

The Master Plan of Evangelism

by

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

The Master Plan of Evangelism reveals the objective of Christ's ministry and His strategy for carrying it out. Coleman focuses on the under-lying principles that consistently determined what Jesus' action would be in any given situation. Every Christian who seeks to follow and witness for Jesus Christ should read this significant and relevant book.

FORWARD:

The secret of this book's impact is not hard to discover. Instead of drawing on the latest popular fad or newest selling technique, Dr. Coleman has gone back to the Bible and has asked one critical question: "What was Christ's strategy of evangelism?" - Billy Graham

INTRODUCTION:

Reflective man produces new philosophies; it is only regenerate man who holds the clue to a society that is really new.

It is the conviction, grounded in the good news that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself," that makes evangelism immensely more than a theory or a slogan. It brings it into focus as a necessity.

The question rises: How do we go forward with an evangelism - a widening of the circle of faith so that it includes more and more people who have transformingly trusted Christ as Savior - that is continuous, contagious, and compelling?

Coleman has presented a set of principles and sketched a scheme which, studied carefully, will go far toward rescuing the concept of evangelism from the realm of the "special" and the "occasional," and anchoring where it belongs in the essential, ongoing life and witness of the congregation.

There is much that beckons us to the disciple-winning that works through small groups and builds toward congregational witness - to demonstrate the connection between the Gospel and the life which that Gospel enables us to live... It is plain. It is direct.

PREFACE:

“The Master and His Plan”
“*I am the way...*” – John 14:6

I. The Problem in Evangelistic Methods

Objective and relevance – these are the crucial issues of our work. Both are interrelated, and the measure by which they are made compatible will largely determine the significance of all our activity. Merely because we are busy, or even skilled, doing something does not necessarily mean that we are getting anything accomplished.

**The question must always be asked: “Is it worth doing?” and
“Does it get the job done?”**

This is a question that should be posed continually in relation to the evangelistic activity of the church. Are our efforts to keep things going fulfilling the Great Commission of Christ? Do we see an ever-expanding company of dedicated people reaching the world with the gospel as a result of our ministry?

Are we accomplishing our objective?

- A. Form Follows Function
 - a. Concern immediately focuses the need for a well-thought-through strategy of movement day by day in terms of the long-range goal.
 - b. We must know how a course of action fits into the overall plan God has for our lives if it is to thrill our souls with a sense of destiny.
 - c. This is true of any effort to spread the gospel.
 - d. EVERYTHING we do must have a PURPOSE.**
 - e. Otherwise, our efforts can be lost in aimlessness and confusion.
- B. A Study in Principles
 - a. This book does not seek to interpret specific methods of Jesus in personal or mass evangelism.
 - b. Rather, this is a study of principles underlying His ministry...
 - c. These are the principles that determined His methods...
 - d. This is a study of His strategy of evangelism, around which His life was oriented
- C. More Research Needed
 - a. There has been surprisingly little published along these lines
 - b. A.B. Bruce’s “The Training of the Twelve” is the best available...
 - c. Henry Latham’s 1890 “Pastor Pastorum” is also good...

II. Our Plan of Study

- A. We will use the New Testament & the Gospels in particular as our guide...
- B. We will use the eyewitness accounts of those who saw the Master at work (Luke 1:2-3; John 20:30; John 21:24; & 1 John 1:1)
- C. The Gospels were written primarily to show us Christ, the Son of God, and that by faith we can have life in His name (John 20:31).
- D. Be sure... the Gospels are intended to teach us how to follow in the way of the Master.**
- E. Thus, **the spiritual accounts of Jesus constitute our best, and only inerrant, Textbook on Evangelism.**
- F. His tactics have been analyzed from the standpoint of His ministry as a whole... to see the larger meaning of His methods with people.

III. Christ, a Perfect Example

- A. His Objective Was Clear
 - a. His days on earth were the unfolding in time of the plan of God from the beginning
 - b. He intended to save out of the world a people for Himself and to build a Church of the Spirit which would never perish.
 - c. This world was/is His creation.
 - d. Jesus gave Himself to provide a salvation from all sin...
 - e. Contrary to our superficial thinking... there never was a distinction in His mind between domestic and foreign missions.
 - f. To Jesus, it was all world evangelism...g**
- B. He Planned to Win
 - a. His life was ordered by His objective.**
 - b. Everything He did and said was a part of the whole pattern... of redeeming the world for God.
 - c. The cross was His motivating vision that governed His behavior.
 - d. Not for one minute did Jesus lose sight of His goal.
 - e. There was nothing haphazard about His life... no wasted energy nor any idle word.
 - f. He was on business for God (Luke 2:49)**
 - g. Like a general plotting his course of battle, the Son of God calculated to win.
 - h. He conceived a plan that would not fail.**
- C. Worth Careful Consideration
 - a. His strategy is so unassuming and silent that it is unnoticed by the hurried churchmen.**
 - b. Consequently, the basis philosophy is so different from that of the modern church that its implications are nothing less than revolutionary.**
 - c. The following pages attempt to clarify 8 guiding principles of the Master's plan
 - d. It must be said... the steps are not to be understood as strictly sequential...
 - e. Actually, all the steps were implied in each one, and in some degree they all began with the first
 - f. The outline is intended only to give structure to His method and to bring out the progressive logic of the plan.

Chapter One:

SELECTION

"He chose from them twelve..." – Luke 6:13

Men Were His Method

It all started by Jesus calling a few men to follow Him.

His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with men whom the multitudes would follow.

Jesus started to gather these men before He preached in public.

Men were to be His method of winning the world to God.

The initial objective of Jesus' plan was to enlist men who could bear witness to His life and carry on His work after He returned to the Father.

There is no evidence of haste in the selection of the disciples... just determination

Jesus' early efforts of soul winning (meaning the disciples), had little or no immediate effect upon the religious life of His day, but that did not matter greatly.

These few early converts were destined to become the leaders His Church that was to take the gospel to the entire world.

The significance of their lives would be felt throughout eternity.

That's the only thing that counts.

Men Willing to Learn

What is more revealing about these men is that at first, they do not impress us as being key men.

None occupied prominent places in the synagogue or priesthood...

For the most part, they were common laboring men... They were impulsive, temperamental, easily offended, and had all the prejudices of their environment.

One might have wondered... How could Jesus use these guys?

This was not the kind of group you would expect to win the world for Christ.

Yet, Jesus saw in these simple men the potential of leadership for the Kingdom.

They were “unlearned and ignorant” according to the world’s standard (Acts 4:13), but they were teachable.

Though often mistaken in their judgment and slow to comprehend spiritual things, they were honest men, willing to confess their need... and they were teachable!

Perhaps most significant about them was their sincere yearning for God and the realities of His life.

They were fed up with the hypocrisy of the ruling aristocracy. Some of them had already joined the revival movement of John the Baptist (John 1:35). These men were looking for someone to lead them in the way of salvation.

Jesus can use anyone who wants to be used.

Concentrated on a Few

Here is the wisdom of His method... the fundamental principle of concentrating on those He intended to use.

One cannot transform the world without transforming individuals

Individuals cannot be changed except as they are molded in the hands of the Master

The necessity is to keep the group small enough to be able to work effectively with them.

As the followers around Jesus increased, it became necessary by the middle of the second year of His ministry to narrow the select company to a more manageable number (Luke 6:13-17; Mk 3:13-19)

It is clear that Jesus intended these men to have unique privileges and responsibilities in the Kingdom work.

This does not mean that Jesus’ decision to have 12 apostles excluded others from following Him... The seventy of Luke 10:1, Mark (the Gospel writer), James (the Lord’s brother) are notable examples of others who were used powerfully by the Lord.

Nevertheless, we must acknowledge that there was a rapidly diminishing priority given to those outside the Twelve.

Within the apostolic group Peter, James, & John seemed to enjoy a more special relationship to the Master than did the other nine.

The fact that there is no record of the disciples complaining about the preeminence of the three, though they did murmur about other things, is proof that where preference is shown in the right spirit and for the right reason, offense need not arise.

The Principle Observed

Jesus deliberately proportioned His life to those He wanted to train.

The FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE... When teaching/mentoring: the more concentrated the size of the group being taught, the greater the opportunity for effective instruction.

Jesus devoted most of His remaining life on earth to these few disciples.

The world could be indifferent toward Him and still not defeat His strategy...

He was not greatly concerned when His followers on the fringes of things gave up their allegiance when confronted with the true meaning of the Kingdom (John 6:60 & 66)

But He could not bear to have His close disciples miss His purpose. They had to understand the truth and be sanctified by it (John 17:17).

Thus, He prayed “not for the world,” but the few God gave Him “out of the world” (John 17:6 & 9).

Not Neglecting the Masses

It would be wrong to assume that Jesus neglected the masses...

Jesus did reach the multitudes... He taught them as well.

Jesus continually preached to the crowds that followed His miracle-working ministry. He healed them when they were sick. He fed them when they were hungry and He cast out demons among them.

In every possible way Jesus manifested to the masses a humility and genuine concern that underscored the fact that these were the people He came to save...

He loved them, wept over them, and finally died to save them from their sin.

No one could think that Jesus shirked mass evangelism.

Multitudes Aroused

Jesus would not play to the galleries.

Quite the contrary. Repeatedly, Jesus took special pains to allay the superficial, popular support of the multitudes which had been occasioned (a.k.a. easily aroused) by His extraordinary power (John 2:23-3:3; 6:26-27)

On other occasions, when applauded by the crowd, Jesus would slip away with His disciples and go elsewhere to continue His ministry.

Few Seemed to Understand

It is not (therefore) surprising to note that few people were actually converted during the ministry of Christ.

Many of the multitudes believed in Christ in the sense that His divine ministry was acceptable, but comparatively few seemed to have grasped the meaning of the gospel.

Perhaps His total number of devoted followers at the end of His earthly ministry numbered little more than 500... to whom Jesus appeared after the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:6)... and only about 120 tarried to Jerusalem to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:15).

If at this point one were to measure the effectiveness of Christ's evangelism by the number of His converts... Jesus would not have been considered among the most productive mass evangelists of the Church.

His Strategy

Why did Jesus deliberately concentrate His life on comparatively so few people when the Master could have had an immediate following of thousands if He wanted?

Surely Jesus could have adopted a more enticing program of mass recruitment.

Is it not rather disappointing that One with all the powers of the universe would live & die to save the world, yet in the end, have only a few ragged disciples to show for His labors?

Jesus was not trying to impress the crowd, but to usher in a kingdom. This meant He needed people who could lead the multitudes.

It had been (and still is) demonstrated that the "crowd" was an easy prey to false gods (prophets & teachers) when left without proper (biblical) care.

The masses were like helpless sheep wandering aimlessly without a shepherd (Mark 6:34; Matthew 9:36; 14:14). They were willing to follow almost anyone who came along with some promise for their welfare.

Thus, before the world could ever be permanently helped, people would have to be raised up who could lead the multitudes in the things of God.

Jesus was a realist & fully realized the fickleness of depraved human nature as well as the satanic forces of this world amassed against humanity, and it this knowledge He based His evangelism on a plan that would meet the need.

Jesus helped the multitudes but devoted Himself primarily to a few men, so that the masses could at last be saved.

This was the genius of His strategy.

The Principle Applied Today

Yet, strangely (and sad) enough, today most of the evangelistic efforts of the church begin with the multitudes, under the assumption that the church is qualified to preserve what good is done.

The result is our spectacular emphasis on numbers of converts, candidates for baptism, and more members for the church, with little or no genuine concern manifested toward the establishment of these souls in the love and power of God... let alone the preservation and continuation of the work.

Conversely, the pattern of Jesus teaches that the first duty of a church's leadership is to see to it that a foundation is laid in the beginning on which can be built an effective and continuing evangelistic ministry to the multitudes.

This will require more concentration of time & talents on fewer people in the church while not neglecting the passion for the world.

It will require raising up trained disciples "for the work of ministering" with the pastor & church staff (Ephesians 4:12).

A few people so dedicated, in time, will shake the world for God!

Qt: "Victory is never won by the multitudes."

Some might complain that favoritism is shown toward a select group in the church; nevertheless, it is the way that Jesus concentrated His life... and it is necessary if any lasting leadership is to be trained.

Where it is practiced out of genuine love for the whole church, such priorities is mission critical.

Qt: "Everything that is done with the few is for the salvation of the multitudes."

Modern Demonstrations

Jesus demonstrated clearly... the multitudes can be won easily if they are just given (Spirit-led) leaders to follow.

Time for Action

The evangelistic program of the Church has bogged down on nearly every front...

At the same time, the satanic forces of this world are becoming more relentless and brazen in their attack(s).

A sad irony... In an age when tools for rapid communication of the gospel are ever-increasing within the Church, **there are actually more unevangelized people on the planet today than there was before the invention of the horseless carriage.**

Our problem... we (the Church) have launched one crash program after another to reach the multitudes... But what we have failed to comprehend is that the real problem is not with the masses.

Before we can resolve the exploitation of the people, we must get to (and disciple) those whom the people (will) follow.

This puts a priority on winning and training those already in responsible positions of leadership (and/or those the Lord identifies as future leaders).

Remember... One does not have to have the prestige of the world to be greatly used in the Kingdom of God.

Anyone who is willing to follow Christ can become a mighty influence on the world; providing, of course, this person has the proper (Spirit-empowered) training.

Here is where we must begin like Jesus... It will be slow, tedious, painful, and probably unnoticed by people at first; but the end result will be glorious - even if we don't live to see it.

Seen this way, it becomes a big decision in the ministry. We must decide where we want our ministry to count - in the momentary applause of popular recognition or in the reproduction of our lives in a few chosen people... It is a question of which generation we are living for.

In the next chapter we will see "how" Jesus trained His followers...

Chapter Two:

ASSOCIATION

“Behold, I am with you always...” – Matthew 28:20

He Stayed with Them

Having called His men, **Jesus made a practice of being with them.**

This was the essence of His training program – just let His disciples follow Him.

Jesus’ way was incredibly simple... Jesus had no formal school, no seminaries, no outlined course to study. None of these highly organized procedures considered so necessary today entered into His ministry...

Amazingly, all Jesus did to teach these men His was to draw them close to Himself.

Jesus was His own school and curriculum.

The natural informality of Jesus’ teaching method stood in striking contrast to the formal, scholastic procedures of the scribes... Jesus asked only (but truly) that His disciples follow Him (John 18:19).

To Know Was to Be With

Knowledge was gained by association before it was understood by explanation (Luke 8:10).

John & Andrew were invited to “come and see” (John 1:39)

Philip was addressed in the same basic manner: “Follow Me” (John 1:43). Then Philip invited Nathaniel also to “come and see” the Master (John 1:46).

Later, when James, John, Peter, & Andrew were found mending their fishing nets, Jesus used the same familiar words: **“Come, follow Me”** – and in this case, Jesus adds the reason why they are being invited to follow; **“& I will make you fishers of men”** (Mark 1:17; cf., Matthew 4:19; Luke 5:10).

Matthew, who was called from the tax collector’s booth, received the same invitation: “Follow Me” (Mark 2:14; Matthew 9:9; Mark 5:27)

At home with Jesus they could talk things over and there in private see intimately into His nature and work.

Qt: “One living sermon is worth a hundred explanations.”

The Principle Observed

See the tremendous strategy of it...

By responding to Christ's initial call, believers in effect, enrolled in the Master's school where their understanding could be enlarged & their faith established.

There were many things these men did not understand yet; but all these problems could be dealt with as they followed Jesus.

In His presence, they could learn all that they needed to know.

The PRINCIPLE articulated... Jesus chose from the larger group about Him the Twelve... “that they might be with Him” (Mark 3:14; cf., Luke 6:13)

Jesus made it clear that before these men were “to preach” or “to cast out demons,” they were to be “with Him.”

Closer as Training Ends

Contrary to what one might expect, as the ministry of Christ lengthened into the second & third years He gave increasingly more time to the chosen disciples, NOT less.

In view of this, it is not surprising that during passion week, Jesus scarcely ever let His disciples out of His sight... Words uttered shortly before departure are always more precious.

Indeed, it was not until time began to close in that the disciples of Christ were prepared to grasp many of the deeper meanings of His presence with them (John 16:4)...

Doubtless, this explains why the writers of the Gospels were constrained to devote so much of their attention to these last days... half of what is recorded about Jesus happened in the last months of His life, and most of this, in the last week.

Interestingly, every one of the ten post-resurrection appearances of Christ was to His followers, particularly the chosen apostles.

As far as the Bible shows, not one unbelieving person was permitted to see the glorified Lord.

The disciples who had fled in despair following the crucifixion needed to be revived in their faith and confirmed in their mission to the world. **Christ's whole ministry evolved around them.**

The time which Jesus invested in these few disciples was so much more by comparison to the given to others that it can only be regarded as a deliberate strategy.

They walked together along the lonely roads; they visited together in the crowded cities; they sailed and fished together on the Sea of Galilee; they prayed together... and they worshipped together...

Still Ministering to the Masses

The disciples were always there with Him; whether He addressed the multitudes, conversed with the scribes & Pharisees who sought to ensnare Him, or spoke to the "least of these" along the road-side, the disciples were close at hand to observe, listen, and learn.

Jesus' time was paying double dividends... Without neglecting His regular ministry to those in need, Jesus maintained a constant ministry to His disciples by have them with Him,

It Takes Time

Such close and constant association meant that Jesus had virtually not time to call His own.

Even the time He took to go apart to keep His personal devotions was subject to interruption at the disciples' need (Mark 6:46-48; cf., Luke 11:1)

Jesus would have it no other way.

Jesus wanted to be with them... They were His spiritual children (Mark 10:24; John 13:33; 21:5).

The only way a father can properly raise a family is to be with them.

The Foundation of Follow-up

Nothing is more obvious and yet more neglected than the application of this principle... the principle of the foundation that is created thru follow-up.

Note a couple examples.... Jesus went home with Zacchaeus after his conversion on the streets of Jericho (Luke 19:7)... After the conversion of the woman at the well in

Samaria, Jesus tarried two extra days in Sychar to instruct the people of that community who “believed on Him because of the word of the woman who testified” and because of that personal association with them “many more believed,” not because of the woman’s witness, but because they heard for themselves the Master (John 4:39-42)

The Church as a Continuing Fellowship

Really the whole problem of giving personal care to every believer is only resolved in a thorough understanding of the nature and mission of the Church.

It was the Church who served as the means of following up all those who followed Jesus... the “believers” became the body of Christ, and as such, ministered to each other individually and collectively.

Every member of the community of faith had a part to fulfill in the ministry.
But this could only happen as they were trained and inspired.

Our Problem

When will the Church learn... Preaching to the masses, although necessary, will never suffice in the work of preparing leaders for evangelism. Nor will occasional prayer meetings and training classes for Christian workers do this job.

Building men and women is not that easy.

Building (a.k.a. “discipling”) men and women requires constant personal attention.

This is something that no organization or class can accomplish.

Children are not raised by proxy.

Jesus’ example would teach us that discipling can only be done by persons staying close to those whom they seek to lead.

The Church has tragically failed at biblically discipling people. There is a lot of talk in the Church about evangelism and Christian nurture, but little concern for personal association when it becomes evident that such work involves the sacrifice of personal indulgence.

Most churches, at best, insist on bringing new members through some kind of confirmation class which usually meets an hour a week for a month or so... But rest of the time the young convert has no contact with a definite Christian training program (beyond the worship service).

Unless new Christians, if indeed they are saved, have people who will fill the gap in a real way, they are left entirely on their own to find the solutions to innumerable practical problems confronting their lives... any one of which could mean disaster to their new faith.

With such haphazard follow-up of believers, it is not wonder that about half of those who make professions and join the church eventually fall away... and even fewer still grow in sufficient knowledge and grace to be of any real service to the Kingdom.

If Sunday services and new membership training classes are all that a church has to develop young converts into mature disciples, then they are defeating their own purpose by contributing to a false security... and may ultimately do more harm than good.

There is simply no substitute for doing life together with people.

If Jesus, the Son of God, found it necessary to stay almost constantly with His few disciples for 3 years, (and even one of them was lost), how can a church expect to do this job on an assembly line basis a few days a month?

The Principle Applied Today

Whatever method of follow-up the church adopts, it must have as its basis a personal guardian concern for those entrusted to their care.

To do otherwise is essentially to abandon new believers to the devil.

This means... some system must be created & employed whereby EVERY convert is given a Christian friend/mentor to follow until such time as he or she can lead/mentor another.

The friend/mentor/counselor should stay with the new believer as much as possible, studying the Bible and praying with him/her, all the while answering questions, clarifying the truth, and seeking together to help others.

If a church does not have such committed counselors willing to do this service, it should be training some!

The only way to effectively train such leaders is to give them a leader to follow.

This (Jesus' method) can accomplish its purpose only when they followers practice what they learn.

Chapter Three:

CONSECRATION

“Take My yoke upon you...” – Matthew 11:29

He Required Obedience

Jesus expected the men He was with to obey Him.

They were not required to be smart, but they had to be loyal.

Loyalty became the distinguishing mark by which they were known.

They were called “disciples” meaning that they were “learners” or “pupils” of the Master. It was not until much later that were called “Christian” (Acts 11:26)

In time, obedient followers invariably take on the character of their leader.

Note... none of the disciples was asked at first to make a statement of faith or accept a well-defined creed... although they recognized Jesus to be the Messiah (John 1:41, 45, 49; Luke 5:8)

Initially, all they were asked to do was to follow Jesus... Of course, **clearly implied in their initial invitation was a call to faith in the person of Christ and obedience to His Word.**

The Way of the Cross

Qt: Following Jesus seemed easy enough at first, but that was because they had not followed Him very far.

It soon became apparent that being a disciple of Christ involved far more than a joyful acceptance of the Messianic promise...

Being a disciple meant the surrender of one’s whole life to the Master.

There could be NO COMPROMISE... no servant can serve two masters! (Luke 16:13)

There had to be a complete forsaking of sin. The old thought patterns, habits, and pleasures of the world had to be conformed to the new disciplines of the kingdom of God (Matthew 5:1-7, 29; Luke 6:20-49)

Love was to manifest itself in obedience to Christ (John 14:21,23), expressed in devotion to those whom Jesus died to save (Matthew 25:31-36).

There was a cross in it – the willing denial of self for others (Mark 8:34-38; 10:32-45; Matthew 16:24-26; 20:17-28; Luke 9:23-25; John 12:25-26; 13:1-20)

This was strong teaching. Not many people could take it. (John 6:60-66)

They liked to be numbered among His followers when He filled their stomachs, but when Jesus started talking about the true spiritual quality of the Kingdom and the sacrifice necessary in achieving it (John 6:25-59), many of His disciples “went back, and walked with Him no more” (John 6:66).

As they put it: “This is hard teaching, who can take it?” (John 6:60)

The surprising thing is that Jesus did not go running after them to try to get them to stay on His membership roll.

Jesus was training leaders for the Kingdom... if they were going to be fit vessels of service, they were going to have to pay the price.

Count the Cost

Those who would not go all the way... fell by the wayside.

They separated themselves from the chosen by reason of their own selfishness

Judas, exposed as a devil (John 6:70), held on unto the end, but at last his greed caught up with him.

One simply could not follow Jesus through the course of his life without turning loose of the world.

One of His disciples wanted to be excused from his immediate obligations of obedience so that he might go and care for his aged father, but Jesus would allow no delay. “Follow Me and leave the dead to bury the dead...” (Matthew 8:21-22; Luke 9:59-60).

Another disciple wanted to first bid farewell to his family, but Jesus put it to him straight: ‘No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God’ (Luke 9:62)

Jesus did not have the time or desire to scatter Himself on those who wanted to make their own terms of discipleship.

Hence, would be disciples were made to count the cost... (Luke 14:28).

To sum it up bluntly, Jesus was abundantly clear: whoever would not give up all that they had/were, could not be His disciple (Luke 14:33; cf., Mark 10:21; Matthew 19:21; Luke 18:22)

Few Would Pay the Price

When the opportunists left Jesus because He would not satisfy their popular expectations, Jesus had only a handful of followers left. (John 6:67)

To Obey Is to Learn

Jesus patiently endured his devoted disciple's human failings because in spite of all their shortcomings they were willing to follow Him.

Jesus was willing to put with a lot of spiritual immaturity.

He knew that they could master these defects as they grew in grace and knowledge.

Their capacity to receive revelation would grow provided they continued to practice what truth they did understand.

Obedience to Christ was thus the very means by which those in His company learned more truth. (John 7:17)

Jesus did not urge His disciples to commit their lives to a doctrine... but to a Person (His name is Jesus!) who was the doctrine.

Only as they continued in His Word could they know the truth (John 8:31-32).

The Proof of Love

Supreme obedience was interpreted to be the expression of love

Jesus said: "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." (John 14:15, 21, 23, 24; 15:10, 12)

Demonstrated by Jesus

Absolute obedience of the will of God was the controlling principle of the Master's own life. (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 15:10; 17:4; Luke 22:42; Mark 14:36; Matthew 26:39, 42, 44)

The cross was the crowning climax of Jesus' commitment to do the will of God.

The cross forever showed that obedience could not be compromised – it was always (and still remains) a commitment unto death.

When Jesus therefore spoke about obedience, it was something which the disciples could see incarnated in human form (John 13:15-16)

Just as Jesus found His blessedness in doing His Father's will, so His followers would/will find theirs.

This is the sole duty of a servant.

Nothing less can be accepted as worthy of His disciple (Luke 17:6-10; cf., 8:21; Mark 3:35; Matthew 12:50)

The Principle in Focus

A father must teach his children to obey him if he expects his children to be like him.

Jesus was making men to lead His Church to conquest, and no one can ever be a leader until first he has learned to follow a leader.

So He brought up His future commanders from the ranks, drilling in them the necessity for discipline and respect for authority.

There could be no insubordination in His command.

No one knew better than Jesus that the satanic forces of darkness against them were well organized and equipped to make ineffectual any half-hearted effort of evangelism.

They could not possibly outwit the devilish powers of this world unless they gave strict adherence to him who alone knew the strategy of victory.

Victory required absolute obedience to the Master's will, even as it meant complete abandonment of their own.

The Principle Applied Today

There can be no dillydallying around with the commands of Christ.

We are engaged in eternal, spiritual, warfare.

Everyday we are indifferent to our responsibilities is a day lost to the cause of Christ.

We must know that we are called to be servants ("doulos"/slaves) of our Lord and to obey His Word.

It is not our duty to reason why He speaks as He does, but only to carry out His orders.

There is no place in the Kingdom for a slacker.

A slacker's attitude not only precludes any growth in grace and knowledge, but also destroys any usefulness on the world battlefield of evangelism.

One must ask, "Why are so many professed Christians today stunted in their growth and ineffectual in their witness?" Why is the modern Church so weak in its witness to the world?

Answer: Among the clergy & laity alike, there is a general indifference to the commands of God.

Where is the obedience of the cross?

The teachings of Christ regarding self-denial and dedication have been replaced by a sort of respectable 'do-as-you-please' philosophy of expediency.

The great tragedy is that little is being done to correct the situation...

It is time for the requirements for church membership be interpreted and enforced in terms of true Christian discipleship.

Followers must have leaders... this means that before much can be done with the church's membership, something will have to be done with the Church's leaders.

Start like Jesus did...

Start by getting with a few chosen ones and instilling into them the meaning of obedience.

Chapter Four:

IMPARTATION

“Receive ye the Holy Spirit...” – John 20:22

He Gave Himself Away

In receiving His Spirit His disciples would know the love of God for the lost world. That is why His demands were accepted with argument.

The disciples understood that they were not just keeping a law, but were responding to One who loved them, and was willing to give himself for them.

Jesus’ was a life of giving... (John 15:15; 17:4,8,14)

He gave them His peace by which He was sustained in tribulation (John 16:33; cf., Matthew 11:28)

He gave them His joy in which He labored amid sufferings and sorrows (John 15:11; 17:13).

He gave them the keys to His Kingdom, against which the powers of hell could not prevail (Matthew 16:19; cf., Luke 12:32).

He gave them His own glory... that they all might be one, just as He and the Father are One (John 17:22,24).

Jesus gave all He had... even His own life.

Love is like that... **Love is always giving itself away (John 3:16).**

When love is self-contained, it is not true love.

Only in this light can one even begin to understand the cross of Christ.

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

The Compulsion of Evangelism

Jesus’ life was simply the revelation in time of God’s eternal purpose to save for Himself a people...

Supremely, this is what the disciples needed to learn, not in theory, but in practice (John 13:1-20).

The disciples saw how their Master denied Himself many of the comforts and pleasures of the world and became a servant among them...

They saw how the things which they cherished – physical satisfaction, popular acclaim, prestige, etc. – He refused; while the things which they sought to escape – poverty, humiliation, sorrow, and even death – He accepted willingly for their sake.

It was clear that the Master considered no service too small, nor sacrifice to great, when it was rendered for the glory of God.

His Sanctification

Jesus praying to the Father... “as You sent me... I have sent them” (John 17:18-19)

Jesus was a Model... of faithful obedience

Jesus gave Himself to those about Him so that they might come to know through His life a similar commitment to the mission for which He had come into the world.

Credentials of the Ministry

The disciples were to give as freely as they had received (Matthew 10:8).

They were to love one another as He loved them (John 13:34-35)

By this token they were to be His disciples (John 15:9-10)

Herein was contained all His commandments (John 15:12, 17; cf., Matthew 22:37-40; Mark 12:30-31; Luke 10:27)

Love... “Calvary love” was (and is) the standard for true Christians.

Disciples are to give themselves in selfless devotion to those whom the Father loved and for whom their Master died (John 17:23).

Such demonstrations of love, lived out through true Christians disciples, was to be (and still is), the way that the world would know that the Gospel was/is true.

Qt: Love is the only way to win the free response of men... and this is possible, only by the presence of Christ within the heart. (John 17:25-26)

The Work of the Holy Spirit

Transformational encounters with Jesus cannot be man made (John 6:63).

That is why, even to begin to live in Christ, one has to be born again (John 3:3-9)

Likewise, it is the Spirit who sustains & nourishes the transformed life of a (true) disciple in knowledge & grace (John 4:14; 7:38-39)

By the same Spirit one is made clean through the Word and set apart unto God for holy service (John 15:3; 17:17; cf., Ephesians 5:26)

From beginning to end, experiencing the living Christ in any personal way is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Qt: “Jesus was God in revelation; but the Spirit was God in operation.”

The Holy Spirit was the Agent of God actually effecting, through men, the eternal plan of salvation.

Jesus explained that the Spirit would prepare the way for their ministry (Matthew 10:19-20; Mark 13:11; Luke 12:12).

The Holy Spirit would convict the world “in respect of sin and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8).

The Holy Spirit would give illumination of truth that men might know the Lord (Matthew 22:43; cf., Mark 12:36; John 16:14).

By His power, the disciples were promised the very ability to do the works of their Lord (John 14:12).

In this light, evangelism was not interpreted as a human under-taking, bus as a diving assignment/project.

Evangelism was, is , and will always be the Spirit’s work.

Consequently, the only thing disciples are asked of by God, when it comes to evangelism, is to let the Holy Spirit have complete charge of their lives.

Another Comforter

Jesus had been the disciple’s Comforter, their Teacher, their Guide... In fellowship with Him, the disciples had known courage and strength; with Him they felt that everything was possible; but their trouble was that Jesus was going back to heaven.

Jesus told them about the Spirit as “Another Comforter,” an Advocate (John 14:16).

Now the Spirit would guide them into all truth (John 16:13).

He would teach them what they needed to know (John 14:26).

He would help them pray (John 14:12-13; 16:23-24).

He would glorify the Son by taking the things of Christ and making them real to His followers (John 16:14-15).

“Another Comforter” just like Jesus was to fill them with the very presence of the Master.

The privileges which the disciples were to enjoy in this deeper relationship to the Spirit were greater than they had known as Jesus walked with them..

Now He could be with them ALWAYS (Matthew 28:20; John 14:16).

It was better for them that Jesus return to the Father and send the blessed Comforter to come and take His place (read John 16:7)!

The Secret of the Victorious Life

The superhuman work to which they (the disciples – as well as us) were called demanded supernatural help.

It is not who we are, but who He is that makes the difference.

A Truth Hidden from Unbelievers

Only those who followed Jesus ALL-THE-WAY came to know the glory of this experience.

Jesus would not cast His pearls before those who did not want them.

This characterized His teaching throughout life. Jesus purposely reserved for His few chosen disciples His most revealing things (Luke 10:22; Matthew 11:27; cf., 16:17)

The Principle Issue Today

We must have His life in us by the Spirit if we are to do His work and practice His teachings.

Any evangelistic work without the power of the Spirit working in us and through us is as lifeless as it is meaningless.

We cannot give away something which we do not possess ourselves.

The very ability to give away our life in Christ is the proof of its possession.

The Spirit of God always insists on making Christ know.

Here is the great paradox of life - we must die to ourselves to live in Christ.

To live “in Christ” is to give ourselves away in service and devotion to our Lord.

This was Jesus’ method of evangelism.

Chapter Five

DEMONSTRATION

"I have given you an example..." - John 13:15

He Showed Them How to Live

Jesus realized that it wasn't enough to just get people into His spiritual communion.

His disciples needed to know how His experience was to be maintained and shared.

We live by what we do.

Where "living" the life and growth are neglected, life will cease to be.

Hence, **demonstration was a deliberate & important part of Jesus' strategy.**

The Practice of Prayer

Jesus often let His disciples see Him conversing with the Father

The disciples saw the strength which prayer gave to His life.

Note that Jesus did not force the lesson on them... He just kept on praying until the disciples got so hungry that they asked Him to teach them what He was doing.

Elementary methods of teaching are often necessary to get people started...

Whatever it took, Jesus was determined to get the lesson across.

Jesus emphasized the life of prayer again and again, continually enlarging on its meaning and application as they were able to comprehend deeper realities of His Spirit.

Demonstration was an indispensable part of Jesus' training method, which in turn, would become an indispensable part of their teaching of others...

Using Scripture

Another aspect of Jesus' life which was vividly portrayed to the disciples was the importance and use of the Holy Scriptures.

Often times Jesus took special pains to impress on His followers the meaning of some passage in the Bible...

Jesus never ceased to use the Scriptures in His conversation with them.

It was made clear to the disciples that if they were to continue in His fellowship by the Spirit after He was gone, they would have to abide in His Word (John 15:7).

Supremely Soul Winning

Perhaps most important... He was teaching them how to win souls.

Practically everything that Jesus said and did had some relevance to their work of evangelism, either by explaining a spiritual truth or revealing to them how they should deal with people.

Teaching Naturally

This point cannot be over-stated or over-emphasized...

Jesus did not let His “method” obscure His lesson.

Jesus let His truth call attention to itself & NOT the presentation.

His method was to conceal that He had a method... He was His method!

This may be hard to imagine in our day of professional techniques and sure-fire gimmicks.

One might have expected Jesus to at least offer a seminar in soul-winning... Yet the disciples never had any of the things/approaches applied to them that we now consider “essential” to the work of evangelism/discipleship.

All the disciples had to teach them was a Teacher who practiced with them what He expected them to learn.

He led them to recognize the need inherent in all classes of people.

He taught them the best methods of approaching people.

The disciples observed how He drew people to Himself; how He won their confidence, and how He inspired their faith.

The disciples learned through Jesus’ demonstration, how... He opened to people the way of salvation AND called them to a decision.

In all types of circumstances and among all kinds of people, the disciples watched the Master Soul-winner at work.

Classes Always in Session

Jesus was always teaching... both to the masses, as well to the disciples.

The Principle in Focus

The method of Jesus was more than a “continuous sermon”

Jesus’ method was also an object, lived out lesson as well.

Being a living Lesson was the secret to His influential teaching.

Jesus did not ask anyone to do or be anything which He had not first demonstrated in His own life.

Jesus was constantly with His disciples (intentionally).

Qt: Christ’s training classes were never dismissed.

The disciples were learning practically every moment of their waking day.

As good as it is to tell people what we mean, it is infinitely better to show them.

Qt: People are looking for a demonstration, not an explanation.

The Principle Applied Today

Those of us who are seeking to train people must be prepared/willing to have them follow us, even as we follow Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1)

Qt: We are the exhibit! (Philippians 3:17ff; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8; 2 Timothy 1:13)

We must take this truth to heart and into our lives.

There can be no shirking or evading of our personal responsibility to show the way to those we are training.

Jesus lead by example – demonstrative modeling was the Master’s method... and nothing else will ever suffice to train others to do His work.

Note: Such a commitment makes us vulnerable. We are not perfect and those persons to whom we open our lives will come to see our many shortcomings. But let them also see a readiness to confess our sins when we understand the error of our way. Let them hear us apologize

Our weaknesses need not impair discipleship when shinning through them is a transparent sincerity to follow Christ.

Remember: knowledge alone is not enough.

There comes a time for action.

Indeed, unapplied knowledge can become a stumbling block to further truth.

Jesus was training men to do a job, and when they knew enough to get started, He saw to it that they did something about it.

Chapter Six

DELEGATION

“I will make you fishers of men...” – Matthew 4:19

He Assigned Them Work

Jesus was always building His ministry for the time when His disciples would have to take over His work, and go out into the world with the redeeming gospel.

The patience with which Jesus brought this out reflects His consideration for their ability to learn/grow.

Jesus was never premature in His insistence on action.

The first invitation to the disciples to follow Him said nothing about going out and evangelizing the world, although this was His plan from the beginning.

His method was to get the disciples into a vital experience/relationship with God, and to show them how He worked, before telling them they had to do it.

At the same time, Jesus did not discourage their spontaneous reactions to bear witness to their faith.

Jesus also delegated hands on ministry to the disciples (John 4:2).

On the other hand, the Gospels reveal that the early disciples did little more than watch Jesus most of the time.

Jesus kept His vision before His followers through His actions...

Christ’s example should cause us to be more patient with new converts who follow us.

When Jesus was beginning His third ministry tour thru Galilee, “He called unto Him the twelve, and began to send the forth” (Mark 6:7; Matthew 10:5; Luke 9:1-2).

Like a mother eagle teaching her young to fly by pushing them out of the nest, Jesus pushed His disciples out into the world to try their own wings.

Briefing Instructions

Before letting them go; however, Jesus gave them some briefing instructions regarding their mission.

Jesus outlined explicitly for them, what He had been teaching implicitly...

First, Jesus reaffirmed His purpose for their lives.

They were to go and “preach the Kingdom of God, and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:1-2; Matthew 10:1; Mark 6:7)

The instructions emphasized the urgency at hand (Matthew 10:7)

Jesus also extended the scope of their ministry... (Matthew 10:8)

Jesus prioritized the disciple’s efforts to those who would be most apt to accept the message of the gospel (Matthew 10:5-6)... Jesus did the same.

Second, Jesus addressed their need for support... They were told to render their services freely, remembering how they had also freely received from their Lord (Matthew 10:8).

Jesus instructed them not to burden themselves unnecessarily with a lot of excess baggage and provisions (Matthew 10:9-10; Mark 6:8-9; Luke 9:3).

Jesus assured the disciples that as they were faithful to God, He would see to it that they would have their needs met.

Follow His Method

Jesus instructs His disciples to find some friendly person in each town and then live there as long as they continued to effectively evangelize the community...

In effect, the disciples were told to concentrated their time on the most promising individuals in each town who would thereby be able to follow up their work after they had gone... This was to receive priority over everything else (Matthew 10:11; Mark 6:10; Luke 9:4).

If the disciples could not find someone who would take them in, Jesus specifically told them to “shake off the dust” on their feet as a testimony against the people in town...

Jesus’ PRINCIPLE: the establishment of a beachhead in a new place of ministry, by connecting with a potentially key follow up leader, is not to be minimized.

Expect Hardship

The disciples were told that they would be hated... (Matthew 10:22-23).

Nevertheless... Jesus told His disciples to “fear not”

Jesus promised... though their witness could endanger their lives, the Holy Spirit would enable them to meet emergencies (Matthew 10:20-21).

Jesus’ words had a “No Matter What!” overtone... (Matthew 10:32).

Jesus never let His followers underestimate the strength of the enemy, nor the natural resistance of self-serving people to His redeeming gospel.

Jesus told His followers that they were being sent out as “sheep amongst wolves” (Matthew 10:16).

A Dividing Gospel

It is significant to note that **Jesus reminded the disciples of the decisive nature of the gospel invitation.**

Per Jesus... there could be no compromise with sin.

Consequently, anyone holding out on God was sure to be disturbed by the disciple’s preaching.

Again, per Jesus... The disciples were not hand-shaking emissaries maintaining the status quo of complacency... (Matthew 10:34-38)

The disciples were going forth with a revolutionary gospel, and when it was obeyed, it effected a revolutionary change in people and their society.

One with Christ

The point Jesus made with all of His instructions... the mission of His disciples was not different in principle or method than His own.

Jesus began by giving them His own authority and power to do His Work (Mark 6:7; Matthew 10:1; Luke 9:1) and closed by assuring them that what they were doing as though He was doing it Himself (Matthew 10:40; John 13:20).

The disciples were to be the actual representatives of Christ as they went forth.

Two by Two

Before they went out, He teamed them up in pairs (Mark 6:7).

Doubtless, this plan was intended to provide for His disciples' needed companionship.

The disciples could/would/should help one another.

Sending the disciples out in pairs reflects again the characteristic concern of Jesus for togetherness...

The disciples were finally started in the active ministry of Christ on their own.

The Mission of Seventy

The instructions given to this larger group were essentially the same as those delivered earlier to the Twelve (Luke 10:2-16).

These disciples were forerunners for their Lord, setting things up for His ministry.

Post-resurrection Commands

The principle of giving evangelistic work assignments to His disciples was conclusively demonstrated just before Jesus returned to heaven after His crucifixion and resurrection (Luke 24:38-47; John 20:21; John 21:15-17; Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18).

It was a clear proclamation of His strategy of world conquest.

Christ's disciples were to be the human instruments announcing the good news, and the Holy Spirit was to be God's personal empowerment of their mission.

Acts 1:8 says it all.

The Principle Is Clear

Jesus did not leave evangelism up in the air as an option...

Jesus was clear to His followers... evangelism is a definite command.

No follower of Jesus could/can escape the command to evangelize the world.

True Christians are "sent people" – sent out to evangelize the world like Jesus did...

Jesus gave His life for the ministry of evangelism.

Evangelism is not an optional accessory to our life...

Evangelism is the heartbeat of all that we are called to be and do.

Everything done in the name of Christ has its justification in fulfilling this mission.

The Principle Applied Today

It is not enough to simply make this an “ideal.”

The best way to live this out is to give people practical ministry assignments and expect them to be carried out.

Giving people ministry assignments gets them started...

When churches take this message to heart and start giving people evangelistic ministry assignments, the people in the pews will soon start moving out for God.

However, the fact that one “starts” the work is no assurance he or she will keep it up.

Once inertia is overcome, it is still necessary to keep one moving and going in the right direction.

Chapter Seven

SUPERVISION

“Do ye not yet perceive?” - Mark 8:17

He Kept Check on Them

Jesus made it a point to meet with His disciples following their tours of service to hear their reports and to share with them...

The initial solo excursion of the disciples was merely a field assignment as they continued their training with the Master.

After the disciples were sent out to work, they were expected to share their experiences, later with the group (Luke 10:17).

Continuous Review and Application

A strategy of Jesus throughout His ministry... As He reviewed some experience which the disciples had, He would bring out some practical application of it to their lives.

Lessons on Patience

One of the most penetrating lectures our Lord gave to correct the disciples came in response to their attitude toward others who were ministering in Jesus' name, but who were not a part of the apostolic group. (Mark 9:38; Luke 9:49).

Jesus was giving a discourse designed to draw the disciple's attention to the dangers of discouraging any sincere work on the Lord's behalf (Mark 9:39-50; Matthew 18:6-14; Mark 9:42).

When the disciples wanted the Lord to call down fire on some people for their unbelief, Jesus actually turned and rebuked them for their hart-heartedness (Luke 9:51-56).

The Principle Observed

No matter what the disciples did, there was always more to do & learn.

Jesus regularly let His followers have some experience or make some observation of their own, and then He would use it as a starting point to teach a lesson of discipleship.

The disciple's encounters with life situations enabled Jesus to pinpoint His teaching on specific needs and to spell it out in the concrete terms of practical experience.

Jesus did not expect more from His disciples than they could do, BUT He did expect their best.

Moreover, Jesus expected His follower's "best" to be ever-improving as they grew in knowledge and grace.

Jesus' plan of teaching, by example, assignment, and constant checkup, was calculated to bring out the best that was in His followers.

The Principle Applied Today

Patient and determined supervision is needed today among those who are seeking to train other for evangelism.

We dare not assume that just because we have shown a willing worker how to do the ministry, that the ministry will get done.

People can become easily discouraged & defeated...

Likewise, many experiences of grace which bring delight to the soul need to be clarified and deepened as their meaning is interpreted.

It is thus crucial that those engaging in the work of evangelism have personal supervision and guidance until such time as they are mature enough to go it alone.

We must always remember that the goal is world conquest.

We dare not let a lesser concern capture our strategy of the moment.

All too many times people are brought to the place of service only to be discharged with no further training or inspiration.

The potential is not developed, and before long a promising leader is lost due to a lack of supervision... Success is lost on the eve of victory.

Qt: **We fail, not because we do not try to do something, but because we let our little efforts become an excuse for not doing more.**

Disciples must be brought to maturity.

There can be no substitute for total victory... and our field is the world.

Qt: **We have not been called to "hold the fort," but to storm the heights!**

Chapter Eight

REPRODUCTION

“Go and bring forth fruit...” - John 15:16

Jesus Expected Them to Reproduce

Jesus intended for the disciples to produce His likeness in and through the Church... thus His ministry in the Spirit would be duplicated many-fold by His ministry in the lives of His disciples.

Jesus had built into His disciples the structure of a church that would challenge and triumph over all the powers of death and hell.

It had started small like a grain of mustard seed, but it would grow in size & strength (Matthew 13:32; Mark 4:32; Luke 13:18-19).

Jesus was always honest and direct... **world conquest will not be easy. Many would/will suffer persecution and martyrdom in the battle.**

While the ultimate war has been won, the battles rage on till the end.

Victory Through Witnessing

We cannot miss the direct relationship to witnessing and victory.

The Principle Observed

It all comes back to His disciples... “Through their word” He expected others to believe in Him (John 17:20-23).

Jesus’ evangelistic strategy was built upon the faithfulness of His chosen disciples.

It did not matter how small the group was to start with so long as they reproduced and taught their disciples to reproduce in the same way...

This was the way His Church was to win...

As simple as it may seem, this was the way the gospel would conquer... Jesus had no other plan.

The Test of His Ministry

Here was the acid test... Would His disciples carry on His work after He had gone?

Parable of the Vine/Branches (John 15:1-17): This is one of the most simple, yet profound analogies of the Lord. Christ explained that the purpose of both the vine (Himself) and the branches (believers in Him), was to **bear fruit**.

Hence, any branch that did not yield fruit was cut off – it was worthless.

What is more, those branches that did bear fruit were pruned – that they would yield MORE FRUIT (John 15:2).

It was clear that the life-sustaining power of the vine was not to be bestowed endlessly on lifeless branches.

Any branch that lived on the vine had to produce to survive.

Jesus directly applied the parable to His disciples... (John 15:5,8)

Jesus also said that if they believed in Him, their fruit would “remain” (John 15:16).

Qt: A barren Christian is a contradiction... A tree is known by its fruit.

In various ways, and among all kinds of people, Jesus called men to evaluate the product of their lives...

Practically everything which the Master said & did pointed to this principle.

The Great Commission

The Great Commission of Christ, given to His Church, summed it up in the command to “make disciples of every creature” (Matthew 28:19).

In the Greek, grammatically speaking, the Church’s mission is emphasized even more. The words “go,” “baptize,” and “teach,” are all participles which derive their force from the **one controlling verb: “make disciples.”**

This means that the Great Commission is not merely to go to the ends of the earth preaching the gospel (Mark 16:15), nor to baptize a lot of converts into the name of the triune God, nor to teach them the precepts of Christ, but to “make disciples” – to BUILD PEOPLE.

Only as disciples were made could the other activities of the commission fill their purpose.

Pray for Harvesters

Leadership was Jesus' emphasis.

Without spiritual shepherds to lead them, how could they ever be won
(Matthew 9:37-38; cf., Luke 10:2).

There is no use to pray for the world. What good would it do? God already loves them and has given His Son to save them. No, there is no use to pray vaguely for the world.

The world is lost and blind in sin.

The only hope for the world is for laborers to go to them with the gospel of salvation, and having won them to the Savior, not to leave them, but to work with them faithfully, patiently, painstakingly, until they become fruitful Christians savoring the world about them with the Redeemer's love.

The Principle Applied to Our Lives

We must ALL evaluate the contribution that our life & witness is making.

Are those who have followed us to Christ now leading others to Him and teaching them to make disciples?

It is not enough to rescue the perishing.

It is not enough to build up newborn babes in the faith.

It is not sufficient to just get your people out winning souls.

What really counts is the faithfulness with which our converts go out and make leaders out of their converts... not simply more followers.

Our work is never finished.

The test of any work of evangelism; thus, is not what is seen in the moment... but in the effectiveness with which the work continues in the next generation.

The criteria on which a church should measure its effectiveness is not "new names on the membership," nor how much the "budget increases," but rather, how many Christians are winning souls AND training them to win the multitudes.

It is time that we look at our lives and ministries through this perspective.

Proved by the Church

Be thankful that in those first disciples... this was done.

The disciples gave the gospel to the multitudes, BUT ALL THE WHILE, they were building up the fellowship of those who believed.

As the Lord added daily to the Church... the apostles, like their Master, were developing men to reproduce their ministry to the ends of the earth.

The early Church proved that the Master's plan for world conquest worked.

Shortcuts Have Failed

Over time... the simple way of Jesus' evangelism was (corrupted) forced into a new mold...

The principles got confused in the desire to give the Evangel/Gospel a new look...

The costly principles of leadership development and reproduction seem to have been submerged beneath the easier strategy of mass recruitment.

The near-sighted objective of popular recognition took precedence over the long-range goal of reaching the world.

Qt: Jesus' plan has not been discredited/disavowed... it has just been ignored.

The Issue Today

The problem with "methodology" today is that people are trying, through human ingenuity, to do a job that only can be done by people serving in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Unless the personal mission of the Master is vitally incorporated into the policy and fabric of all these plans, the Church/church cannot function as she should.

Qt: When will we realize that evangelism is not done by some-thing... but some-One?

Evangelism is an expression of God's love... and the work of evangelism is done by people reaching other people for Christ.

Qt: "Men are God's method." – E.M. Bounds

Until we have people (committed)/imbued with His Spirit and committed to His plan, none of our methods will work.

THIS IS THE "NEW" EVANGELISM WE NEED...

It is not better methods, but better men and women who know their Redeemer from personal experience --- men and women who see His vision and feel His passion for the world --- men and women who are willing to be nothing so that He might be everything --- men and women who want only for Christ to produce His life in and through them, according to His own good pleasure.

This is the way the Master planned for His objective to be realized on earth...

Where the Master's true strategy is carried through, the gates of hell cannot prevail against the evangelization of the world.

Epilogue

The Master and YOUR Plan

"I am the Alpha and the Omega..." – Revelation 1:8

Life Has a Plan

What is the plan of your life? **Everyone has to live by some plan.**

The plan is the organizing principle around which the aim of life is carried out.

We may not be conscious of the plan in every action, but nonetheless, our actions invariably unfold some kind of a pattern/plan...

An honest appraisal should cause us to be more concerned for our calling, at least for those who (claim to) believe Jesus' way is the rule by which every action should be tested.

Some cherished plans of our own making may have to be redirected or abandoned.

Equally agonizing may be the adjustment of the congregation to the Master's view of the ministry.

In all probability, our whole concept of "success" will have to be reevaluated.

It is only as the truths/principles in this book are applied to the everyday work of living, that they will have any real significance for our lives.

Methods Will Vary

Everyone of us should be seeking to incorporate the wisdom of Jesus' strategy into our own preferred method of evangelism.

Any method God is pleased to use is a "good" method.

The Master gives us an outline to follow, but He expects us to work out the details according to local circumstances and traditions. (timeless missionary training!)

This requires every bit of resourcefulness that we have... New and bold approaches will need to be tried as situations change... and not everything tried will work.

A person unwilling to fail in the determination to find some way to get the job done will never get started.

The Priority of People

Whatever our methodology, Jesus' life would teach us that finding and training people to reach people must have priority.

The wandering masses of the world must have a demonstration of what to believe... they must have a mentor who will stand among them and say, "Follow me, I know the way." Here is where ALL our plans must focus.

Qt: The enduring relevance of all that we do will depend on how well the Great Commission is fulfilled.

Qt: We must realize that the kind of energy that Christ needs (demands) does not happen by accident. It requires deliberate planning and concentrated effort.

If we are to train people, we must labor for them. We must seek them. We must win them. Above all, WE MUST PRAY FOR THEM.

Wherever they are, they must be reached and trained to become effective witnesses of our Lord.

Begin with a Few

We should neither expect or desire a great number to begin with...

The best work is always done with a few.

Qt: Better to give a year or so to one or two people who learn what it means to conquer for Christ than to spend a lifetime with a congregation just keeping the program going.

What counts is that those to whom we do give priority in our life learn to give it away.

Let this be absolutely clear – CHRIST IS THE LEADER, not ourselves.

There is no place in discipleship for any authoritarian role of a master-guru.

Keep the focus on Jesus!

In subjection to Jesus, disciple and discipler alike learn at His feet.

Stay Together

This is the essence of the plan – to let those we disciple see us in action so as to feel our vision and to know how it relates to daily experiences.

Evangelism is thus seen as a way of life, not a theological dogma.

By bringing those we disciple with us, their involvement in the work is inevitable.

Give Them Time

A plan like this is going to take time...

Anything worth while takes time.

Group Meetings

During informal times when we are gathered together, we can study the Bible, pray, and in general share with one another our deepest burdens and desires.

Expect Something From Those Being Discipled

Those being discipled must be given some way to express the things which they have learned.

Qt: We must keep our purpose clear.

See to it that those being discipled are given something to do which requires the best that is in them.

Qt: Everyone can do something.

Everyone needs to be given some specific work by way of personal evangelism.

Perhaps the most essential contribution they can make to the ministry of the church is to have them serve in “follow up” ministry to/with new Christians... leading them in the disciplines of genuine discipleship.

Keep Them Going

All of this is going to require a lot of supervision, both in the personal development of these people, and in their work with others.

We will have to make a practice of meeting with them and hearing how things are going.

This will mean seeking them out where they are or counseling with them while they are with us in other activities...

Questions which have arisen in their experience must be answered while the circumstances that occasioned the problem are still fresh in their mind.

Faulty attitudes and reactions need to be detected early and dealt with decisively; to include, offensive personal habits, unfounded prejudices, and anything else that would obstruct their priesthood with God and with others.

The main thing is to help them continue to grow in grace and knowledge.

It would be wise to set up a schedule of things to cover... and to keep a record of the individual's progress to be sure nothing is left out.

We need to be patient, as spiritual development is typically slow and encumbered with many setbacks.

As long as a person who is being disciplined is honestly seeking to know the truth, and are willing to follow it, they will someday grow up to maturity in Christ.

Help Them Carry Their Burdens

Perhaps the most difficult part of the process of training others... We must anticipate their problems and prepare them for what they will face.

Qt: Anticipating and preparing others for the problems they will face is terribly hard to do, and it can become exasperating.

This means that we can seldom put those we are discipling out of our minds.

Even when we are in our private meditations and study, our disciples will still be in our prayers and dreams.

But would a parent who loves his children want it any other way?

We have to accept the burden of their immaturity until such time as they can do it for themselves.

Note: When those we are discipling take the attitude that they can "handle things" completely on their own... they are inviting disaster.

As their guardian and advisor, we are responsible for teaching our spiritual children how to live for the Master.

Let Them Carry On

Everything should be leading these chosen men and women to the day when they will assume by themselves a ministry in their own spheres of influence.

Our strategy thus... will have already been infused into their practice...

We should explain to them explicitly, what has been our plan from the beginning.

Those we disciple need to clearly know and understand this strategy so that they can measure their lives by it and impart it to those that they are seeking to help.

Spiritual Experience Above All

The crucial thing is their own spiritual experience...

Before they should be turned loose from our leadership they need to be thoroughly established in the faith that overcomes the world.

The devil, assisted by all the demons in hell, will seek to defeat them by every cunning device at his command.

Qt: It will be a battle all the way.

Qt: Every inch of progress will have to be won by conquest, for the enemy will never surrender.

Nothing but the infilling of the Holy Spirit will be sufficient to meet the challenge.

Unless (we) they live in-Christ and go forth in His purity and power, (we) they can easily be overwhelmed by the forces amassed against (us) them... and all our work with them be nullified.

It does not matter how many people we enlist for the cause, but rather, how many they conquer for Christ.

That is why, all along, our emphasis must be on (a person's spiritual) quality of life.

If we get the right (spiritual) quality of leadership (Luke's "person of peace"), the rest will follow. By contrast, if we do not get the right quality of leadership, the rest of the people around them will have nothing/no-one worth following.

The Price of Victory Comes High

Such a high standard of expectation is costly – to be sure.

Many of those we start out with will think the cost is too high and will subsequently fall away.

Qt: We might as well face it now, Christians service is demanding, and if people are going to be of any use for God, they must learn to seek first the Kingdom.

Yes, there will be disappointments.

But those who do come through, and go out to project our life into harvest fields, will be a source of increasing joy...

Remember, we are not living primarily for the present.

Our satisfaction is in knowing that in generations to come our witness for Christ will still be bearing fruit through them in an ever-widening cycle of reproduction to the ends of the earth and unto the end of time... (Amen!)

Is This Your Vision?

The world is desperately seeking someone to follow. That they will follow someone is certain, but will that person be one who knows the way of Christ, or will he or she be one like themselves, leading them only on into greater darkness?

This is the decisive question of our plan of life. The relevance of all that we do waits on its verdict, and in turn, the destiny of the multitudes hangs in the balance.