the community).
2. **Gospel Sharing (Seeded Field):** After establishing relationships, the next step is to share the gospel. The emphasis is on evangelism.

⁶ **The Parable of the Growing Seed** ²⁶ He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. ²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come (Mark 4:26-29 NIV)."

3. **Discipleship (Growing Crops):** Those who respond to the gospel are then discipled. This involves teaching new believers to obey Jesus' commands and equipping them to share their faith. This stage emphasizes both individual growth and the beginning of community formation.
4. **Church Formation (Harvested Field):** As disciples grow, they gather into new churches. This isn't just about starting a Sunday service; it's about forming a community of believers who support one another, worship together, and commit to the mission.
5. **Leadership Development (Multiplying the Process):** To ensure sustainability and multiplication, leaders are identified, trained, and empowered to repeat the process in new fields. This leadership development is crucial for the churches to grow, mature, and multiply.

The beauty of the Four Fields strategy is its adaptability. It can be contextualized for various cultural settings, and its principles can be applied in urban and rural areas, in different socio-economic contexts, and among different people groups.

The goal of the Four Fields approach to church planting is always the multiplication of disciples and churches.

F. Possible Criticisms of the Four Fields Approach to Church Planting

Here are some of the concerns that have been raised, many of which have already been shared.

1. **Over-Simplification:** Some critics argue that the Four Fields method oversimplifies the church planting process.
2. **Rapid Multiplication Concerns:** This concern has already been spelled out in previous approaches.
3. **Lack of Emphasis on Deep Theology:** This concern has already been spelled out in previous concerns.
4. **Leadership Development:** In the above drawing, “Leadership Training and Multiplication” are not part of the four fields.

Rather, they are included as a circle in the center of the drawing. This concern has already been spelled out in previous approaches.

5. **Potential for Burnout:** This concern has already been spelled out in previous approaches.
6. **Quality vs. Quantity:** This concern has already been spelled out in previous approaches.

G. George Patterson and the Seven Commands to Teach Every New Disciple.

I first heard of George Patterson and his work in Honduras when I attended Fuller School of World Missions forty years ago. He took seriously Jesus' command to "Teach them to obey all I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). He believed that there were seven specific commands that summarized Jesus' basic instructions to his disciples. George Patterson was a pioneer in the multiplication of churches.

He believed that we should teach every disciple of Jesus the following seven specific commands:

1. Repent & Follow Jesus
2. Be Baptized
3. Pray
4. Make Disciples
5. Love
6. Lord's Supper
7. Give

George Patterson's church planting efforts in Honduras offer a compelling model for missions and evangelism. He's especially known for pioneering the principles that later formed the foundation for many church planting movements (CPMs) around the world. What distinguishes his method is the incorporation of Bible stories. This makes the Gospel both accessible and unforgettable, particularly in cultures that value oral traditions. Additionally, he championed a comprehensive ministry addressing both physical and spiritual needs.

Here's what we can learn from George Patterson's method:

1. **Obedience-Based Discipleship:** Instead of mere knowledge-based discipleship, Patterson emphasized obedience to Christ's commands. New believers were trained to immediately obey and implement what they learned from the Bible, ensuring active faith.
2. **Reproducibility:** Patterson prioritized simple methods and teachings that could be easily replicated by new believers without the need for external resources or formal theological education.
3. **Rapid Multiplication:** He encouraged new believers to evangelize and start new churches quickly rather than waiting for external leadership. This led to a rapid multiplication of churches.
4. **Use of Bible Stories:** Recognizing that not everyone could read or had access to Bibles, Patterson made use of storytelling. This made the Gospel message more accessible and memorable, especially in oral cultures.
5. **Indigenous Leadership:** Instead of relying heavily on foreign missionaries, Patterson's method focused on training local believers to become leaders in their communities. This approach made the church more adaptable and relevant to the local culture.
6. **Spontaneous Expansion:** By equipping local believers to evangelize and plant churches, Patterson's method allowed for spontaneous and organic growth of the church without excessive external control or intervention.
7. **T4T (Training for Trainers):** While Patterson himself didn't coin this term, his methods greatly influenced the development of the T4T strategy. As previously mentioned, T4T emphasizes training believers to train others in evangelism and discipleship, leading to rapid multiplication.
8. **Addressing Physical and Spiritual Needs:** Patterson believed in holistic ministry that addressed both the physical and spiritual needs of the people.

9. **Avoiding Dependency:** Patterson was cautious about creating dependency on foreign resources or leadership. He encouraged self-sufficiency among the local churches to ensure their long-term sustainability.
10. **Flexibility:** Rather than imposing a rigid structure, Patterson's method was adaptable. This flexibility allowed churches to thrive in various cultural, economic, and political contexts.

George Patterson's work in Honduras and his broader influence on church planting movements underscore the importance of local leadership, rapid multiplication, and obedience-based discipleship. His methods have been transformative in missions' strategy, and they continue to inspire church planters worldwide.

X. Eight Evangelism Approaches

A. Intellectual Approach to Evangelism

The intellectual approach to evangelism emphasizes the use of reason, evidence, and logic to present the message of Christianity. This method caters to individuals who value critical thinking, have questions about the faith, or need rational answers to their doubts. Here are some key characteristics and components of the intellectual approach:

1. **Apologetics:** This is the systematic defense of a belief or doctrine. Christian apologetics seeks to provide logical and evidence-based arguments in support of the faith. Famous apologists like C.S. Lewis, Ravi Zacharias, and William Lane Craig have used this method to address doubts and objections to Christianity.
2. **Evidence-Based Discussions:** This approach often involves presenting historical, philosophical, and scientific evidence to support the claims of Christianity, such as the historicity of Jesus, the reliability of the Bible, and arguments for the existence of God. Find further information from Apologists, Lee Strobel, and Josh McDowell.
3. **Engaging Doubts and Objections:** Instead of shying away from hard questions, the intellectual approach actively engages them by providing thoughtful and well-researched answers.
4. **Dialogues and Debates:** Public or private dialogues and debates with skeptics, atheists, or adherents of other belief systems are a hallmark of this approach. The goal is often to present the Christian worldview as coherent, reasonable, and superior to alternative worldviews.
5. **Understanding Worldviews:** Evangelists using this approach often invest time understanding various worldviews, both religious and secular, to engage effectively with a diverse range of people.

6. **Use of Literature:** Books, articles, and academic papers are frequently used in this method, both as sources of information and as tools for evangelism.
7. **Training and Equipping:** Those who use the intellectual approach often emphasize the importance of Christians being well-equipped to defend their faith. This might involve seminars, courses, and study materials that delve deep into theology, philosophy, and other relevant disciplines.

While the intellectual approach can be powerful, especially in academic or skeptical settings, it's essential to use it in conjunction with other methods and to always prioritize the love and compassion of Christ. Knowledge and reason are important, but they should be paired with genuine care and concern for the individual, ensuring that the evangelistic effort doesn't become merely a cerebral exercise.

Where to start? Try reading Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis, The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus by Lee Strobel and Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics by William Lane Craig

Key Scriptures: 2 Timothy 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

B. Possible Criticisms of the Intellectual Approach to Evangelism

The intellectual approach to evangelism has several possible criticisms:

1. **Too Academic:** It may focus more on arguments than personal faith experiences.

2. **Seems Arrogant:** It can appear condescending or more about winning debates.
3. **Ignores Emotions:** Overlooks the emotional aspects of belief.
4. **Not Always Relevant:** May not fit well in cultures that value stories or experiences over logic.
5. **Overcomplicates Faith:** Risks making the gospel seem unnecessarily complex.
6. **Limited Appeal:** Mainly attracts skeptics or academics, not everyone.
7. **Misses Spiritual Aspects:** Might neglect the Holy Spirit's role in faith.
8. **Focuses Too Much on Defending Faith:** Prioritizes argument over sharing the gospel's essence.
9. **Creates Distance:** Can hinder personal connections if not done humbly.

It's worth noting that every evangelistic method has its strengths and weaknesses. The key is to use the right approach for the right context and to always prioritize love, understanding, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

C. The Testimonial Approach to Evangelism

The Testimonial Approach to Evangelism centers on personal stories and experiences to communicate the power of the Gospel. Here's a breakdown of this approach:

1. **Personal Testimony:** At the heart of this approach is a believer's personal testimony. This is the story of how someone came to faith in Jesus Christ. It often includes details about their life before coming to faith, the circumstances that led them to Christ, and the changes they've experienced since becoming a Christian.
2. **Relatability:** Personal testimonies are powerful because they are relatable. When people hear about real-life experiences and changes, they can often see similarities in their own lives.

3. **Authenticity:** Personal stories come across as genuine and heartfelt. They are not rehearsed arguments or theological explanations, but real accounts of personal experiences.
4. **Emotional Connection:** Testimonies often evoke emotional responses. They can inspire hope, empathy, and even conviction as listeners relate to the storyteller's experiences.
5. **Demonstration of God's Power:** Through personal testimonies, listeners can see tangible evidence of how God works in individual lives, bringing about change and transformation.
6. **Variety of Experiences:** Every believer has a unique story. This variety ensures that there's likely a testimony that can resonate with just about anyone, regardless of their background.
7. **Everyone is Able:** Anyone who has experienced God's grace can share their story. Unlike the intellectual approach to evangelism, every individual can compellingly speak of how God touched their life.

In evangelism, sharing personal stories helps start deeper conversations about faith. But, using this method works best when done with real love, humility, and understanding of the listener's views.

D. The Relational Approach to Evangelism

The Relational Approach to Evangelism is about making real connections with people to share the Gospel. It's more about building trust and showing care than starting with religious discussions. Here's how it works:

1. **Personal Connection:** Get to know people personally, like friends or neighbors.
2. **Be Genuine:** Show real interest in their lives, not just trying to convert them.
3. **Build Trust:** Spend time with them and show consistent care to build trust.
4. **Share Naturally:** Talk about faith through personal experiences and life events.

5. **Long-Term Focus:** It's about lasting relationships, not quick conversions.
6. **Show Love in Actions:** Help and support them in practical ways, not just with words.

The idea is that people are more open to the Gospel when they see and feel genuine love and care over time.

For more information read, [The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door](#) by Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon.

Scripture often used to promote the relational approach to evangelism is from *Matthew 9:10-13*, “¹⁰ While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. ¹¹ When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” ¹² On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ¹³ But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’”^[a] For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’”

E. Possible Criticisms of the Relational Approach to Evangelism

The Relational Approach to Evangelism, while praised for its sincerity, faces several criticisms:

1. **Time-Consuming:** It can be slow, taking years to discuss faith, possibly missing chances to share the Gospel.
2. **No Urgency:** Some say it doesn't show the immediate need to spread the Gospel as suggested in scriptures.
3. **Risk of Compromise:** Close relationships might lead to compromising beliefs to avoid conflict.
4. **Misunderstanding:** People might feel used if they think the relationship was just for evangelism.
5. **Too Focused on Relationships:** There's a concern that it prioritizes human connections over Christ's message.

6. **Discouragement:** Failure to convert someone after investing in the relationship can be disheartening.

It's important to understand that every evangelism method has its limitations and requires careful, spirit-led practice.

F. The Direct Approach to Evangelism

The Direct Approach to evangelism involves immediately and clearly sharing the gospel without building relationships first. It focuses on explaining the core beliefs about sin, redemption, and salvation in a straightforward way. Key aspects include:

1. **Instant Sharing:** The gospel is shared whenever possible, without waiting for a perfect time.
2. **Clear Message:** It emphasizes explaining the main points of the gospel simply and clearly.
3. **Urgency:** Stresses the importance of quickly deciding to follow Christ.
4. **Tools:** Uses materials like tracts or booklets to help explain the gospel.
5. **Various Settings:** Can be done anywhere, like in public spaces, door-to-door, or at events.
6. **Call to Action:** After sharing, it often invites people to make a decision or pray.

This approach believes in the gospel's power to change lives when presented directly.

G. Possible Criticisms to the Direct Approach to Evangelism

1. **Perceived Aggressiveness:** It's often seen as confrontational, making people uncomfortable or defensive.
2. **Lack of Relationship Building:** Critics argue it prioritizes message delivery over establishing trust and relationships.
3. **Cultural Insensitivity:** This approach may ignore diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, leading to misunderstandings.

4. **Shallow Understanding:** Quick presentations can result in a superficial grasp of beliefs, leading to commitments without deep understanding.
5. **Neglect of Holistic Needs:** It may overlook the social, emotional, or physical needs of individuals.
6. **Potential for Manipulation:** Direct evangelism might use emotional pressure, perceived as manipulative.
7. **Resistance to Dialogue:** Often one-sided, it can leave little room for genuine questions or exploration of faith.
8. **Negative Public Perception:** Aggressive tactics can harm the public image of the faith group and create social tensions.
9. **Questionable Long-term Effectiveness:** There are doubts about its ability to foster lasting faith commitments and integration into faith communities.

H. The Invitational Approach to Evangelism

The Invitational Approach to Evangelism involves inviting people to church or other events, hoping they'll connect with God. The church or event leaders share the Gospel message, not the person who invites them. Key points include:

1. **Simple:** Just invite someone; the church or event explains the faith.
2. **Special Events:** It works well with special church events like holiday services or guest speakers.
3. **Low Pressure:** Less direct and confrontational than other methods.
4. **Focus on Community:** Highlights the support and warmth of the church community.

I. Possible Criticisms of the Invitational Approach to Evangelism.

1. **Too Event-Focused:** Could make people too dependent on church events for sharing their faith.
2. **Less Personal:** Might overlook the impact of sharing personal testimonies and stories of faith.

3. **Risk of Disappointment:** If the event doesn't live up to expectations, it might turn people off.
4. **Not for Everyone:** Some might not be open to attending church events, especially if they have had bad experiences before.
5. **Avoids Hard Topics:** Church events might skip complex or controversial religious topics, leading to a limited understanding of the faith.

All methods of evangelism have their challenges and benefits. It's important to use them wisely and be guided by the Holy Spirit.

J. The Service Approach to Evangelism

The Service Approach to evangelism is grounded in the idea of serving others as a tangible expression of God's love as a means to share the gospel. This method revolves around meeting physical, emotional, or social needs simply out of love, but also as an avenue to address spiritual needs. It is based on Jesus' own example, as He often met people's immediate needs (healing, feeding, etc.) before or while teaching them spiritual truths.

Key Characteristics of The Service Approach:

1. **Actions Speak Louder:** Demonstrating God's love in tangible ways, often even before verbalizing the message of the gospel.
2. **Meeting Real Needs:** Whether it's providing food, medical care, emotional support, or other forms of assistance, the Service Approach addresses immediate and palpable needs in a community.
3. **Building Trust:** By serving others without an immediate expectation of something in return, trust is built. This can pave the way for more open conversations about faith.
4. **Community Involvement:** This approach often involves active participation in the community, understanding its specific needs, and working to address them in meaningful ways. Jesus and his disciples as well as the early church performed numerous miracles addressing physical needs. They also met physical

needs as they cared for the poor, widows, and orphans. Here are some examples:

1. **Hunger:** Jesus fed 5,000 men (plus women and children) with five loaves of bread and two fish (Matthew 14:13-21). He also fed the 4,000 with seven loaves of bread and a few small fish (Matthew 15:32-39).
2. **Healing:** Jesus and His Disciples saw illness, disease, disabilities, blindness, deafness, and muteness healed.
3. **Care for Physical Needs:** The early church also demonstrated care for the poor, widows, and orphans.

Today, many mission organizations and local churches use the Service Approach as part of their outreach strategy, recognizing the powerful impact of serving "the least of these" (Matthew 25:40).

K. Possible Criticisms of the Service Approach to Evangelism

While the Service Approach to evangelism has been effective for many and has biblical precedent, there are still criticisms and concerns associated with it. Some of these include:

1. **Misunderstood Motives:** Some may perceive the acts of service as having ulterior motives, suspecting that the service is just a bait-and-switch tactic to proselytize.
2. **Overemphasis on Works:** There's a risk of placing too much emphasis on works at the expense of clear gospel proclamation.
3. **Creating Dependency:** If not carefully managed, continuous service can lead to dependency. Individuals or communities can become reliant on the help provided instead of becoming self-sufficient or addressing root issues.
4. **Potential for Neglecting Spiritual Needs:** In focusing on tangible, immediate needs, there might be occasions where the spiritual needs of an individual are overlooked or deemed secondary.
5. **Burnout:** Those serving can easily become overwhelmed or burned out if they are constantly giving without taking time for their own spiritual nourishment or rest.

6. **Cultural Insensitivity:** If those serving are from a different cultural background, there's a risk of misunderstanding the needs and values of the community they are trying to serve.
7. **Short-term Impact:** While service projects can have immediate benefits, critics might argue that some of these initiatives lack a long-term strategy for sustained impact.

While these criticisms exist, many proponents of the Service Approach to evangelism argue that when done with genuine love, cultural sensitivity, and a clear gospel message, it can be an incredibly effective means of sharing the love of Christ. We have found meeting physical needs can open the door to other forms of evangelism. It can be an effect tool, especially in closed cultures.

L. Large Scale Evangelism: Example of Daniel Kolenda

Daniel Kolenda is a Christian evangelist and the successor to Reinhard Bonnke at Christ For All Nations (CFAN), an international evangelistic ministry. The ministry is primarily known for its large-scale crusades in Africa and other parts of the world. While it's challenging to pinpoint a singular "method" of evangelism attributed to Daniel Kolenda, several characteristics mark the approach of CFAN and, by extension, Kolenda's evangelistic style:

1. **Mass Crusades:** Much like his predecessor Reinhard Bonnke, Kolenda often preaches at massive open-air crusades. These events gather thousands, sometimes even hundreds of thousands, of attendees.
2. **Simple Gospel Message:** Kolenda often emphasizes a clear and straightforward presentation of the Gospel.
3. **Miracles and Healings:** In line with Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions, Kolenda believes in the present-day workings of miracles. Many of the CFAN crusades include testimonies of healings, deliverance and other miracles which are believed to confirm the preached Word.
4. **Follow-Up and Discipleship:** Recognizing the importance of ongoing discipleship after the crusades, CFAN always

collaborates with local churches to ensure new believers are connected to a community where they can grow in their faith.

5. **Evangelism Training:** Apart from the crusades, Kolenda is involved in training others in evangelism, emphasizing not just the act of preaching, but living a life that draws people to Jesus.
6. **Prayer Movements:** Kolenda emphasizes the importance of prayer in evangelistic efforts and often mobilizes prayer movements in conjunction with evangelistic outreaches.

Notable evangelists who have effectively used the Large-scale Evangelism approach include Billy Graham, George Whitefield, and D.L. Moody, among others.

It's essential to recognize that while methods and strategies can be useful, Kolenda, Graham, Whitefield, and Moody, would surely emphasize the need for the power of the Holy Spirit in all their evangelistic effort.

M. Possible Criticisms of Daniel Kolenda's Evangelism Method

1. **Mass Crusades:** Some critics argue that mass crusades, while drawing large crowds, may not lead to genuine long-term conversions. They believe that it's easier for attendees to make a momentary decision without fully understanding or committing to the faith.
2. **Follow-Up Concerns:** While CFAN does work with local churches for follow-up, critics often point to the logistical challenges of adequately discipling the sheer number of new believers from large crusades.
3. **Financial Aspects:** Large-scale evangelistic efforts, like those of CFAN, require significant funding. This sometimes leads to criticisms about financial transparency, the usage of funds, or the necessity of such large budgets for evangelism.
4. **Cultural Sensitivity:** There are concerns about whether large-scale evangelistic efforts by Western ministries in countries with different cultural contexts can sometimes inadvertently overlook or misunderstand local customs, traditions, or social issues.

5. **Overemphasis on Numbers:** Critics might argue that emphasizing the number of attendees or conversions can overshadow the deeper, transformative work of discipleship.

It's essential to approach these criticisms with a balanced view, recognizing that many people have had genuinely life-changing experiences through such evangelistic efforts. While no method is perfect, the intention of reaching people with the Gospel message remains at the heart of Daniel Kolenda's ministry and similar evangelistic endeavors.

N. Power Evangelism

Power evangelism is a form of evangelism that emphasizes the role of supernatural experiences as a means to aid in the sharing of the Christian message. The term was popularized by John Wimber, founder of the Vineyard Movement, in the 1980s. It's essentially a way of evangelizing that combines the proclamation of the Gospel with the demonstration of the Gospel through signs, wonders, miracles, and other manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

Here are some characteristics and key points of power evangelism:

1. **Signs and Wonders:** Power evangelism often includes miracles, healings, prophetic insights, and other gifts of the Holy Spirit.
2. **Personal Experience:** This form of evangelism emphasizes personal encounters with God. Those witnessing or experiencing an encounter are then more open to the message of the Gospel.
3. **Kingdom of God:** The emphasis is on the present reality of the Kingdom of God. Power evangelism seeks to demonstrate that the Kingdom of God is at hand, just as Jesus proclaimed.
4. **Holistic Approach:** Power evangelism sees the combination of Word (proclamation) and deed (demonstration) as a full representation of the Gospel.

5. **Spontaneity:** Power evangelism can happen anywhere, not just in church settings. Believers are encouraged to pray for the sick or share prophetic words as they go about their daily lives.
6. **Controversy:** Power evangelism has been a subject of controversy within the broader Christian community. Some embrace it wholeheartedly, seeing it as a return to the practices of the early church, while others are more skeptical, cautioning potential excesses or fake miracles.

In essence, power evangelism is about merging the proclamation of the Gospel with the power of the Holy Spirit. It affirms that God is active and supernaturally involved in people's lives today just as He was with Jesus and his disciples.

XI. Spiritual Mapping

A. What is it?

Spiritual mapping is a controversial strategy used within certain mission groups. Its proponents believe that by identifying and studying spiritual strongholds in a particular geographic area or culture, believers can more effectively pray against or confront these negative spiritual forces. This then paves the way for evangelism and church planting. Some call this "strategic-level spiritual warfare".

B. Positive characteristics and benefits

1. **Identification of Spiritual Strongholds:** Spiritual mappers seek to identify certain demonic spirits or principalities that exert control or influence over specific areas, peoples, or cultural issues.
2. **Research and Analysis:** Spiritual mappers might gather data on historical events, cultural practices, or belief systems in a particular region. They believe that past events or cultural patterns can give rise to spiritual strongholds.
3. **Informed Prayer:** Armed with their findings, intercessors pray more specifically against identified spiritual obstacles. This can involve repenting for historical sins or asking God to break alleged generational curses.
4. **On-Site Prayer:** Some believers involved in this movement will physically go to locations identified as spiritually significant (like ancestral worship sites) to pray against perceived dark forces there.
5. **Evangelism and Church Planting:** With the perceived spiritual barriers addressed, evangelists and church planters can then move in to share the gospel.

Proponents claim to have seen positive results and believe that the practice enables more effective ministry by addressing deep-rooted spiritual issues.

C. Criticisms of Spiritual Mapping

Spiritual mapping, as a part of the larger strategic-level spiritual warfare movement, has drawn various criticisms from theologians, missiologists, and other Christian leaders. Here are some of the primary criticisms:

1. **Lack of Biblical Basis:** One of the primary criticisms is that the methodology and principles of spiritual mapping are not clearly outlined or emphasized in the Bible. Critics argue that while the Bible acknowledges the existence of spiritual warfare, the specific strategies endorsed by spiritual mapping aren't biblically supported.
2. **Oversimplification:** There's a concern that spiritual mapping can oversimplify complex cultural, social, and spiritual issues. By attributing societal problems primarily to demonic activity, it might overlook other significant factors.
3. **Cultural Insensitivity:** The process of identifying non-Christian spiritual practices as demonic can be seen as dismissive or disrespectful of indigenous cultures.
4. **Dualistic Worldview:** Spiritual mapping can promote a hyper-spiritualized worldview where every challenge or problem is attributed to a specific demonic entity or stronghold.
5. **Misallocation of Resources:** Some argue that the time, energy, and resources devoted to spiritual mapping could be better spent on other mission activities, such as direct evangelism, discipleship, or social justice initiatives.
6. **Efficacy Questions:** There's debate over the actual effectiveness of spiritual mapping in advancing the Gospel. Some argue that there's no tangible evidence that the method leads to more conversions or stronger Christian communities.
7. **Theological Concerns:** Some theologians worry about potential imbalances, where the focus on battling the devil might overshadow the centrality of Christ and the gospel.

It's essential to note that while many critics raise these concerns, proponents of spiritual mapping believe they've seen positive results and defend the practice as a valuable tool in mission work. The debate

around spiritual mapping reflects broader discussions about the best methodologies and practices in Christian missions and evangelism.

XII. The Bible is powerful!

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints, and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

Hebrews 4:12

This scripture beautifully encapsulates the power of the Word of God. Let's delve deeper into its profound significance.

1. **Living and Active:** The Word of God isn't merely text on a page or ancient stories passed down through generations. It's dynamic and transformative. It has the ability to speak to every individual, in every situation, in every era.
2. **Sharper than any two-edged sword:** Swords are designed to cut, to penetrate, and to divide. Similarly, the Word of God can penetrate our lives, cutting through our misconceptions, doubts, and facades. Its truth provides clarity in the midst of confusion, hope, and despair.
3. **Piercing to the division of soul and spirit:** The Word transcends the physical realm, delving into the spiritual. It addresses not just our visible lives but also our innermost beings – our hopes, fears, dreams, and doubts. It brings alignment and harmony to our soul and spirit.
4. **Of joints and marrow:** The way marrow is deeply embedded within bones is how the Word reaches to the very core of our existence.
5. **Discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart:** The Word of God has a remarkable ability to illuminate our hidden motives and intentions. It acts as a mirror, reflecting our true selves, revealing areas where we might unknowingly be clinging to sin or unbelief.

In essence, the Word of God is not just a book—it is God breathed. It's a compass for the lost, a comfort for the grieving, wisdom for the seeker, and strength for the weak. “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in

righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Key Point

Let me underscore a pivotal belief that drives today's discipleship and church planting strategies: the transformative power of God's Word. It's not simply a book; it's powerful and God breathed. By reading it, reflecting upon its wisdom, and engaging in meaningful discussions about its teachings, people can be saved and discipled.

I'm convinced that the transformative force behind approaches like Discovery Bible Studies lies in the power of the Word of God. When you get God's word out into a community and encourage reflection on its relevance and application to life, you will see its transformative impact.

XIII. Every Christian can Preach, Teach, and Share the Word of God

In the Scriptures, we certainly witness a unique calling on those chosen to preach and teach God's Word. There are those with specific gifts of evangelism and teaching. But, just as importantly, we see that each one of us has the potential to be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. Remember in the book of Acts when the church faced tough times? Persecution pushed the believers out, spreading them far and wide. Yet, even in those challenges, the Spirit was with them, fueling their passion and purpose. Everyone has a part in God's story. The Spirit stands ready to empower all who believe to share God's message.

Acts 8:1-4, “And Saul was there, giving approval to Stephen's death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. God-fearing men buried Stephen and mourned deeply over him. But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison. **Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.**”

Consider this: it wasn't just a handful who were pushed out and scattered. The Bible tells us, “All except the apostles were scattered”. Think about that for a moment. All these believers, regular folks, spread the Word wherever they went. They weren't just passive listeners; they absorbed the teachings of the apostles and felt compelled to share their newfound knowledge far and wide. Sharing and preaching isn't limited to a chosen few; the Holy Spirit's power and the ability to share God's message is given to every believer. When you empower believers and place them out in the world, they don't just exist—they transform lives.

It's vital for us to truly grasp and believe that the might and strength we carry isn't about us—it's bigger than us. The real power, the force that can change lives, comes directly from the Holy Spirit. We are all merely vessels, chosen to share the gospel and make disciples.

Acts 1:8, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

In 1 Peter 3:15 we read, “But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.” Peter wrote this to Church members living in the five Roman provinces of Asia Minor.⁷ He wanted every believer to be ready to share what they believed and why. This is the foundation of a strategy called, “Obedience Based Discipleship.”

The phrase, "always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you," is a teaching for all believers. Let's break down the meaning.

1. **Always being prepared:** This suggests that believers should be ready at all times. It implies a constant state of readiness, not just occasionally or when it's convenient.
2. **To make a defense:** The word "defense" here translates from the Greek word "apologia," from which we derive the English term "apologetics." It means to give a reasoned argument or explanation.
3. **To anyone who asks you:** This part indicates that this readiness isn't just for formal occasions, debates, or scheduled discussions. Believers should be ready to share their faith in everyday situations, whenever someone expresses curiosity or questions about it.
4. **For a reason for the hope that is in you:** This centers on the essence of the Christian faith, which is hope. The "hope" here refers to the confident expectation believers have in the promises of God, especially concerning salvation and eternal life through Jesus Christ. The verse suggests that believers

⁷ 1 Peter 1:10 “1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God’s elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, 2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.”

should not only possess this hope but also understand why they have it and be able to articulate this hope others.

So, in essence, the verse is encouraging all believers to be ever ready to explain their Christian hope thoughtfully and respectfully to anyone who might inquire about it. It is not just ordained Christian professionals who can answer questions and share their faith; it is a skill that every believer should have and be ready to give “to anyone who asks.”

XIV. Obedience Based Discipleship: Be Careful

A True disciple is always an obedience-based disciple. I want to drive home the point that there aren't two categories here. There are no 'regular' disciples and 'obedience-based' disciples. Disciples of Jesus follow his teaching and seek to imitate his actions.⁸

John 8:31, “To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.”

Luke 6:40, “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.”

John 15:7-8, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”

In my experience of over four decades as a Christian, I've yet to come across a pastor who advocates for discipleship that's solely rooted in learning without the corresponding act of obedience. There's a discourse within Disciple Making Movements (DMM) suggesting that conventional churches prioritize knowledge over action. However, based on my observations and experiences, this perspective isn't true.

My friend once told me, “I am so tired of every sermon telling me to do more and try harder.” He went on to say that almost every sermon he hears tells him he is not doing enough. This is so often the case. In most Evangelical churches, the sermons often revolve around actions - what we should be doing along with a push to try harder. While there's a place for emphasizing commitment and diligence, there's a

⁸ “A disciple of Christ is one who (1) believes his doctrine, (2) rests on his sacrifice, (3) imbibes his spirit, and (4) imitates his example (Easton Bible Dictionary).”

“Derived as it was from verbs meaning “to learn,” discipleship denoted the learning process but its usage described in addition the necessity of the disciple adopting the philosophy, practices and way of life of his teacher (Encyclopedia of the Bible).”

significant aspect that sometimes gets overshadowed: understanding our identity in Christ and growing in our knowledge of Him.

Delving deeper into who we are in Christ can bring about a transformative understanding of our inherent value, purpose, and immense love that God has for us. When we truly grasp our identity in Him, it can drive us to live out our faith not just out of obligation, but out of genuine love and gratitude. There's a profound richness in the scriptures about our position as God's beloved, our spiritual inheritance, and our ultimate destiny in Christ. By placing more emphasis on these truths, the Church can foster a community of believers who are not just duty-driven, but are deeply rooted in the love and assurance that comes from knowing who they are in Jesus.

While we should all follow Jesus' command to make disciples, this is only one of Jesus' commands. We are told to make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to obey everything Jesus commands.

Here is a list of other commands Jesus gave his followers:

1. **Above all else, love God and your neighbor:** Actively show love, kindness, and empathy towards everyone, regardless of their background or status.
2. **Seek first the Kingdom of God:** Prioritize your relationship with God and align your life with His purposes. Look forward to the fullness of His kingdom when we see him face to face. Jesus taught on the kingdom of God more than any other subject.
3. **Live out the Beatitudes:** Develop the character traits mentioned in the Beatitudes, such as being humble, a peace maker, merciful, and having a pure heart.
4. **Practice Forgiveness:** Forgive others for their wrongs against you, releasing bitterness and grudges. Understand that God's forgiveness towards us is contingent upon our forgiveness towards others.
5. **Exercise Faith:** Maintain steadfast trust in God's promises and providence, even in challenging circumstances.

6. **Count the Cost:** Understand that following Jesus might come with sacrifices, persecution, or hardship.
7. **Understand and Live Out Parables:** Reflect on the deep spiritual truths in Jesus' parables and incorporate their lessons into daily life.
8. **Believe in the Resurrection:** Recognize Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life. Live in the hope and assurance of eternal life, understanding that death is not the end for those in Christ.
9. **Serve Others:** Adopt a posture of humility and servanthood in all relationships and endeavors. Always look for ways to serve and uplift others.

One might mistakenly believe that the essence of discipleship is merely the multiplication of believers, overshadowing other vital dimensions of the Christian journey.

The following seems to be the core message that DMM seeks to impart: “Churches have relegated discipleship to a select few – the clergy, the missionaries, the professionals. But the truth is every believer, irrespective of their title or role, is commissioned by Jesus to disciple others. The undue emphasis on leaving discipleship to the 'experts' has inadvertently stymied the spread of the Gospel. If we truly aspire for the life-transforming message of Jesus to reach every corner of the world, then every Christian must rise to their calling, stepping into their God-given role as disciple-makers.”⁹

Almost forty years ago while I was attending the Fuller School of World Missions, we learned about George Patterson. Even at the time, having very little experience in any kind of Christian work, I worried about having a list of seven commandments that made us disciples.

In evangelical Christianity, discipleship is not primarily about adhering to a list of "do's and don'ts." Instead, it's about a relationship

⁹ A hypothetical representative from the Discipleship Making Movement might articulate the following sentiments.

with Jesus Christ, a transformative change from the inside out, and a life lived in obedience to His teachings.

It's important to clarify that rules and guidelines, as found in the Scriptures, play a vital role in Christian living. But, following these rules in and of themselves does not make one a disciple.

XV. What we should truly emphasize in discipleship?

1. **Heart Transformation:** A genuine encounter with Jesus that leads to repentance and a changed heart.
2. **Relationship:** Daily walking with, talking to, and depending upon Jesus through prayer, meditation, and reading the Scriptures.
3. **Love for Others:** Jesus emphasized love as a hallmark of discipleship (John 13:34-35). The greatest way we show love to the world is to introduce them to Jesus.
4. **Obedience out of Love:** Follow Jesus' teachings not out of obligation, but out of love for Him (John 14:23).
5. **Continuous Growth:** A disciple is a learner, always growing in understanding and application of the faith.
6. **Commission:** Participating in the Great Commission, making disciples of others (Matthew 28:18-20).

In essence, while moral and ethical guidelines are valuable and play a role in the life of a believer, simply adhering to them will not make one a disciple. True discipleship goes beyond mere rule-following; it's a transformative relationship with Jesus Christ marked by continuous growth and love.

If you use the Disciple Making Movement approach, make sure and not have a limited view of discipleship. Often obedience to Jesus' commands goes beyond the one command to, "go and make disciples."

Again, here is my description of a disciple: "A disciple is someone who loves Jesus, anchors their life and faith in Jesus, cherishing every word and lesson He imparts. They long for His presence and seek to imitate Him in every action and decision."

On one hand, we try our best to live by Jesus' teachings and show his love in our actions. On the other, we know we'll never attain his perfection. We can imitate Jesus and live by his commandments, while at the same time know we will always fall short of His perfection. This understanding helps us in two big ways: it keeps us

humble, knowing we can always do better, and it reminds us that God's love and forgiveness are always there when we fall short. Christianity is a continuous journey of spiritual growth and the lifelong process of sanctification.

Understanding this balance helps us avoid two traps. One trap is getting too down on ourselves when we make mistakes. The other trap is thinking too highly of ourselves, believing we've got it all figured out. Instead, we aim for growth while leaning on God's love and grace when we fall short. This balance is at the heart of the Christian journey.

While Christians can celebrate milestones and spiritual victories in their walk with Christ, the overarching theme of Scripture encourages continuous growth, learning, and reliance on God. The journey of faith is lifelong, and believers are called to persevere -- always seeking to know and love God more deeply.

Why do I want to emphasize this distinction? The church throughout the world is poisoned by religion and at the center of most religion is legalism.

XVI. What is legalism?

Legalism is an excessive adherence to the law or a set of rules as a means of earning or maintaining salvation. It's the belief that righteousness and favor with God can be achieved through human efforts and adherence to rules, rather than through faith in Christ alone. One of my favorite authors, John Piper, defines legalism, "legalism is the conviction that law-keeping is the ground of our acceptance with God, the ground of God being for us and not against us." He goes on to write,

So what we want, what I want in my life, is not just to be free from a principled legalism — you know, a theological legalism that says you get to heaven, or you please God, or you win his favor by keeping the law. I want to have a gracious spirit, a

gospel spirit, not a legal spirit that comes from a failure to be amazed at my being saved by grace.

Here are a few aspects of legalism:

1. **Legalism** can imply that one can earn salvation or God's favor by good works or following specific regulations.
2. **Strict Rule-Keeping:** This might mean observing certain rituals, dietary laws, days of worship, or other specific regulations, and holding others to these same standards.
3. **Judgmental Attitude:** Legalists might look down on others who don't follow the same set of rules, leading to a sense of spiritual pride and superiority.
4. **Missing the Heart:** Legalism often focuses on outward actions rather than the inner heart transformation. It might prioritize ritual or rule-keeping over genuine love, mercy, grace, and relationship with God.
5. **Misunderstanding of Grace:** Legalism undermines God's grace. The gospel message teaches that salvation is a gift from God, received through faith in Jesus Christ, not something we can earn. In the New Testament, particularly in Paul's letters, there's a recurring theme of cautioning believers against legalism.

Please don't get me wrong, I am not against teaching new believers that they should help fulfill the great commission. I think that would be fantastic. I think it can also be highly effective if we keep in mind that Jesus' call to obedience is not about ticking boxes or fulfilling a list of duties. It's a heart-oriented obedience, rooted in a deep, personal relationship with Him. The foundation of this relationship is the profound realization of God's deep love for us, demonstrated through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus. When we truly grasp the magnitude of what Christ has done for us, our obedience is no longer a burdensome obligation. Instead, it becomes a joyful response.

This kind of obedience springs from a well of gratitude. We obey not out of fear of punishment or to earn favor, but out of sheer

thankfulness for the unmerited grace we've received. The profound gift of salvation changes our perspective. We begin to see God's commands not as restrictive rules, but as guidelines that lead us to a fuller, more abundant life. They become the natural expressions of a heart that's been transformed by the knowledge of God's love.

Furthermore, when we operate from a place of gratitude, our actions and choices reflect the character of Jesus. We no longer merely "follow rules" but seek to embody the love, mercy, and grace that we have been shown. In this way, obedience becomes an act of worship, a daily offering of our lives to the One who gave His life for us.

XVII. Foundational Concepts

A. What is Cultural Relevance in Missionary Work?

In missionary work, cultural relevance refers to the conscious effort made by missionaries to understand, respect, and appropriately engage with the customs, values, and beliefs of the local culture where they are ministering. Rather than imposing foreign customs or traditions, culturally relevant missionaries seek to present the Gospel in ways that are meaningful and relatable to the local populace.

Key components of cultural relevance in missionary work include:

1. **Contextualization**¹⁰: Adapting the presentation of the Gospel to fit the local culture without compromising its core message. For instance, using local idioms, stories, or symbols to convey biblical truths.
2. **Understanding Local Practices**: Taking time to learn and appreciate the local traditions, ceremonies, and rituals, and discerning how they might align with or diverge from biblical principles.
3. **Building Genuine Relationships**: Engaging with the community not as an outsider but as a listener and learner, building trust and understanding.
4. **Respect for Local Leadership**: Empowering and supporting indigenous leaders who can lead and shepherd their communities with an inherent understanding of their culture.

¹⁰ Let's use an example from history involving the Christmas holiday to illustrate contextualization in missions:

When St. Boniface, an English missionary, arrived in Germany in the 8th century, he faced the challenge of introducing Christianity to a people who were deeply attached to their tree-worshipping practices. Instead of condemning this practice outright, he sought a way to contextualize the Gospel message within this cultural framework. Legend has it that St. Boniface used the triangular shape of the fir tree to describe the Holy Trinity of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He then declared the evergreen tree, with its enduring foliage amidst winter, as a symbol of the eternal life that Jesus offers. Instead of worshipping the tree, the people were encouraged to adorn it with candles (and later, ornaments) as a symbol of Christ's light in the world. This approach allowed the Germanic people to retain a cherished cultural practice, but with new Christian significance. What's fascinating is that this contextualized approach didn't just remain localized to Germany. The tradition of the Christmas tree spread and became an integral part of Christian Christmas celebrations globally.

5. **Avoiding Ethnocentrism**¹¹: Recognizing that one's own cultural norms and practices aren't universally applicable or superior. Respecting cultural differences and avoiding imposing one's own cultural biases.
6. **Using Local Resources**: Rather than relying solely on foreign materials or methods, utilizing local songs, art, stories, and other resources in worship and teaching can make the message more accessible and relatable.

In essence, cultural relevance in missionary work emphasizes the importance of connecting with people in their heart language and cultural framework. This approach respects the local culture while sharing the universal truths of the Gospel, ensuring that the message is both understood and transformative.

B. What is the “Three-Thirds Process” in Small Group Settings?

The three-thirds process, often associated with Church Planting Movements, Training for Trainers (T4T) and other disciple-making movements, is a structure used in small group settings (like Bible studies or discipleship groups) to foster growth, participation, and multiplication. The process divides the meeting time into three distinct segments:

The Three Thirds process created by Ying Kai is explained by Pastor Kai himself at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBju623PgGc>

Here are the key aspects to the process:

1. **Look Back** (Review and Worship):

¹¹ Ethnocentrism refers to the belief or attitude that one's own culture is superior to others. This can lead to a tendency to view other cultures through the lens of one's own cultural norms, values, and practices. It's crucial for missionaries to be aware of and actively combat ethnocentrism in their work. Doing so not only respects the dignity and value of other cultures but also facilitates more effective and meaningful sharing of the Gospel message. Recognizing the universality of the Gospel – that it is good news for all people, in all cultures – is essential in moving beyond ethnocentric tendencies.

- Accountability: Participants share how they applied what they learned in the last gathering, reporting on commitments and any outreach or sharing they did.
- Worship: This can include prayer, singing, or other forms of worship.
- Vision Casting: Encouraging the group to think about expansion and reminding them of the bigger vision of making disciples.

2. **Look Up** (Study God's Word):

- New Lesson: Participants explore a new passage or topic from the Bible. Often, this involves reading a scripture passage, discussing its meaning, and identifying applications for daily life.
- Practice: Participants may practice sharing the lesson or story to ensure they can communicate it effectively to others outside the group.

3. **Look Ahead** (Plan and Practice):

- Planning: The group makes specific plans for applying what they've learned and for sharing it with others.
- Prayer: Close in prayer, with a focus on seeking God's help in applying the lesson and reaching others.

The idea behind this process is to ensure that groups aren't just "studying" the Bible but are also actively applying its teachings and looking forward to how they can share the message with others. It's a method intended to promote both spiritual growth and multiplication.

C. What is Reproducing Evangelism?

Reproducing evangelism, often associated with movements like Disciple Making Movements (DMM) and Church Planting Movements (CPM), refers to a method of evangelism that emphasizes not only sharing the Gospel with others but also equipping and empowering those new believers to immediately share the Gospel with others as well. The aim is for each new disciple to reproduce their faith by making other disciples, who in turn make disciples, and so forth.

By focusing on reproduction from the outset, this evangelistic approach aims for a rapid expansion of the Gospel in a way that can become self-sustaining within communities.

D. What is “Reproducing Leadership?”

Reproducing Leadership in the church refers to the intentional development and multiplication of leaders who in turn develop and multiply other leaders. Instead of leadership being limited to a select few or a single individual, the goal of reproducing leadership is to continually increase the number of capable leaders within a church or ministry. Here are the core concepts:

1. **Leadership Multiplication:** At its core, Reproducing Leadership is about training leaders who can then train others. The Apostle Paul captured this concept in 2 Timothy 2:2 when he wrote, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."
2. **Empowerment:** Leaders are not just developed to take on tasks but are empowered to take on significant responsibilities, making leadership decisions, and carrying the vision forward.
3. **Cultural Shift:** Reproducing leadership often requires a cultural shift in the church. Instead of "hoarding" leadership, there's a generous handing off of responsibilities and roles.¹²
4. **Intentional Development:** This isn't about a spontaneous or occasional mentoring moment; it's a deliberate and systematic approach to leadership development.
5. **Modeling:** Current leaders model what they desire in future leaders, providing a tangible example for others to follow.
6. **Continuous Cycle:** As new leaders emerge, they are integrated into the same process, ensuring that leadership reproduction becomes a continuous cycle.

¹² For information on “Culture Shift” go to the section, “What is a culture shift in church leadership?”

Reproducing leadership ensures sustainability and growth in a church. As the church grows or faces transitions, there's a pool of trained and equipped leaders ready to step into roles as needed. This approach reflects Jesus' method of investing deeply in a few to ensure that leadership, teaching, and mission would continue and multiply beyond His earthly ministry.

E. What is a Cultural Shift in Church Leadership?

A cultural shift in church leadership refers to a significant change in the values, practices, and beliefs that inform how leadership operates within the church context. This kind of shift can manifest in various ways and can be driven by different factors. Here are some examples and reasons for a cultural shift in church leadership:

1. **From Hierarchical to Collaborative Leadership:** Traditional churches often operate on a hierarchical model where decision-making resides mainly with senior pastors or a select group of elders. A cultural shift might move the church towards a more collaborative model, emphasizing team-based leadership and broader congregational involvement in decisions.
2. **Empowerment of Laity:** There's a growing emphasis on equipping and empowering lay members to take on leadership roles instead of leaving all leadership to ordained ministers.
3. **Relevance and Adaptability:** As society changes, churches sometimes undergo a cultural shift to remain relevant. This might involve adjusting worship styles, utilizing technology, or rethinking ministry approaches.
4. **From Maintenance to Mission:** Some churches experience a shift from focusing primarily on maintaining existing structures and programs to prioritizing outreach, evangelism, and community impact.
5. **Generational Transitions:** As older leaders retire or move on, younger leaders may bring in fresh perspectives, values, and visions that lead to a cultural shift.
6. **Inclusion:** As the global church becomes more interconnected and societies become more varied, there's a move towards more

inclusive leadership that values a range of cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

7. **Renewed Theological Emphasis:** A renewed emphasis on certain theological principles can reshape leadership practices, such as a heightened focus on the priesthood of all believers or a return to early church practices.
8. **Adopting New Methods:** The introduction of new strategies like church planting movements, disciple-making movements, or other missional approaches can create shifts in how leadership operates.

A cultural shift in church leadership is significant and often requires intentional navigation. Such shifts can lead to growth and revitalization but can also be accompanied by challenges as members adjust to the new leadership culture. Effective communication, patience, and consistent vision-casting are essential during such transitional periods.

F. What are “Micro churches”?

Micro churches, sometimes also referred to as "house churches" or "simple churches," are smaller, more intimate gatherings of believers that meet outside of the traditional church setting. They can convene in homes, cafes, workplaces, or other informal settings. Here are some of their main characteristics:

1. **Size:** Typically, they consist of a small number of people. The size makes it possible for everyone to participate actively, build deeper relationships, and ensure that everyone's needs are met.
2. **Simplicity:** They don't require large infrastructures, paid staff, or complex programming.
3. **Flexibility:** Meeting locations and times can easily change based on the needs and schedules of the members.
4. **Leadership:** Often led by laypeople rather than ordained ministers, leadership can be shared or rotated among its members.
5. **Organic Growth:** They can multiply easily. As one group grows, it can split into two or more smaller gatherings.

6. **Focus on Relationships:** The small setting fosters deep, personal relationships, discipleship, and mutual care among members.

XVIII. Francis Chan

Francis Chan, a former megachurch pastor and now a well-known Christian author and speaker, has been quite vocal about his beliefs concerning the Church. Here are some of his key perspectives based on his writings, teachings, and interviews up until my last update in January 2022:

1. **Intimacy with God:** Chan often emphasizes the importance of a deep, personal relationship with God rather than merely participating in church activities.
2. **Church as a Community:** Chan believes that the Church should be more than a place people attend once a week. He suggests that the Church should be a community where believers live out their faith daily and intimately with one another, much like the early church depicted in the Book of Acts.
3. **Simplicity of Church Structure:** In his book "Letters to the Church," Chan critiques the modern Western church model with its often complex organizational structures and large budgets. He advocates for a return to simpler, home-based fellowship groups.
4. **Making Disciples:** Chan places a high emphasis on the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), which instructs believers to make disciples. He believes that every Christian should be actively involved in disciple-making, not just church leaders.
5. **Concern about Consumer Christianity:** Chan has voiced concerns about what he sees as a consumer mentality in many Western churches, where attendees come to get something out of the service rather than give and participate actively in the body of Christ.
6. **Holiness and Surrender:** He consistently teaches that Christians should pursue holiness and total surrender to God, highlighting the cost of discipleship.
7. **Church Planting Movements:** In recent years, Chan has been involved in house church planting movements, particularly in Asia. He believes that this model can be more effective in

certain contexts and is more in line with the New Testament model of church.

It's essential to note that while many appreciate Chan's perspective and passion, others have critiques or differing viewpoints. As with any teacher or preacher, it's always a good idea to explore their teachings directly and compare them with the Bible.

XIV. What is a Multiplication Model of Church Planting or Church Growth?

The multiplication model, especially in the context of church planting and growth, is an approach that emphasizes not just adding members, but multiplying leaders, groups, and churches. It's rooted in the idea of disciples making disciples, who in turn make more disciples. Here's a closer look:

1. **Rapid Expansion:** The aim is for swift growth, not just through individual conversions, but by training new leaders who can start new churches or groups.
2. **Empowerment:** Every member is seen as a potential leader or church planter. Training and discipleship are geared towards empowering individuals to take on leadership roles.
3. **Reproducibility:** Everything from church practices to discipleship materials is designed to be easily reproducible. The idea is that whatever is taught can be quickly and easily passed on to others.
4. **Organic Growth:** Instead of investing heavily in large, centralized structures, the emphasis is on starting many small, independent, self-sustaining churches or groups.

XX. Growing in Cultural Understanding

In the realm of Foreign Christian Ministry, the idea of consistent daily learning and dedication holds significant importance.

To truly understand the intricate cultural, social, and spiritual dimensions of a foreign land, dedicating 15 minutes daily towards targeted learning can be transformative. Imagine allocating 15 minutes each day to study indigenous religious traditions or regional cultural nuances. Over a span of six months to a year, this commitment would not only enhance your capability as a missionary but also deepen the bonds of trust and mutual respect within the community you serve.

Consider the potential impact: By investing 15 minutes daily for six months into researching a specific people group, you'd likely possess knowledge deeper than most of your peers. Persist with this regimen for one year, and you could be viewed as an expert on the subject.

While the duration might vary, the principle remains: 15 minutes daily can be the bridge between an average understanding and expert understanding. The relevance? In Foreign Christian Ministry, merely having surface-level knowledge might not suffice. To truly serve, connect, and make a difference, a deeper understanding could be pivotal.

On this topic of continual learning, consider learning how to learn the language of your targeted people group. It's nearly impossible to truly understand a culture without knowing the language, since words are given to what people value. Two methods we recommend include LAMP, by Thomas Brewster (which my wife and I have used successfully to learn three different languages on three different fields), and the Growing Participant Approach (which we've seen other missionaries on the field use successfully). It's possible to give and take from these two approaches as well, since GPA is more current with new information regarding language acquisition. Both these methods must be learned on the field and do not use typical language schools. They also allow you to learn heart languages,

which language schools do not teach. (Learning a heart language – what they speak at home - will connect you instantly to the hearts of your new people-group.) Bonding, friendships, and trust will come easily as you come into their circles as a humble learner. You will also learn the language much quicker with these methods, as long as you set up accountability to keep you going. Even if you just commit 15 minutes a day to learning, like we discussed at the beginning, it's worth it.

Is such dedication worthwhile? Emphatically, yes. In the mission field, mediocrity can hinder the genuine connections and positive impact we strive for. Unless one is prepared to commit those precious minutes daily, the risk is remaining superficial in one's engagement, possibly settling for mediocrity.

XXI. Reliance on the Power of God

“When it is a question of God's almighty Spirit, never say, ‘I can't’” (Oswald Chambers).

“On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ Then they gathered around him and asked him, ‘Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?’ He said to them: ‘It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth’” (*Acts 1:4-8*).

The significance of this verse in the context of church planting cannot be overstated. It signifies that we should not even start the process of making disciples until we are indued with power from on high. This empowerment is not merely a theological concept. It is a demonstratable power that can be experienced and seen by the world.

It is the power of God that will propel the spread of the gospel to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. This type of progression is what we want to see in any church planting effort. Dependence upon the Holy Spirit lies at the heart of church planting. It is the power that transforms ordinary individuals into extraordinary witnesses, embolding and empowering them to carry the light of the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Whether it is Alpha Course, the Church in China, or the Church Planting Movement, all have testimonies of the power of God working through their ministry with signs and wonders.

Dependence on God has always been the case throughout the history of missions. Hudson Taylor, for example, emphasized the need for complete reliance on God's power, guidance, and provision. One of his notable quotes on this topic is: "All God's giants have been weak

men who did great things for God because of their faith.” Taylor faced numerous challenges and obstacles in his life and ministry, but he relied on prayer and faith to overcome them. His legacy continues to inspire and encourage Christians to rely on the Holy Spirit's leading in their own lives and missions.

Without the Spirit of God, we can do nothing. We are as ships without wind or chariots without steeds. Like branches without sap, we are withered. Like coals without fire, we are useless. As an offering without the sacrificial flame, we are unaccepted” (Charles Spurgeon).

The greatest cross-cultural missionary, Paul, admits to being with the Corinthians "in weakness and in fear and much trembling."

1 Corinthians 2:2-5, “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”

The Apostle Paul’s humility serves as a powerful reminder that, despite our limitations and fears, we can still be effective instruments in God's hands. Our effectiveness does not rest on how talented we are, but on the power of God. Our weakness can be an amazing conduit for God's strength to shine through. This should encourage us to seek his presence and the power of the Spirit in our own lives and ministries.