

Unfinished

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Discipleship

'The greatest issue facing the world today' –Dallas Willard

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Cover photo:

The man on the cover is a village evangelist in India who has been serving for more than 40 years. Photo by Frank Decker.



Join us in The Mission

When you partner with The Mission Society, not only do you join us in The Mission to offer Christ to the world, but you join us in embracing our core values.

Our vision

The Kingdom of God advancing among all peoples bringing about redemption and reconciliation through Jesus Christ

Our mission

The Mission Society exists to mobilize and deploy the body of Christ globally to join Jesus in His mission, especially among the least reached peoples.

Our core values

INCARNATION

The Mission Society seeks to minister to others by following the example of Jesus, who fully entered the human experience. In our cross-cultural ministry, we are committed to learning the local language, living among the people, ministering in culturally appropriate ways, demonstrating love for God and neighbor, and disciple-making among the nations.

INTEGRITY

The Mission Society desires to reflect the holiness of God in all we do. Personally and corporately we endeavor to make the character of Christ manifest in our lives and our ministry.

PASSION

We are not complacent about the One who matters supremely or the work God has given us to do; nor is our ministry prompted simply by duty, or even obedience. Our life together and our ministry are marked and motivated by passion for God and God's mission. We are passionate about Jesus, our mission, and all those involved in the journey with us.

PEOPLE

The Mission Society believes that people are of primary value. Because people matter to God, people matter to us. Our cross-cultural workers, staff, donors, volunteers, prayer partners, and those we seek to reach are of greatest worth to us. Because "relationships" and not "formulas" are our method, The Mission Society exudes an entrepreneurial culture where every member is encouraged to discern and pursue God's unique direction for his or her ministry.

PARTNERSHIP

Since it is the Kingdom of God that we are called to express and extend throughout the world, our ministry is about more than ourselves and our organization. We believe that working together enhances our witness and strengthens our ability to make disciples of all nations. The Mission Society therefore pursues partnership in ministry endeavors – with churches, nationals, Christian organizations, and individuals.

PRAYER

It is only through the power and presence of the Spirit of Christ that we can live up to the high and holy intentions embodied in these values. We acknowledge our absolute dependence on God and seek both His guidance and His strength each day. Therefore, The Mission Society is a praying community.

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Discipleship, our main focus

Jesus' last command insists on it



“At the First International Consultation on Discipleship, held in September of 1999 on England’s South Coast, John R. W. Stott called attention to the “strange and disturbing paradox” of the contemporary Christian situation: We have experienced enormous statistical growth, he said, without corresponding growth in discipleship. ‘God is not pleased,’ warned Stott, ‘with superficial discipleship.’”

—reported by *Christianity Today*

Shown left: Baptism in Kenya

Ask anyone where you go in the Bible to find a mandate for missions, and they’ll point you to “the Great Commission” in Matthew 28:18-20.

Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (New Living Translation)

As the son and grandson of missionaries, and therefore a frequent attendee of “missionary meetings,” I have probably heard more messages on this text than any other passage in the Bible. Come to think of it, I’ve preached quite a few of them myself. And almost always, the

punch line is “Go!”

In point of fact, however, the operative command in this “last command” from Jesus isn’t to “go.” It is to “make disciples.”

Since I’m neither a Greek scholar nor the son of one, I won’t try to explain the

Today The Mission Society’s ministries are focused around five key strategies. At the heart of them is “making disciple-makers.”

grammatical nuances of this passage.

I can tell you, though, that a more precise translation of verse 19 might read, “As you go, make disciples of all nations.” Young’s literal translation renders it this way:

“Having gone then, disciple all nations.”

What’s the point, you ask? Simply this. We typically read the Great Commission

and conclude that the big deal is that we “go.” But “go” isn’t what Jesus commanded us to do. His assumption was that in the course of life, we would be going here and there. That’s just life! What He commanded was that as we go here and there, we are to make disciples.

The Great Commission, then, is first and foremost a command to make disciples. Where are we to make them? Wherever we go! Who are we to disciple? All the nations. (That, of course, presumes that our “going” will ultimately take us to every unreached people group. The Church needs to be intentional about ensuring that this happens.) What is involved in this disciple-making process? Baptizing new believers and teaching them to obey all of Jesus’ commands. But the *central* task is making disciples.

Today The Mission Society’s ministries are focused around five key strate-



Leaving a Legacy: Remembering The Mission Society in Your Will

Psalm 24:1 tells us that “the earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.” Throughout scripture, God calls on us as His followers to be good stewards of all the resources He has created and gives us. He blesses us not to increase our standard of living, but to increase our standard of giving.

By including The Mission Society in your will, you can leave a legacy of giving toward Kingdom ministry around the world. Through your generosity, countless lives and communities will receive the transforming love and grace of our Lord Jesus for years to come.

Thank you for prayerfully considering The Mission Society in your will and estate plan.

If you’d like to discuss more details about including The Mission Society in your will, please email us at dbrown@themissionsociety.org or call 1-800-478-8963 ext. 9037.



gies. At the heart of them is “making disciple-makers.” We express it that way just to underline the point that unless the process of making disciples is being reproduced – unless the people we disciple disciple others – we’ll only have addition, not multiplication.

This issue of *Unfinished* is devoted to discipleship. Robert Coleman saw it as the heart of Jesus’ “master plan of evangelism.” Leroy

Eims called disciple-making a “lost art.” Dallas Willard writes that “nondiscipleship” is the elephant in the room in the Church.

For The Mission Society, disciple-making is deeper than the missionary’s “job description.” It doesn’t matter

whether a missionary is an evangelist, a church planter, a doctor, a teacher, an ESL teacher or an agriculturalist. Every missionary is to be a disciple-maker.

As you read through this issue, I hope you’ll be encouraged to know that making

disciples is central to our strategy and at the heart of our varied ministries. More than that, I hope you’ll be challenged and encouraged to be in the disciple-making business yourself!

It wasn’t just a suggestion. It was His last command. ✚

Dick McClain is the president and CEO of The Mission Society and is an elder in the North Georgia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

The Mission Society’s five key strategies

Mobilize the Body of Christ so that it will

Live and share the gospel incarnationally in order to more effectively

Reach the least reached with the goal that we

Make disciple-makers who lead communities that

Do and proclaim God’s mercy and justice



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



MEXICO



ECUADOR

COSTA RICA



SENEGAL



PERU

BRAZIL

PARAGUAY

BOLIVIA



The greatest issue facing the world today

"The greatest issue facing the world today, with all its heartbreaking needs, is whether those who, by profession or culture, are identified as 'Christians' will become *disciples* – students, apprentices, practitioners – of *Jesus Christ*, steadily learning from Him how to live the life of the Kingdom of the Heavens into every corner of human existence."

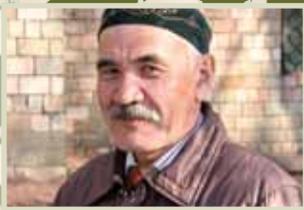
–From *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship*, by Dallas Willard



RUSSIA

FRANCE

KAZAKHSTAN



CHINA

JAPAN



INDIA



THAILAND

CAMBODIA

GHANA



KENYA



The faces here mark some of places around the world where Mission Society missionaries are focused on organizing discipleship ministries. For more information, please visit our website at www.themissionsociety.org.



The unanswerables

What to do when the challenge of disciple-making carries you beyond your capabilities

An interview

“We’ve changed our mission statement every month for the last five years,” say Mr. and Mrs. Peterson* who, by their own admission, were called to do an “impossible job.” The job looked possible, though, when their journey began. They had a detailed business plan. They would help Russia’s orphan teens transition successfully into society by establishing a Christian center where orphanage graduates would be taught computer, micro business, basic life skills, and be introduced to Jesus. The center would be replicated, too – adding a certain number of new locations every year, like a McDonald’s franchise.

It looked good on paper, says Mrs. Peterson, but when the couple started operating the center, they discovered that “the only thing the kids wanted to do was to drink vodka and play computer games.” What’s more, when

the kids started asking why God never showed up to save them from the abuse they suffered, “I became God’s prosecuting attorney,” remembers Mr. Peterson.

The situation seemed unsolvable. Hearts seemed impenetrable. This stopped place, however, would become the starting point to a revolutionary way of discipleship among these Russian orphans.

The following article first appeared in the Spring 2008 issue of *Unfinished*. Since the time of this article, other missionaries have been discovering how, through “prayer counseling,” God heals wounded hearts and memories.

**A pseudonym is used here because this couple ministers in an area where Protestant Christian witness is not welcome.*

“These kids were asking questions that we could not answer, like, ‘Where was God when I was raped?’ ‘Where was God when I was abused?’ ‘Where was God when my parents left me?’ ‘Where was God when I lived in terror in the orphanage?’ ... We thought, ‘God, if You care so much for the orphan, really, where were You?’ We were coming to see that our own hearts were in pretty bad shape.”

Mr.: A real watershed moment came when one of the kids at the center said to me, “You know, all this stuff you are saying is really great, and I love the center. I love being here. But I can’t live by this reality and these rules in the hell I live in. It will get me killed.” That’s when we started to realize that what the kids were experiencing at the center had no connection to their outside lives.

Over time they began to relate to each other at the center more and more in the way they related to each other in the dorm. So it was getting worse. At some point, we asked them, “Do you believe in God?” And they said, “no.” And we asked, “Do you believe in the devil?” And they said, “We live in his territory. We’ve seen him; we’ve seen demonic manifestation. We’ve seen demons when we’ve been high.”

Mrs.: There was so much darkness in them, at some point we started to really realize that we had nothing to offer. Our orphan kids’ hearts were big, bleeding wounds, and it felt like all we were doing was putting Band-Aids on them, but not stopping the bleeding, not dealing with the infection.

Mr.: Even if we put these kids in a bubble where their world would not touch them, it wouldn’t matter. The biggest blackness was in their own hearts. They were asking questions that I could not answer, like, “Where was God when I was raped?” “Where was God when I was abused?” “Where was God when my parents left me?” “Where was God when I lived in terror in the orphanage?” And to be perfectly honest, I became the prosecuting attorney against God.

Mrs.: We thought, “God, if you care so much for the orphan, really, where were You?” We were coming to see that our own hearts were in a pretty bad shape, and that the orphans were bringing our own pain to the surface.

Mr.: And God began to speak to me. He said, “I have been moving in the lives of these kids. But no one has brought them to Me in a way that I can show them where I’ve been working in their lives. So for everything I have

done, they have given credit to another source. They say, ‘It’s luck’ or ‘It’s chance.’ I need someone who will walk into their lives and declare to them that, ‘What you’re about to see is God’s love manifest in your lives,’ and then get out of the way for Me to do what only I can do. If you don’t declare to them beforehand what I’m about to do, they can give credit to another source.”

God reminded me of the story of Moses and the Nile. If Moses had come the day after the Nile had turned to blood and said, “My God did this,” he would have been number 13 in a long line of magicians who claimed credit for their god. But because Moses came the day before and said, “What you are about to see is God showing His glory and His majesty in your presence,” nobody could argue.

A while after that, I was talking to a gang leader, and he essentially told me, “Your God has no place here. This is the devil’s territory.” Oxana was there while he was saying this. She’s an orphan girl who has, in desperation, tried prostitution and suicide. She said, “No. God is real.” She told a story about how she had had a terrible headache one day when she was riding the bus with Tanya. And Tanya prayed for her, and the headache immediately left. “God is real,” she said. The gang leader had nothing to say.

These kids were saying to us, “I need someone who can save me from the hell I live in and the hell that lives in me. I mean save. Every part of me.” Oxana could see God was real and working in her life when he saved her from her headache.

Not knowing what else to do, we began to pray for healing for kids who had physical problems, and we started reading books on healing and deliverance. Among the books we read was *Always Enough*, by Rolland and Heidi Baker.

Mrs.: Basically, *Always Enough* is a book about Rolland and Heidi Baker’s working in an orphanage in Mozambique, and how God has used orphans in one of the poorest nations on earth to begin a revival that has swept through the whole country.

These kids were saying to us, “I need someone who can save me from the hell I live in and the hell that lives in me.”



Last May, *The New York Times* interviewed Russia's chairwoman of the parliamentary committee on family and children, who reported that "Russia has more orphans now, 700,000, than at the end of World War II, when an estimated 25 million Soviet citizens were killed." Most of the children in Russia's orphanages, "have been either given up by their parents or removed from dysfunctional homes by the authorities." Sue Fuller is among Mission Society workers serving among Russia's orphan children. For more information about her ministry, visit www.themissionsociety.org.

Mr.: We thought, "We need what the Bakers have, because what we have doesn't work."

Mrs.: We had gone to do this impossible job, and we were not supposed to go without the supernatural tools. When we did, it was just horrible. I learned that the spiritual gifts are really necessary for ministry. You cannot do it without them. We said, "God, we've just got to have more of You."

Mr.: By this point, my frustration level with ministry and my pain for our kids had increased so much, I said, "Okay, God, I need whatever You have." Soon after that, a friend invited me to a conference and I said, "Okay. What's to lose?"

Mr. Peterson told that some of the main teachings at the conference were about forgiveness. God began "parading" before him people he needed to forgive.

With every person I forgave, I began to have more joy, more happiness, more peace, more power – even more than I had just after my salvation. I wanted to read the Bible again; I wanted to spend time with God. I could hear His voice again. Learning to hear God was what freed us both up to have anything to give our orphan kids. And it happened through forgiveness.

The scriptures say [see John 5:19] that Jesus only did what He saw His Father doing – present tense. Moment by moment, Jesus did what His Father was doing, and that has become, essentially, our entire ministry model.

Mrs.: I never really knew I could hear God's voice. I didn't know that on a daily basis God had stuff to say to me, like pages of stuff to say to me, and to everyone really.

Mr.: He's there, all the time, talking.

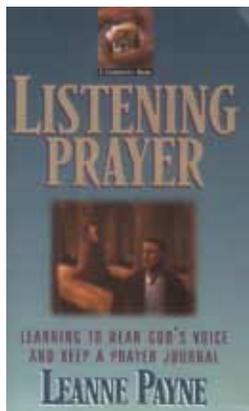
Mrs.: And we just don't know how to tune in and listen to Him. We're not taught how to hear His voice. We're not taught to expect Him to speak. And if you ask Him to speak, then He will.

We started learning how to hear God's voice and to teach others to do it. Over time, we also began learning to do prayer counseling. This is when we seek to allow Jesus to be the One who is counseling people, and we just help them to learn to hear Him for themselves; we help guide them in the process. We started to see that, through prayer counseling, Jesus would take people into the moments of trauma and show them that He was there with them in that moment. Then He would show people what lie they had believed from that experience.

Mr.: When we got back from the conference, we started inviting orphans to come to our house, and we would spend an hour just listening to God's voice. And you know what happened? We had non-Christian kids telling us perfect theology. They would say, "God told me this and this." And they had healthier theology than many people I know. They heard His voice. Non-Christian kids!

What we found was that most of our kids had not been able to come to God, because you cannot come to God unless you believe that He is a rewarder of them who do diligently seek Him. If I think that He's going to reward me with a two-by-four in the head, I'm not going to come near Him. Most of our kids are convinced that God is either super far away or He's waiting to hit them. And so their first step actually has to be to hear His voice. We teach them to ask, "God, show me one of Your thoughts about me." I can't tell you the number of times they have

"I never really knew I could hear God's voice. I didn't know that on a daily basis God had pages of stuff to say to me, and to everyone really."



Around the world, “listening prayer” (or “prayer counseling”) is opening doors to closed hearts, helping people learn for the first time their true identity in Christ. For more information, check out resources, like those by Leanne Payne or by Ed Smith at www.theophostic.com.

heard God answer, “I love you.” They’re like, “That can’t be. Can that be Him?”

And there are kids who hear Him and say, “I’m still not willing to accept it.” But one of the biggest shockers for me was how He answered all the questions they had – like, “Where was God when?”

Mrs.: Once the kids can ask God for themselves, and they actually know how to listen, He gives them really good answers. His voice is always encouraging and loving.

One of our favorite stories of healing and restoration is about one of our girls. Natasha was an orphan from birth (left in the hospital by her mother). She was a tough little girl with lots of anger and unrest on the inside. By the time she was in second grade, she was smoking; by fourth grade, she was drinking.

We met her when she was out of the orphanage and studying in a tech school. Shortly after we met, she received Jesus and was instantly transformed in many ways. She lost all interest in drinking and stopped cursing (which, up to that point, had been her main language).

Natasha started growing in Christ, but after about six months, she came to a point that unless she allowed God to deal with some of her pain and unforgiveness, she couldn’t go any further. So she met with one of our teammates for prayer counseling.

As they prayed, Natasha saw herself carrying a big bundle of her pain. Then she saw herself at the foot of the cross, and Jesus was asking her to give Him her pain. It was a real struggle for her to give up her pain, because it had become so much part of her identity. Finally she gave it up to Jesus and was immediately transported in her mind to the next picture where she was a little baby, and

God the Father was carrying her around in His arms and showing her off to everyone, saying how glad He was for her to be born and how incredible He thought she was. He was also calling her His daughter.

As Natasha came out of this experience she was no longer an orphan, but was adopted by Daddy God Himself. To this day, two years later, Natasha will tell you that she used to be an orphan, but then was adopted and now has an awesome Daddy.

Mr.: Sometimes the kids get answers from God that are, to me, not satisfying. But to them, they are. For example, when one girl wanted to know why God didn’t intervene when her mom wouldn’t come see her at the orphanage, God showed her a vision of

her mom passed out drunk on the couch. The girl saw that Jesus was there, too, trying to wake up her mom. When her mom wouldn’t wake up, Jesus began to cry. When I asked the girl if that answer (seeing Jesus crying like this) was enough for her, she said, “Oh, more than enough.” People want to know a God who cares for them like that.

Before all this happened, we saw ourselves as doctors. Now I feel like we’re somewhere between a nurse and a cheerleader for what God is doing. We’re just following God around saying, “We just want to see what You are doing and what You’re going to do next.” †

The Petersons are presently in the United States. To partner with their ministry, indicate account #0299 on the online donation form. Missionary Sue Fuller also serves among Russian orphans in the Russian Far East. To partner with her ministry, indicate account #0245.

This interview was conducted by Ruth A. Burgner, editor.



Statue of Christ, Cusco, Peru

Widespread discipleship

In communities where people are turned off by Christianity that has been miscommunicated or misinterpreted, how do you effectively reintroduce the gospel? This missionary family unlocked a key to widescale discipleship.

By Bob Smietana

Arthur Ivey calls himself a grave robber for Jesus. That notion first occurred to him in the early 1990s while walking down Monserrate, a hill in Bogota, Colombia. Ivey, who then owned a civil engineering firm in Norcross, Ga., had visited Colombia to organize short-term mission trips with United Methodist Men.

One day Ivey and his friend Walt Boyd hiked up to the church on top of the hill, a pilgrim destination with a panoramic vista of the capital city. Meanwhile others around them made the journey on their knees to pay penance for their sins.

Ivey and his friend prayed over the capital city. On the way back, they spied a grave cut into the side of the mountain.

“Lazarus, come forth,” Walt called as they passed, referring to the story in John 11 where Jesus raised his friend from the dead.

Those words stuck in Ivey’s mind. “I just had to study that passage over and over again,” he said. “It would not let go of my heart.”

A ministry pattern for discipleship

He saw a ministry pattern emerge from that scene at Lazarus’s grave. First, “Jesus didn’t take the stone away from the tomb,” Ivey said. “He told the people to do it.”

In effect, the people robbed Lazarus’s grave as an act of obedience. “For me, that became a strong call to evangelism,” Ivey said.

Ivey remembered the students from Campus Crusade for

Christ who in the early 1980s had witnessed to him at Georgia Tech about Jesus. Their witness eventually led him to give his life to Christ. Without their witness, he realized that he might still be far from God in a spiritual grave.

Second, when Lazarus emerged from the tomb, his burial clothes still covered him. “When Lazarus came out, he was alive, but he wasn’t free,” Ivey said. “He was still bound in those things of death that wanted to keep him in bondage.”

In other words, Christ didn’t set Lazarus free. Instead, Jesus told the people to unbind Lazarus. “That’s a call to discipleship,” Ivey said.

Hence came Ivey’s vision to help roll away stones and set people free from the things in life that bind them. He sensed God calling him to evangelism and discipleship through relational ministry that points to the Bible – not tradition or the will of a strong leader – as a believer’s manual for life. To do this, his ministry relies on personal connections as an essential key to Christian witness.

Ivey and his wife Mary Alice, both 51, moved to Peru in 2001, a country in South America. More than 80 percent of its 29 million people are Roman Catholic. Approximately seven percent of Peruvians are Protestant. The Iveys settled in Huancayo, a mountain city of 323,000 in the central Andes, where they serve with The Mission Society. Their focus is in-depth Bible studies in small groups that meet in homes, parks,



Today, the ministry includes more than 3,650 people in 142 groups. Lay pastors, like Genaro Puente Nolasco, shown here, are heavily involved in the work of discipleship. Ivey himself leads four groups, one of which is comprised of shoeshine boys.



A parallel children's discipleship ministry uses games, music, drama, and puppetry with a scriptural message along with Bible teaching, all geared for kids. The program, which has grown to 15 groups around Peru, draws about 1,000 children each week.



Even after having been shot in the head by the Shining Path terrorists, lay pastor Manuel Villar Bodoaya goes on preaching. See the story of this "powerhouse discipler" on page 16.

and even pastures.

The Iveys have seen God transform hundreds of lives, bringing people who were far from God into deep fellowship as followers of Christ. Today more than 3,650 people are engaged in a discipleship program the Iveys helped design.

In contrast to ministries run from a church or office, the Iveys coordinate most of the work from their living room in Huancayo. Most of the work is done by a network of 145 lay leaders who lead small groups in more than 60 Peruvian communities.

Identifying the problem

The discipleship ministry was born from necessity. When Arthur and Mary Alice arrived in Peru following a year of language training, they found a receptive audience for the Good News. But these new believers often felt disconnected from established churches that, like many congregations in the United States, didn't quite know how to welcome newcomers.

"[We would] go to the park and share the gospel and a person would pray to receive Christ very quickly," he said. "But as we began to work, there was a real lack of an environment where we could put those new Christians [to] grow spiritually and become more mature Christians."

By the time the Iveys took their first furlough to the United States in 2005, they had developed deep relationships with some two dozen people in Huancayo who wanted to help continue

their work. Ivey had already concluded that launching a new church would be viewed as a rival of established churches. While many unchurched people may not be willing to set foot in a traditional building, they are willing to go to somebody's home. That's why Ivey believed a long-term, home-based relational model would succeed.

An unexpected factor was the culture shock the Ivey family – including each of their three children – experienced when returning in 2005 for a furlough in the United States. In contrast to their adopted Latin American way of life that centers around spending time in person with friends and family, they returned to their homeland to find many people replacing human contact with e-mail, cell phone, and texting. In Peru, relationships and people come first. But, by contrast, in the United States, the family found a "culture of isolation" that separates people instead of bringing them together.

That reinforced the Iveys' belief that interpersonal connections are central to discipleship. Putting that idea into a workable model, however, proved challenging.

"We spent a couple or three years trying to figure this out," Ivey said. While on furlough he mapped plans for small-group Bible studies. He recruited friends to pray that God would help him discern the best approach to take.

Powerhouse discipler

Undaunted by limits that would stop most, this Peruvian lay pastor has planted 360 new Christian communities

Among the Peruvian pastors with whom the Iveys serve is Manuel Villar Bodoya. Sixty-five years old and standing just four feet six inches tall, Manuel lives in the house in which he was born – with no water or electricity and about a six-hour walk from the main road.

Manuel, who walks with a notable limp (a condition he has had since birth) has planted more than 360 churches. Arthur writes, “Manuel’s present church-planting method is to pray and fast, asking the Lord Jesus where He wants Manuel to plant

the next church. When he receives an answer, he heads out into the jungle on foot, looking for the place he has seen while praying. Once he finds it, he prays and fasts for a week in the place. Afterward he asks permission to preach in the middle of the village.

“As he preaches many begin to give their lives to the Lord Jesus. Manuel then prays and fasts again, asking the Lord to identify who He wants to be the pastor of this new work. Once identified, Manuel works alongside of the man in his fields, all the while teaching him the scriptures and discipling and training him for about six months. Manuel then leaves the church with an organized board and a pastor, and returns periodically to check on the new work until it is well established.”

The solution

The Iveys returned to Peru ready to employ a simple, effective strategy based on the examples of Jesus and the early church. Three small groups, each with 12 people, met for two hours weekly in the Iveys’ home. Meetings began with a half-hour of socializing before moving into discussions of a Bible passage that participants had gone over before the lesson, which may be a scripture or something from basic discipleship books by Ralph Neighor or Sean International.

“To me it’s nothing more than bringing people back to the Bible and helping them read and study and understand it in their context,” Ivey said. “Let the Lord speak to them in His Word.”

Many Peruvians in churches of almost every denomination come from a legalistic works-mentality. “They don’t understand what it is to be saved by grace,” Ivey said. For instance, the majority of Protestant churches in Peru withhold baptism for reasons such as not tithing, missing worship services without the pastor’s permission, and being in a marriage not in accord with church rules.

The Iveys confront not only a great deal of confusion about what the Bible really says, but also a lot of false or inappropriate teaching. When Bible study participants dig into the Word, they start to rethink their positions and attitudes. “We have a number of people who think they’re Christian, but it turns out they were trusting in something other than Christ,” Ivey said. And as they begin to study God’s Word, they realize what

they’ve believed in wasn’t what the Bible says.

Once participants dig into the Bible, “We see a lot of people start to get set free from ‘Phariseeism’ and legalism,” Ivey said. “They get excited and want to start sharing with other people and start a group themselves.”

This was precisely the result the Iveys hoped for. From the beginning, they wanted participants to invite new people.

Multiplication

Each member commits to finding at least one other person to disciple within six months. When Peruvians come to faith and are discipled, they often invite family members to join a group.

Lizbeth is a young woman whose father, a former pastor, was in prison for killing three people. The family also had a history of sexual abuse. A pastor had recommended that Lizbeth join one of the discipleship groups.

In the safe, loving context of a small group, she discovered she had been missing a personal relationship with Christ. Lizbeth began to heal as she let go of hatred and unforgiveness. Her mother joined a group as well. Men who were themselves discipled in the program launched a group in the Huancayo prison. Lizbeth’s father joined the group there, and now he, too, leads Bible studies. Lizbeth became a group leader and now works as a bi-vocational missionary helping launch new groups.

The change in Lizbeth was miraculous. “She was a young lady who was just destroyed, and we saw God restore her and



Billy and Laurie Drum



Tim and Jennifer Goshorn



Ash and Audra McEuen



Arthur and Mary Alice Ivey



Martin and Tracy Reeves



Louise Reimer

remake her,” Ivey said.

Groups stay together for about two and a half years, sometimes longer. The class is conducted in Spanish though Ivey aims to start new groups using materials translated into Quechua, an indigenous language widely spoken in the Peruvian Andes.

To work themselves out of a job, the Iveys train new group leaders and mentors who train leaders. Today the ministry includes more than 3,650 people in 142 groups. Ivey himself leads four groups, one of which is comprised of shoeshine boys.

Mary Alice Ivey leads a parallel children’s discipleship ministry that uses games, music, drama, and puppetry with a scriptural message along with Bible teaching, all geared for kids. Her program, which has grown to 15 groups around Peru, draws about 1,000 children each week.

Kingdom business

Among the Iveys’ supporters is a Georgia Methodist entrepreneur who visits Peru each year to teach a five-day microenterprise workshop for Peruvians interested in starting a “Kingdom business.” Owners of Kingdom businesses help fund ministry by tithing from their profits. Students learn how to draw a business plan plus marketing, sales, budgeting and tracking inventory.

Several of the Iveys’ Peruvian discipleship leaders have launched economic development projects aimed at making

the ministry self-sufficient. One such project in a rural jungle community is a soft drink bottling plant that produces 400 flats of sodas per month in five flavors. Sales support ministry projects and the Christian family running the plant.

Even as the Iveys’ ministry has expanded to microenterprise development, the example of Lazarus remains the guiding principle for their mission.

“Lazarus was alive, not free,” Ivey said. “He was bound by grave clothes. People have baggage from sinful lives and strongholds that need to be removed. We need to be free in Christ, not just alive in Christ.”

And if anyone is free in the Son, He is free indeed. †

Bob Smietana is the religion writer for the *The Tennessean* newspaper in Nashville, a contributing editor for *Christianity Today*, and correspondent for Religion News Service. Bob is the co-author of *Good Intentions: Nine Hot-Button Issues Viewed Through the Eyes of Faith* from Moody Publishers. He lives near Nashville with his wife and their three children.

Above is the team of missionaries presently serving in Peru. For more information about the ministries of any of these missionaries, visit us at www.themissionsociety.org

Discipleship's key ingredients

We asked our missionaries to complete the sentence: "In my Christian journey I've learned that the most important thing about discipling others is ..." Here's what some of them told us.



Prayer

The most important thing is... prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, prayer for the individual(s) to have an open heart to receiving all the Spirit is teaching, prayer for the one God uses, prayer for compassion, empathy, and understanding, prayer and more prayer!

–Sharon Nichols

Graham and Sharon Nichols are currently raising support to depart for their first term of service in Ecuador. They plan to minister through children's and adult discipleship (Kid's Clubs and small group Bible studies), evangelism, church planting, music, medical/dental campaigns (Community Health Evangelism), teaching ESL (English as a Second Language), hosting short-term mission teams, and by living among and loving Ecuador's people.

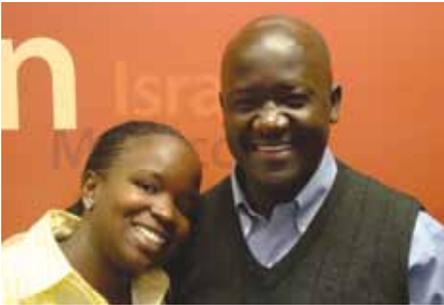


Time

The most important thing is ...making enough time for those that we serve to develop a healthy comfort level with one another. We have learned, in our short time in Thailand, that those students who desire to grow in their faith and seek God will not share their questions and hearts until they are (1) inspired by the love of God displayed in our lives, and (2) when they know we can sit and give them enough time to work through the barriers of fear and unfamiliarity that keep them from the issues that pull at their hearts.

–Chris Barbee

Chris and Dora Barbee live and minister in Roi Et, the poorest province in Thailand. They work with national Thai Christians to teach English-as-a-second language classes, music, and disciple Christians in Roi Et. They have one daughter, Natalie.



Tenacity

Discipleship is a long journey – not a one-day affair. We must create time and prepare well to effectively share our faith. A true discipler has a mission and will not give up until it's completed.

Kenneth Stevens (now on staff with Campus Crusade for Christ) came to my neighborhood (which was like a slum) and sat down with me every Saturday afternoon, discipling me for months. How could this young man of Asian origin come to the black neighborhood to share his faith, not once, not twice, but until I was able to stand on my feet, ready to share the same faith with others? He left his comfort zone. He had a mission and a goal to do God's will. Now, several years down the line, we are both in ministry together. Fruits of discipleship can be realized in our lifetime.

–Michael Agwanda

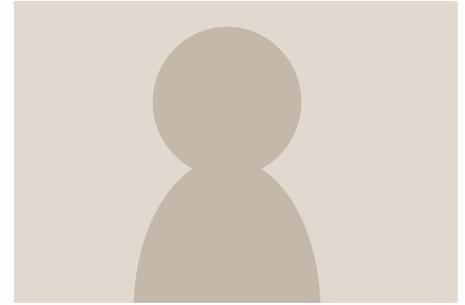
Michael and Lolla Agwanda coordinate the ministries of "Life for Children Ministry," which Michael founded in Kenya. Life for Children Ministry is a ministry with a passion and a heart for offering hope and new life to orphans of HIV/AIDS and vulnerable children. This outreach provides food, housing, health care, education, and spiritual nourishment to the children with whom it works. Through Life for Children Ministry, orphans are reintegrated into loving homes with their extended families. The long-term goal is the spiritual and economic transformation of communities. The Agwandas have two children: Mike and Gabriel.



Listening

While I was serving as a pastor, I disciplined my youth leader who was not sure of his salvation. [The "doctrine of assurance" was not in his background.] We discussed God's plan for salvation and then turned to His plan for our eternal security. When the conversation was over this young man said, "Wow, it was like a light came on in my life and for the first time I now know without a shadow of doubt that I am saved." He later went on to become a minister. Discipling requires time, patience, and a willingness to listen to conflicting ideology.

Larry Williams founded The Mission Society's Agrimissions, a ministry which combines missions and agricultural work for the glory of God. He is based in the U.S. and travels to various Mission Society fields to assist with pilot projects, national assessments, one-on-one technical assistance, leading short-term trips, and evangelism. He is a member of The Mission Society's Global Resource Team, which he directed for 10 years. (See page 22.)



Holiness

For me, the key element of discipleship has nothing to do with spiritual gifts or training. It's "holiness." This is the key intent of God for each follower of Jesus, and it is the destination toward which we journey. I came across an updated version of J.I. Packer's *Rediscovering Holiness: Know the Fullness of Life With God*. This book has been one of those revelatory instruments that God uses to hit me upside the head at important junctures in my life. I am on my second reading and have been using this book as a spiritual counseling tool with a young woman who is in great spiritual disarray right now. We both read a chapter and then email back and forth with our reactions, questions, understandings. ...It is one of the five most important spiritual books I have ever read.

–Mr. Evans*

Mr. Evans and his wife served for several years in Russia and have been redeployed to India. They will be working with a ministry run by an Indian national that focuses on getting Scriptures translated into some of the many languages of India, provides oral versions of the Bible and teachings, and begins churches in these groups, many of which are still unreached by the gospel. An ordained United Methodist pastor, this missionary will mentor the leaders in these new church-starts and provide training.*

**Pseudonyms are used for people serving in areas in which security is a concern*



Going deep

Here's a saying I heard recently that still has me contemplating: "Smaller is deeper." This was said in reaction to the last 20 years of pursuing the mega-church – and finding happy, self-esteem-filled church-goers who have little depth in their spiritual life. Here's a book that changed me: *No More Spectators*, by Mark Nyswander

–Jon Herrin

Jon and Jeanne Herrin serve in Monterrey, Mexico in education and pastoral training. Jon trains future pastors, missionaries, and church leaders at El Seminario Juan Wesley. Both Jon and Jeanne teach at El Instituto Laurens. Jon teaches in the Bilingual Teachers' College and Jeanne in the high school program. The Herrins have three children: Jesse, Megan, and Andrew.

Vulnerability

I've learned that the most important thing is ... my willingness to be vulnerable before them and God and allow transformation of even myself to be transparent.

–Jamie Wollin

Jamie and Holle Wollin are currently raising support for their first term of service in Cambodia. Holle plans to train and disciple Cambodian teachers and develop Christian values curriculum for a Cambodian pre-school program that serves non-Christians. Jamie will help establish an English training center for high school and undergraduate students. He will coach Cambodian ESL teachers. The Wollins desire to empower Cambodian Christians to utilize their gifts and skills in business and education for the glory of God. The Wollins have two children, Thomas and Eli.

Humility

What have I learned about discipleship? There is no "one-size-fits-all" method. Nor is discipleship a technique. Discipleship is borne out of relationship. In my Christian journey, I've learned that the most important thing about discipling others is being bold and free to speak and live a humble and authentic faith in Christ within the circumstances of life.

–Cameron Gongwer

Authenticity

I have learned that the most important things are ... (1) To keep myself more and more in touch with the abiding presence of God. As I put my mind and spirit in His authority, I find that my ears are more attentive; my eyes are more perceptive, and my tongue is either more silenced to listen or salted to the wiser and/or more fun. (2) Authenticity. This can't be overstated. A daily set of spiritual exercises keeps me more authentic and empowered to be a disciple(r), either planned or spontaneous, in the midst of life's interactions. (3) Reliance on the Holy Spirit. Some treasures from the

Lord are only meant for the individual to know. Thus sometimes we must not tell people the way it worked for us to learn a lesson or truth. We can't teach all things with words. Rather, the new believer also must encounter situations and turn to God within their own pilgrimage. The Spirit is the teacher of the heart.

—Anne Gongwer

The Gongwers have served in Ghana, West Africa since 1998. Cameron is a physician and served as the first full-time doctor and medical superintendent of the Ankaase Methodist Faith Healing Hospital. He also trains Ghanaian doctors in the specialty of Family Medicine, planting churches with Ghanaian Christians through medical evangelism outreaches, and assisting the Methodist Church Ghana in other medical ministry endeavors among the poor. Anne, a former teacher, coordinated the development of the Ankaase Literacy Program. She also coordinated the building of The Reading Town library in Ankaase. The Gongwers have one daughter, Caylor.



Focus on relationships: the answer to 'ministry burnout'

As we volunteered to open a Mission Society ministry in French speaking West Africa, we had little idea what we were up against. We have encountered so many needs and so much opportunity. But we have little resources and personnel.

We found ourselves trying to do everything for everyone. We wanted to meet all of the needs – physical and spiritual. We learned that this was next to impossible, and we had little success in ministry.

After much discouragement and not much fruit for our labor, God answered a prayer with Luke 19:17: "The king said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been trustworthy in a very small thing, take charge of ten cities.'"

Be faithful in the little things.

In two separate visits, two former missionaries (who now serve on The Mission Society staff) visited us. Both took a look at what we were trying to accomplish, and both encouraged us to step back, pray, and change our direction. They recommended that we should choose several people and disciple them. This would be the main focus of our ministry.

What a great idea! We also sought council from fellow missionaries in country who we respect and who have flourishing ministries. They told us the same thing. Discipling is the way to go!

Making disciples takes time and effort. In the long run, this is the most effective way to have a flourishing ministry that will impact the Kingdom for generations to come! —Adam Dalenburg

Adam and Jennifer Dalenburg serve in Thies, Senegal, a nation which is 94% Muslim. Adam preaches in two Methodist churches in Thies, and Jennifer participates in a weekly nutritional program for mothers and young children. She also home schools their children. They lead a weekly Bible study involving a diverse group of seekers and new believers. The Dalenburgs have three children: Joseph, Samuel, and James.

A curriculum for Christlikeness

Dallas Willard names discipleship's two primary goals. You may be surprised by what doesn't make the list.

“To correctly form a curriculum for Christlikeness, we must have a very clear and simple perception of the primary goals it must achieve, as well as what is to be avoided,” writes Dallas Willard in *The Divine Conspiracy*. There are some objectives, he notes, that “have often been taken as primary goals, but must not be left in that position.”

Willard identifies four *non*-primary goals: (1) external conformity to the wording of Jesus' teachings about actions in specific contexts; (2) profession of perfectly correct doctrine; (3) encouraging faithfulness to the activities of a church or other outwardly religious routines and various “spiritualities,” and (4) the seeking out of special states of mind or ecstatic experiences.

“These are good things,” he writes, “but special experiences, faithfulness to the church, correct doctrine, and external conformity to the teachings of Jesus all come along as appropriate, more or less automatically, when the inner self is transformed. But they do not produce such a transformation.

“The human heart must be plowed much more deeply. Thus these four emphases are good in their place, and even necessary when rightly understood. But when taken as primary objectives, they only burden souls and make significant Christlikeness extremely difficult, if not impossible.”

In the following, Willard discusses the two essential elements to disciple-making.

Objective #1: Help them love God

The first objective is to bring apprentices to the point where they dearly love and constantly delight in that “heavenly Father” made real to earth in Jesus and are quite certain that there is no “catch,” no limit, to the goodness of his intentions or to his power to carry them out.

When the elderly apostle John, who had been the “kid” among the apostles, came near to the end of his long life, he said, “This is the message we heard from Jesus . . .” (1 John 1:5). How would we finish this sentence for John? The aged apostle, on the basis of a lifetime of firsthand experience of Jesus, said that this was Jesus' message: “God is light, and darkness in him there is not, none.” (v. 5). That is the message [Jesus] brought, according to John. It is also, according to him, the message “we proclaim to you” (v. 5). It is the message we today are to proclaim. It is the message that impels the willing hearer to dearly love and constantly delight in that “heavenly Father” made real to earth in Jesus. And it is the message that, finally, gives us assurance that his universe is “a perfectly safe place for us to be.” Love perfected eliminates all fear.

When the mind is filled with this great and beautiful God, the “natural” response, once all “inward” hindrances are removed, will be to do “everything I have told you to do.”



“The first objective is to bring apprentices to the point where they dearly love and constantly delight in that ‘heavenly Father’ made real to earth in Jesus.” –Dallas Willard

Objective #2: Free them from enslavement from old way of being

The second primary objective of a curriculum for Christlikeness is to remove our automatic responses against the kingdom of God, to free the apprentices of domination, of “enslavement” (John 8:34; Rom. 6:6) to their old habitual patterns of thought, feeling, and action. These are the “automatic” patterns of response that were ground into the embodied social self during its long life outside The Kingdom Among Us. They make up “the sin that is in my members” which, as Paul so brilliantly understood, brings it about that “wishing to do the good is mine, but the doing of it is not” (Rom. 7:18).

It is not enough just to announce and teach the truth about God, about Jesus, and about God’s purposes with humankind. To think so is the fallacy underlying most of the training that goes on in our churches and theological schools. Even relentlessly pursued, it is not enough.

Very little of our being lies under the direction of our conscious minds, and very little of our actions runs from our thoughts and consciously chosen intentions. Our mind on its own is an extremely feeble instrument, whose power over life we constantly tend to exaggerate. We are incarnate beings in our very nature, and we live from our bodies. If we are to be transformed, the body must be transformed, and that is not accomplished by talking at it.

The training that leads to doing what we hear from Jesus must therefore involve, first, the purposeful disruption of our

“automatic” thoughts, feelings, and actions by doing different things with our body. And then, through various intentional practices, we place the body before God and his instrumentalities in such a way that our whole self is restrained away from the old kingdoms around and within us and into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Col. 1:13 NAS).

The way of transformation

These two “primary objectives” of the curriculum are not to be pursued separately but interactively. We do not first bring apprentices to love God appropriately and then free them from pattern enslavement. Nor do we do it the other way around.

Pursuit of the two primary objectives go hand in hand. They are to be simultaneously sought. †



Dallas Willard is a professor in the School of Philosophy at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. His other books include: *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*; and *Renovation of the Heart: Putting On the*

Character of Christ. The preceding was excerpted from *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* published by HarperCollins Publishers, 1998.



“When the mind is filled with this great and beautiful God, the ‘natural’ response, once all ‘inward’ hindrances are removed, will be to do ‘everything I told you to do.’” –Dallas Willard

The disciple-maker's limits

Willard notes what is and isn't our job to do

With regard to helping people love God, the most important question we face is, *How do we help people love what is lovely?* Very simply, we cause them, ask them, help them to place their minds in the lovely thing concerned. We assist them to do this in every way possible. Saint Thomas Aquinas remarks that “love is born of an earnest consideration of the object loved.” And: “Love follows knowledge.” Love is an emotional response aroused in the will by visions of the good. Contrary

to what is often said, love is never blind, though it may not see rightly. It cannot exist without some vision of the beloved.

As teachers we therefore bring the lovely thing – in this case, God – before the disciple as fully and as forcibly as possible, putting our best efforts into it. But we never forget that in the last analysis, as we have learned from Emily Dickinson, “the soul selects her own society, then shuts the door.” Though we act, and as intelligently and responsibly

as possible, we are always in the position of asking: asking them, asking God, and responding to their responses.

God has placed the only key to the innermost parts of the human soul in its own hands and will never take it back to himself or give it to another. You will never unlock the soul of another against his or her will. The soul, to continue the words of the poet just quoted, can “close the valves of her attention, like stone.” †

The world's 'ripe' spiritual climate

In my nearly 50 years of living as a Christian, I have never seen the soul's thirst for God more talked about, more recognized as a vital motivation in the human personality or more strongly experienced as a consuming passion. Perhaps a revolution is under way, a revolution of the Spirit that is about to shift our core energies away from arranging life to make it as satisfying as possible to drawing near to God.

The spiritual climate is ripe. Jesus seekers across the world are being prepared to abandon the old way for the written code for the new way of the Spirit. –Larry Crabb, from the introduction of *Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship and Direction*, a book by David G. Benner

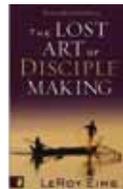
Good reads

Here are some missionary favorites on discipleship. In addition, we asked Frank Decker to add his top five picks (listed here first). Decker, The Mission Society's vice president of mission operations, directed the national evangelism and discipleship program of the Methodist Church in Ghana from 1987-1993, and today, in addition to his responsibilities at The Mission Society, heads the cell group ministry in his local church.



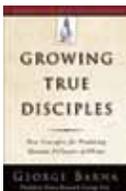
No More Spectators, by Mark Nysewander.

Basic, concise, and practical. I have used it as a teaching tool many times. (Missionary Jon Herrin also recommends this book. "It's a book that changed me," he writes.)



The Lost Art of Disciple Making, by Leroy Eims is

recommended by missionary Adam Dalenburg.



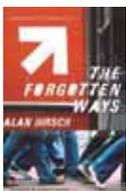
Growing True Disciples, by George Barna.

An analysis of what has and has not worked in various church contexts, with some case studies of successful churches.



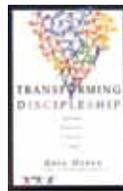
Adam also suggests **Walk with Me, by Hal**

Perkins. "I have not read this one yet, he writes, "but I can hardly wait to dive in to it!" (See page 17.)



The Forgotten Ways, by Alan Hirsch.

Thorough and practical. A good follow-up to his book with Frost, *The Shaping of Things to Come*.



Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time, by Greg Ogden.

"This book shows how Jesus taught his disciples and then sent them out to train or disciple others. I found it very helpful in learning how to disciple someone," writes missionary Mrs. Stevens.*



The Complete Book of Discipleship, by Bill Hull.

Includes a very helpful historical background of discipleship through Christian history. Fascinating.

The Stevens family is exploring a call to serve in the Muslim nation of Kosovo. They currently own their own business, and Mrs. Stevens is attending college as a cross-cultural studies major with a minor in TESOL. They have five children.*



Real Life Discipleship, by Jim Putnam.

A good and practical presentation of the principles that Putnam has employed in building a 7,000 member cell-church in Idaho.

A discipleship website: www.disciplers.org. This website contains a program for discipling others, developed by a missionary who had served in Bolivia for 25 years. "He told us that if he had only poured into one person and taught them to pour into another, it would have had more impact than all of the other things he did during his years as a missionary," recalls this Mission Society missionary, who is presently *developing support to come alongside a movement in a closed, Muslim area of south Asia.*



Rediscovering Holiness: Know the Fullness of Life With God, by J.I. Packer.

"I highly recommend this J.I. Packer book, not for a quick read, but for a guideline for dramatic change in one's life – the change we all want and were designed for. –Missionary Mr. Evans* (See page 15.)

**Missionary is not named for security reasons.*



Inside a revolution

News from Cairo

On February 11, friends of The Mission Society who reside in Cairo, Egypt sent news of the situation there after Mubarak stepped down.

“We write to you now hearing fireworks, honking, and loud celebrations out in the streets! ... We would like to thank each and every one of you for your prayers. We have all prayed His will be done, and we know our God in heaven has heard those prayers. We believe He makes all things work for the good of those that love Him and we stand on that promise! This truly is a moment in history and we do pray the nation's future would grow peaceful, restful, and full of freedom.” ✝

Genesis Photos: Stock imagery used for security purposes.

‘Water specialist’ missionaries appointed co-directors of the ‘Global Resource Team’



During the Bakers' service abroad, they provided clean water through well-drilling as a support ministry to church planting. They completed more than 40 projects in Paraguay, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Nicaragua involving wells, spring development, sanitation, and water quality assessments.

Missionaries Ed and Linda Baker have transitioned from drilling water wells in Nicaragua to now leading a global team of cross-cultural workers.

After more than a decade of foreign missionary service, the Bakers will co-direct The Mission Society's Global Resource Team, which provides specialists in various disciplines to help other Christian missionaries and national ministries worldwide. The Bakers will also serve as the water and sanitation specialists on the team.

“Our 10 years serving as missionaries in Paraguay and Nicaragua taught us,” say the Bakers, “that ... people are more open to receive the gospel from those who become involved with the daily challenges they face – water and sanitation, agricul-

ture, health, education, and many social issues. This is where The Global Resource Team can help missionaries and national ministries. Many of us see these problems but don't have the skills or tools to help solve them. The Global Resource Team can mobilize specialists to assist in many of these areas, some of whom have served as missionaries themselves.”

In December, the Bakers returned from Nicaragua, where they have been serving, and now reside in Lawrenceville, Ga. They will manage a team of ministries spanning the globe that includes specialists in agriculture, commerce, health, water and sanitation, and outreach to women. ✝

To learn more about the Bakers and their ministry, visit www.themissionsociety.org.

Four members join The Mission Society board

This January, The Mission Society welcomed four new board members. "We appreciate the diversity of real-world experience, theological depth, and pastoral insight these members bring to our board," said President Dick McClain. "All four have been deeply involved in church life and reaching out to others with the kind of love that characterizes our organization's desire to spread the gospel."

The new board directors are as follows:



Neal Reynolds is president of The Ad Shop, an Atlanta-based advertising and marketing firm. Reynolds and his wife, Jan, have been active members of Roswell United Methodist Church for 28 years, where he has served as a lay leader. Reynolds is chairman of the board of Esther's Urban Missionary Academy, an inner-city ministry that meets the needs of abused, homeless, and

hurting women. He has also served on the board of Souly Business, whose mission is to bring the Christian faith into the workplace. He and Jan are the parents of two children.



Helen Rhea Stumbo is president of Bristol House Ltd., a publishing company that produces church resources written from a theologically Wesleyan perspective. She is an active member of Fort Valley United Methodist Church in Fort Valley, Ga. Stumbo has served in numerous church and denominational leadership positions and is on the Salvation Army's Central Georgia

advisory board. She is a prolific community volunteer involved in city beautification and historic preservation. She and her husband, John, have four children and nine grandchildren.



David T. Roller, of Baltimore, has served as a bishop in the Free Methodist Church of North America since 2007. In that capacity, he oversees the ministry of 11 annual conferences in the eastern United States and the United Kingdom, and five annual conferences in Latin America. He has ministered as a Free Methodist missionary in Mexico and as Latin America area director

for Free Methodist World Missions. He and his wife, Yvonne, have two children.



Max Wilkins is senior pastor at The Family Church, an interdenominational congregation in Gainesville, Fla. with an active missions ministry that includes dozens of local and international partners. Formerly a teaching pastor at one of the nation's fastest-growing churches, Wilkins was ordained in the Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church. He has completed

course work for a doctor of ministry degree at Asbury Theological Seminary. Wilkins and his wife, Dorothy, have two children. ☩

Persecuted disciple-makers

Michael Mozley reports from conference in India, where persecution in some areas is on the increase

Among its ministries, The Mission Society provides conferences, resources, and training for church leaders of other nations to help them mobilize their own people in greater missions involvement. In a recent conference in India, Michael Mozley, senior director of International Mobilization, sent this report:

"Words really are hard to come by when trying to describe this entire experience.

When sitting at the table with these precious men and women and hearing their testimonies of fellow Christians who have been martyred, or others being held at gunpoint by radicals to renounce Christ, we are just awed. ... One former Hindu follower heard God speak to him on June 19, 1995 and God said, "You are my son!" Then God told him to begin to pray, so he would rise early and pray and he didn't

know what prayer was! All his neighbors asked him in the morning, "What is that language you are speaking in early in the morning?" The Kingdom of God is coming in power.

Prayer time for India, writes Mozley, "went on for at least 30 minutes with weeping, shouting, rejoicing... We were claiming the promise that India belongs to God!" ☩



Disciple-making in a sauna?

Our right and wrong perceptions about disciple-making



“It should be clear that the cure of souls is not a specialized form of ministry but is the essential pastoral work. It is ...a way of life that uses everyday tasks, encounters, and situations as the raw material for teaching prayer, developing faith, and preparing for a good death.” –Eugene Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor* (p. 59)

One cold winter evening in northern Kazakhstan where our family lived, I went to enjoy the great Russian tradition of going to the sauna with friends. This time I was with a young man from the church we were working with. As we sat relaxing in the heat of the sauna, we talked at length about issues of faith and of ministry. I remember wondering if this is what Jesus had in mind when He commanded us to make disciples!

Make Disciples! We emphasize that part of the Great Commission in our missionary training. Not only was it the final command of Jesus, it was exemplified in the ministries of both Jesus and Paul. In fact, they really went about making disciple-makers – disciples who would themselves make disciples. But what does that look like in practice? Having a group of folks gathered at one’s feet, hanging on every word? While that might be great for

the ego, in my experience as a believer and as a missionary, and in my observation of effective missionaries, that is not usually the picture I see.

Big names

Big conferences, big names. This is a popular understanding of successful disciple-making, isn’t it? I think of the many “successful” conferences across the former Soviet Union in the 1990s, when a big-name person would come hold a conference, have his or her teaching translated, then go back to the United States and report the huge numbers who came to faith or now had been trained. I used to joke that if all the reports were accurate, then the entire population of the former USSR must have come to faith multiple times!

When I look over the 10 years that my family served in Kazakhstan, I have no

doubt that any impact we made was in the lives of various individuals. I directed a school, taught in a seminary, provided general oversight for our team of 15 missionaries, did strategic planning, etc. Those were and are fine ministries, but the real impact was in the margins – as my family and I interacted with people, sometimes in those institutional settings, but more often in the informal, unplanned settings, such as my conversation in the sauna.

I remember conversations with young church leaders as we waited for the bus on cold winter evenings following a pickup soccer game, and young women coming over to have tea with Shawn, my wife. Once a young mother told me that, after watching us with our children, she began intentionally listening to and talking with her daughter, whereas before she had just assumed the popular idea



“Discipleship does not need to be overly scripted or planned out. However, it is always intentional,” says Jim Ramsay, shown here with friends from Kazakhstan, where he and his family served for 10 years.

that adults didn’t engage with children in conversation. In all these contexts, it wasn’t a matter of me going to someone and saying, “Let me disciple you.” Discipleship was the context of long-term relationships of trust and mutual growth, of living life in Kazakhstan, of wrestling with life issues as they happened.

So discipleship in missions – or anywhere – does not need to be overly scripted or planned out. However, it is always intentional. In looking at the life of Jesus, I see that so often his ministry occurred in unplanned and unscripted settings. (I’ve heard it referred to as a “ministry of interruptions.”) Yet even if the event itself was unplanned, Jesus’ response was always intentional – bringing the light of truth into these everyday situations so that growth would occur in the people surrounding him.

This understanding of ministry is life-

oriented, rather than event-oriented. It isn’t “drive-by disciple-making.” There aren’t many immediate rewards, but there are indeed rewards.

No ‘big’ anything

Recently, I was reminiscing about our years in Kazakhstan with Joyce, a former teammate. She moved back to the United States a year ago after 14 years of service. Joyce related to me, “When I think back over my life in Kazakhstan, there was no ‘big event,’ there was no ‘big’ anything. It was just the years of being with the people.”

This past January, she returned for a brief visit to the town in Kazakhstan where she had served. The believers held a gathering for her, complete with a skit depicting her life, including her testimony of her initial reluctance to come to this far-off, cold country. At the conclusion, they told her to look behind her. The

church was full of people and each held a leaf aloft. They said, “Look at what God has done as a result of your answering His call. These leaves represent the growth.” Some of the people were indeed people Joyce had worked with directly, but many were people who had been discipled by those initial people she had known, or perhaps even a generation or two more removed. Joyce told me, “It was an amazing picture of where we’ve come.”

It is also a beautiful picture of what we mean by our core strategy, “Make disciple-makers.” †

Jim Ramsay is The Mission Society’s senior director of field ministry.



The way of the disciple

Four stepping stones to move you along in your journey with Christ



"To journey for the sake of saving our own lives is little by little to cease to live in any sense that really matters. ...It is only by journeying for the world's sake – even when the world bores and sickens and scares you half to death – that little by little we start to come alive." –Frederick Buechner

Every individual believer and every local congregation should live out their walk of faith in intimacy with Jesus, showing love to others, and seeking to encourage others to find the same relationship with Christ that they enjoy. The four 'Greats' of discipleship presents a cyclic progression that models how that can happen in a way that impacts lives near and far.

The Great Question

Life is full of questions. In fact, it can be argued that the course of our lives is the result of how we respond when confronted with life's significant questions. For example, in 1995 I was asked by my

employer whether I wanted to remain in my present position and move to Atlanta or to stay in Birmingham and take a different position. Although I didn't realize it at the time, had I chosen to remain in Birmingham I would not be writing this article now nor working for The Mission Society.

Some questions are more important than others. Some 40 years ago I asked Deborah if she would be willing to become my wife. Obviously, that question was much more important than if I had asked what she had for breakfast that morning.

There are other important questions in life such as: What house should we buy? What college should we attend? What line of work should we pursue? But as important as these questions are, they pale in comparison to the one great question. That question is found in Matthew 16:13-16. Here, Jesus asked the disciples who it was that that people were saying He was. Their response was that some were saying that He was John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others were saying He was Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets. Then Jesus said, "But what about you? Who do you say I am?"

That one question is the question of the ages. It is more important than any other question one will ever be asked. As Leonard Sweet and Frank Viola put it in their excellent book *Jesus Manifesto*, "If we get our 'you say' wrong, we get everything wrong, since Jesus is the Alpha and

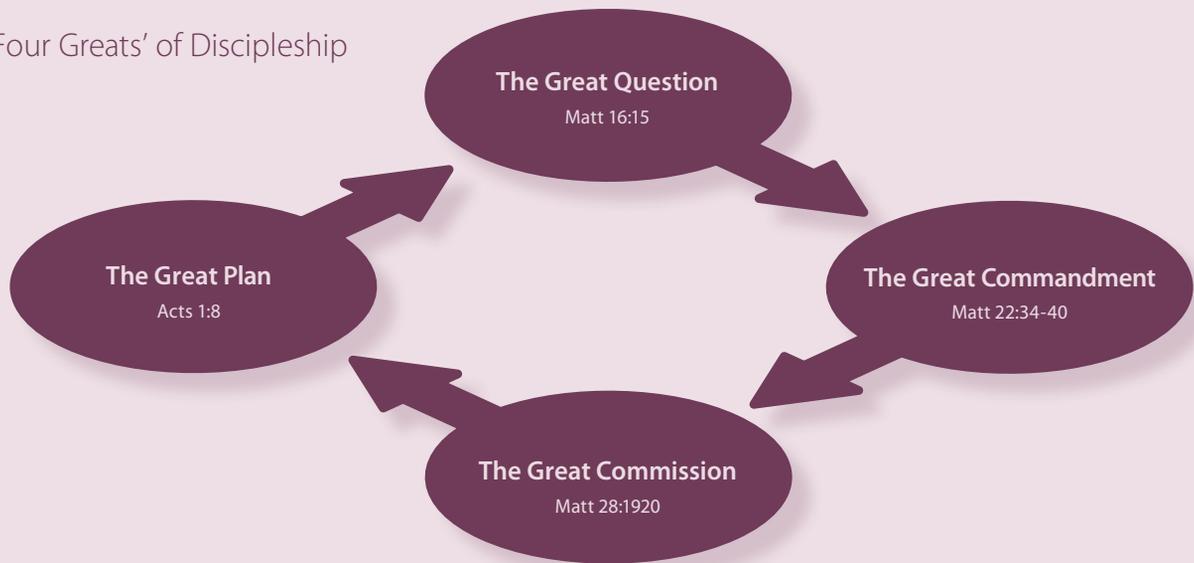
Omega, the beginning and the end of all things." Peter responded by saying, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God," and was commended by Jesus.

The Great Commandment

Immediately upon answering the Great Question correctly, one moves to the next great, The Great Commandment, recorded in Matthew 22:34-40. In answering a lawyer's question as to what was the greatest commandment, Jesus responds, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." This is discipleship to the max, because learning to love God as described is a never-ending quest. The more one learns of Him, the more one knows. And the more one knows, the more one loves Him.

This deepening cycle of learning, knowing, and loving leads to a desire to be like Him. As Philippians 2:1-2 says, "Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind." Paul goes on to say that we should look not only to our own interests, but to the interests of others, that we should have the same

The 'Four Greats' of Discipleship



mindset as Christ, and we should take on the role of a servant (verses 4-7). So as Jesus' disciples, we are to learn to love our neighbors, who may be people we may not like initially, who may even be culturally different from us. Such was the message of the Good Samaritan parable of Jesus.

The Great Commission

It is not enough that followers of Jesus remain in this Great Commandment state of loving God and loving neighbor, without adding the third great to their faith journey. Jesus clearly indicates that as a follower of His, they must engage in making other disciples. This is the Great Commission, and although it is found in all of the gospels, it is most quoted from Matthew 28:18-20. There, it reads, "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'"

Jesus is saying that His followers are not only to be disciples, but they are also

to be disciple-makers. Additionally, there is no place on earth that we should not be willing to go to bring that about. He further gives the promise that He will be with us in power and authority as we go.

In his book, *The Senders*, the Rev. Paul B. Smith provides an analogy of Great Commission work with that of a military campaign. Not every soldier, writes Smith, is on the front lines of the battle. There are also planners, logisticians, suppliers, financiers, cooks, mechanics, etc. And although not all of them are on the front lines, all of them are prepared for battle should an opportunity to engage the enemy present itself. In the same way, not all involved in God's mission are on the front lines, but every believer is called to find their place in the Great Commission effort – and to be ready to "give an account of the hope that we have in Jesus Christ." The stakes are too high and the task is too vast for any believer to sit on the sidelines.

The Great Plan

Jesus not only told his followers to go and make disciples, but He gave them a plan to do so. It is the Great Plan, and it was so important that it was the last thing Jesus

told His disciples before ascending into heaven. Acts 1:8 describes this plan this way, "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 that brief verse, Jesus gives his followers the impetus for going (the power of the Holy Spirit), the reason for going (to be his witnesses), and the places to go (Jerusalem, all of Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth).

That brings us full circle. Jesus' disciples go, so that non-disciples may have the opportunity to respond to the Great Question, "Who do you say I am?" in the hopes that they too will become disciples who help make other disciples. If we are not fully engaged in all four of these steps, perhaps we should reevaluate our standing as a disciple. ✝

Stan Self is The Mission Society's senior director of church ministry.

All scripture quotations in this article were taken from the New International version.



Something you know for sure

God has this work for you

I am an evangelist, not a pastor. I'll go out and get people saved and then hand them over to a pastor so he can care for them. These were my exact thoughts during my college years. I was passionate about winning souls for Christ, but I had no desire to disciple these souls once they came to faith. I didn't have the patience, nor did I think it was my responsibility. This "I catch 'em, you clean 'em" mentality was short-sighted and failed to recognize the intent of the words Jesus issued to his disciples in Matthew 28.

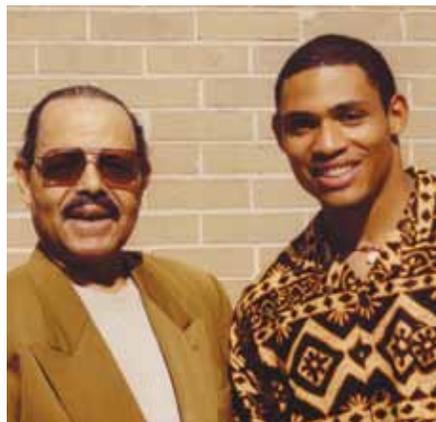
Jesus did not say to the eleven, "Go and make disciples if you think you have a pastoral calling." Nor did he say, "Those of you who don't feel qualified are exempt from making disciples." No! Jesus said to all of his disciples, "Go and make disciples." And Jesus says to all who will ever be his disciples, "Go and make disciples." That includes you and me!

No degree required

How is it then that so many of us have reduced the Lord's command to an optional request in much the same way we have reduced missions to an optional activity? My guess is that many people avoid disciple-making because they don't think they are qualified. Perhaps they assume that they must be a seminary graduate or hold a ministerial title. Maybe they assume that they must know all of the answers to life's many questions. Or they reason they don't have the time, thinking discipleship requires a 24/7 relationship with another

person. However, none of these are the qualifications Jesus had in mind. What then are the qualifications to be a disciple-maker?

A disciple-maker, must first be a disciple of Jesus. After all, it is Jesus who is the ultimate teacher and the One we should ultimately follow and desire to imitate. We should pattern our lives after his life and strive to reproduce this Kingdom lifestyle



"Mr. Allen disciplined me for nearly 10 years. I didn't know I was being disciplined, but I knew he was deliberately pouring into my life."

in the lives of others. But what should we do? What are the practical things a disciple-maker should do?

When Jesus instructed His disciples to make disciples, I think he intended for them to do the these things: model dependence on God, display a moral lifestyle, demonstrate the power of the Holy Spirit, teach the Scriptures, publicly confront evil and injustice, offer godly counsel, and point people to Himself. No

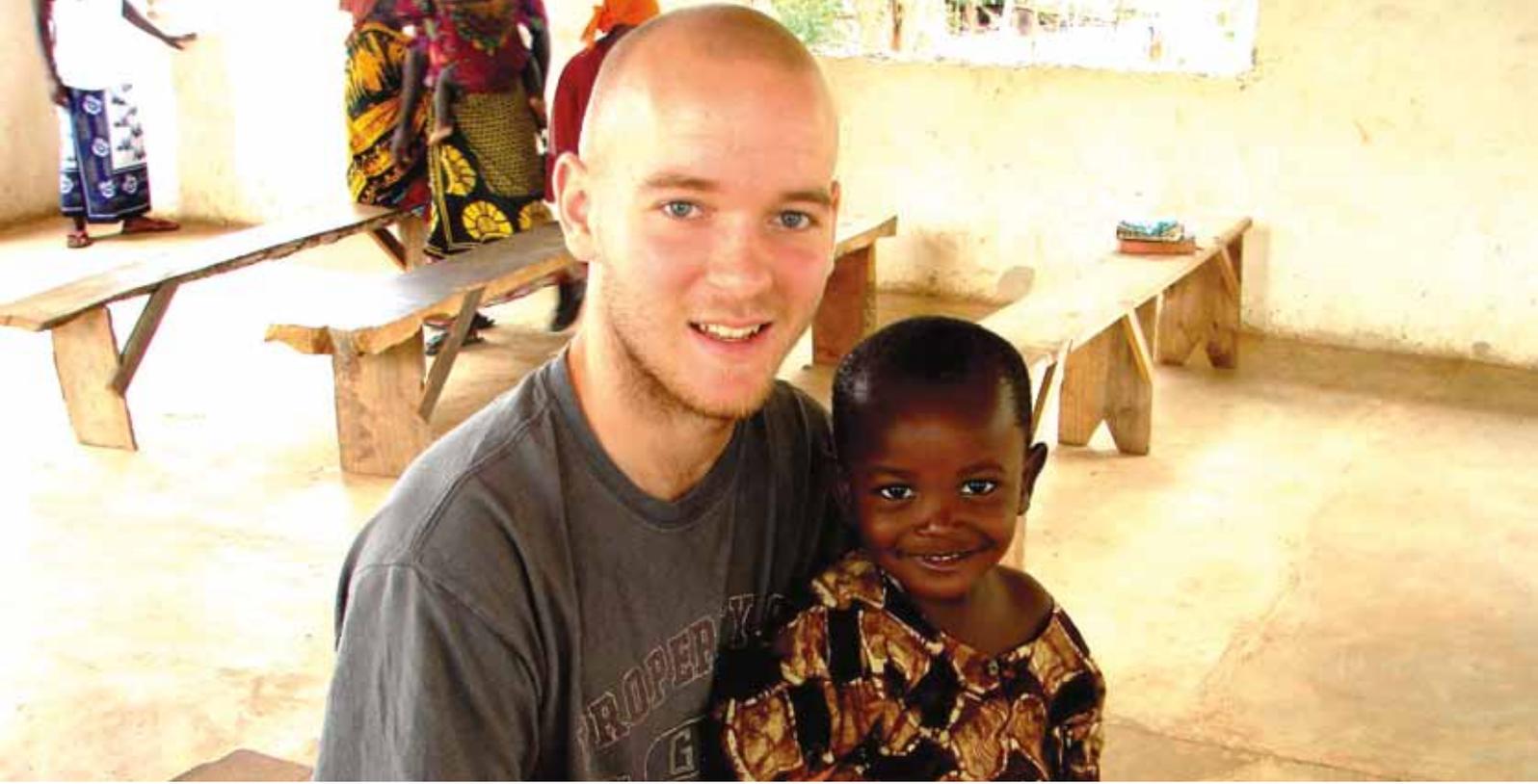
degrees required. The wisdom is supplied by the Holy Spirit. Time is necessary, but it doesn't have to be 24/7. These actions are in reach of every believer through the power of the Holy Spirit.

How it is done

The perfect example of this is the late Richard Allen, a retired real estate agent who met me while he was in his early 70s. Mr. Allen adopted me as his grandson and disciplined me for nearly 10 years. I didn't know I was being disciplined, but I knew he was deliberately pouring into my life. He didn't have a book to follow called *How to Disciple African-American Young Men*, nor did he have a ministerial title. What he had was a transparent life, many words of encouragement, a life of service, and lots of prayers. Although he passed last year, I still remember his stories and the many lessons he taught me. I am still challenged by his example, which continually points me to Jesus.

What about you? Are you making disciples of Jesus? Regardless of your education, age, title, etc., God has called you to the work of discipleship. †

Richard Coleman is the director of mobilization and candidacy for The Mission Society.



Calling all young people

It's often been said that our generation is one of great passion; that we have the passion and opportunities to do things that have never been done before.

The question is, **“What will you and I do with that passion?”**

Are you interested in cross-cultural ministry? Perhaps sensing a call to missions? Filled with a passion for people and to follow Jesus wherever He may lead you? But at the same time, are you maybe not so sure where to begin or where to even get started in pursuing this calling?

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