

Effective
Disciple-Making
For The 21st Century
Using The It's All About
Relationship Model

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Relationship Model**

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Dedication

To my co-author, John Hendee, thanks for being the greatest example to me in how to be a passionate disciple-maker. Your contribution to the kingdom of God is multiplied by all the equipped ambassadors presenting the Gospel around the world with the tools you have provided.

- Dr. James Scott, Jr.

Have you even been tired, fighting to stay awake and then all of a sudden you get a burst of energy from somewhere and you are “revived”? Well, that is what Scotty has been to me. God brought him back into my life after 30 years and he has been a shot of energy for me. He helped “revive” me to see the bigger picture of the potential of what we can do with what we have. He has cast new visions, redesigned old materials, created new materials, given new insights and ideas. I have been known over the years as ‘the idea man’. I think I have met my match. And it has been a tremendous blessing. This book is a part of what he has brought to the table. He has taken a system I had developed over the years and he put it all into a MODEL that is easier to make sense out of. Thank you Lord and Scotty!

- John Hendee

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Preface

I (Dr. Scott) was sitting in a Starbucks enjoying conversation with a pastor I was getting to know for the first time. During our exchange, he suddenly stopped and asked, “You’re an evangelism guy, aren’t you?”

I responded that I wouldn’t consider myself just an “evangelism guy” because my passion isn’t limited to just sharing the Gospel with the lost. I also want to see people surrender their lives to Christ, see them grow to spiritual maturity, see them equipped for ministry, see them become disciple-makers, and make sure they’re shepherded well. I want to see the same for those who already know Christ. I want to see God transform lives to His glory! But that all starts with *evangelism*, which has been a big part of my ministry for almost three decades, so it’s not uncommon for other ministers to think of me as an “evangelism guy.”

In our culture today, the effort is toward not being known as “*that guy*.” You know, the guy who always steps in front of your camera and ruins the shot with his contorted facial expressions. Or that guy who still goes to high school parties after he has graduated high school. Or that guy who always makes a fool of himself in social settings.

You know, “*that*” guy!

How sad it is that ministers who still have a passion for evangelism and discipleship have become known in some church leadership circles as “*that guy*.” But if having a passion for bringing people to Christ is being “*that guy*,” then we need a lot more people who are “*that guy*”!

Research into being “*that guy*” --- a Christian who will

share the Gospel with others --- has produced a staggeringly tragic statistic. The data indicates that 96.7 percent of all Christians will never share the Gospel with anyone in their *lifetime!*

What a massive failure that is by the church to fulfilling Christ's commission for it.

“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’,” Matthew 28:18-20.

The Apostle Paul says that all of us who are followers of Christ are supposed to be “that guy.”

“And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, ‘Come back to God!’” 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.

A primary contributing factor to why so many Christians don't share the Gospel with anyone is because they don't know how to do so. Not only has the church failed at carrying out the Great Commission, its leaders have failed at one of their most important responsibilities, that of “equipping the saints.”

*“Now these are the gifts Christ gave the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. **Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.** This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and*

knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord,

measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ,”
Ephesians 4:11-13.

Even though it is the responsibility of church leaders to equip the saints, most churches are not doing anything to teach believers how to share the Gospel with others.

Let's change that!

When I first met my co-author, John Hendee, there was no doubt he was “that guy.” At the time, he was serving as Minister of Evangelism at Central Christian Church in Mesa, Arizona, and his passion was to equip Christians to be effective disciple-makers using a relational model for evangelism he had created called “*A Peace Treaty With God.*” When we reconnected nearly 30 years later, I discovered his passion hadn’t changed!

The model for disciple-making John had designed a few decades ago has since been used over the years by individual Christians, churches, pastors, church planters, mission organizations and missionaries, and others to lead thousands of people in various cultures around the world into a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ. Now the model has been revised, updated, and renamed “It’s All About Relationship” (IAAR) and serves as the core content of an online course John teaches at Hope International University (HIU) in Fullerton, California, where he now serves as Chair of World Evangelism.

This book serves as a companion to the practical content taught in John’s “Relational Evangelism” course. The online course is now offered by HIU as an Open Class Course which allows individuals or groups --- even massive groups --- to take the course and is a highly effective way of equipping individuals, teams, churches, and organizations with an effective model for disciple-making in the twenty-first century.

Whether you’re reading this book as part of your participation in the “Relational Evangelism” course, or as an interested individual or group, we’re excited that you’re tak-

ing important steps to become equipped to be an effective disciple-maker.

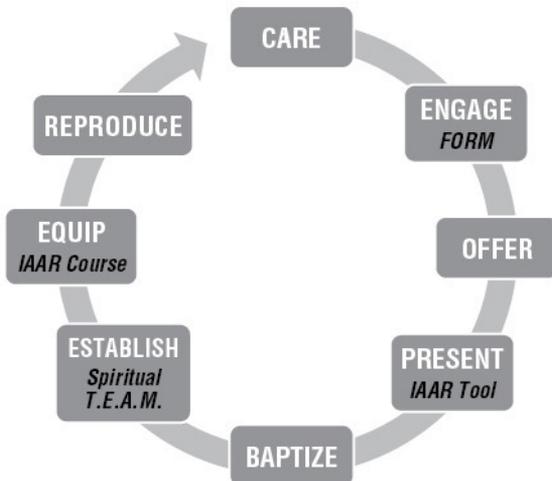
The model for disciple-making we teach appears to be deceptively simple until you realize that embedded into a very basic process is a highly effective relational approach that creates opportunities for sharing a more comprehensive (but still concise) Gospel message by presenting the powerful IAAR disciple-making tool. The outline of this book is based on the eight core elements of the process in the IAAR model, and the content is a collection of short writings by the authors on the different process topics.

This equipping is changing things!

This training is molding many more ambassadors for Christ which some might describe as “that guy.” You know, the guy who is effectively making new disciples of Jesus Christ!

Now let’s take just a glance at the IAAR model for disciple-making ...

“It’sAllAboutRelationship” Model for Making Disciples



The model above is at first deceptively simple looking. Many people could figure out that to be an effective disciple-maker you have to first care about people who are lost without Christ, and need to engage with them. But embedded in this model is a very effective but simple *relational approach* to engaging people with an end-goal of making an offer to go through the four presentations that comprise the very powerful IAAR disciple-making tool. From there, the remaining elements of the disciple-making process are basic: baptize the new believers, teach them what Christ taught us (establish them in their new-found faith), and equip them to be effective disciple-makers so they can reproduce the whole process.

Hope International University's online "Relational Evangelism" course provides detailed training in the use of the IAAR disciple-making tool and creating opportunities to do so using the F.O.R.M. relational approach. So don't be deceived at the simplicity of the model above. But the good news is that it is simple to put into application, and yet *very effective!*

Introduction

If you want quality craftsmanship, look up the guys who made doors in ancient Italy and you'll find some fellows who knew how to craft something that would last for centuries.

I took the top photo to the right while walking through ancient ruins in Rome, and the photo beneath it is the doorway of a very old Roman church. During my visit to both Rome and Venice, I saw several centuries-old buildings that had fallen into ruin, except the doors on many of these buildings remained intact and were still intimidating barriers to those who might intend mischief.



While new materials had to be introduced to restore some of these sites, several of the original doors were left standing.

These stubborn old doors remind me of the church, which has had a long-held belief that the primary entry for non-Christians to gain access to the Gospel was the Sunday morning church service. It's an old door that still stands for many local churches.

The problem is, that isn't the door God intended to be the

primary portal to the Gospel. So what is that door?

You!

The Christian.

You're a key door God has crafted as an opening to His message of reconciliation.

*“And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And **God has given us this task of reconciling people to him.** For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And **he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.** So we are Christ's ambassadors; **God is making his appeal through us.** We speak for Christ when we plead, ‘Come back to God!’”* 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.

The great failure of the church today is its preferred strategy of waiting on non-Christians to walk through the door of the local church *building* in search of the Gospel.

That wasn't God's strategy.

Instead, Jesus told us to *go into* the world and make disciples. God has given to us the “message of reconciliation” along with an appointment to be ambassadors for Christ --- official representatives of the King *sent out* to deliver his terms for peace.

God's strategy is brilliant: wherever there is a follower of Christ, there is a portal to the Gospel for the unbelievers in their lives. In that case, it is vital that we beckon those around us to come in! It is vital that we be inviting open doors to a lost world.

As ambassadors for Christ, we need to put out the “welcome mat” in front of our lives and be that doorway to the Gospel. Otherwise, if we continue to wait for people to walk through the doors of church buildings, many will perish without being reconciled to God.

Chapter One

Care

“Jesus replied, ‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”

– Matthew 22:37-40

It almost sounds silly to say the beginning element of an effective process for making disciples is caring. And yet, all around *all* of us are people who are perishing without Christ because no one cares about doing what it takes to share the Gospel with them.

How many people in your own family don’t know Christ?

How many people on your street are lost?

How many people do you work with have never heard the Gospel, or don’t understand it?

Who is caring about the souls of these people?

We will never extend ourselves as an ambassador for Christ until we care about others like Christ, through Christ, and for Christ.

Following are a few short writings offering an assortment of thoughts on the topic of “Care.”

In Pursuit of Wascals ...

One of my (Dr. Scott) fondest childhood memories was waking up early enough on a Saturday morning to get up in time to get breakfast and be in front of the television for cartoons by six a.m. I was a cartoon addict!

Saturday morning was the one time in the week when my parents gave me freedom to indulge in television viewing, so I would spend the entire morning watching cartoons. I was thoroughly delighted by just watching the coyote try to catch the roadrunner, the pink panther frustrate the detective, and Elmer Fudd set out on his quest to get the “wascally wabbit.” I haven’t seen Elmer Fudd pick up his gun and go tip-toe- ing into the woods in a long time, but I sometimes think of him when I see how Christians often approach evangelism ... very much like going on a hunt, seeking out the “wascally sinners.”

Reaching the lost for Jesus Christ isn’t a hunting expedition. It’s not an effort to trap, snare, or otherwise tame some wild creature. Yet, we often approach it as if it’s an “us against them” endeavor. And with that attitude, that’s what it often becomes.

But that isn’t the attitude or motivation God displayed when He reached out to a lost world. How did He do it?

“For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him” (John 3:16-17).

God didn’t go hunting for humankind to capture us and make us into something we didn’t want to be. Instead, He unleashed His love on us in the humility of a stable and gave us what was most precious to Him, His Son.

He did this because He cared!

Boundless love, total selflessness, humbly aimed entirely

at our well-being because He cared about what sin had done to us and our relationship with Him.

Can you imagine how effective we might be if we sought the lost on behalf of Christ in the same way?

Playing Spiritual Cop Will Cause You to Miss the Mark ...

In 1992, a Los Angeles County parking control officer spotted a brown El Dorado Cadillac illegally parked next to the curb on street-sweeping day.

The officer dutifully wrote out a ticket. Ignoring the man seated behind the driver's wheel, the officer reached inside the open car window and placed the \$30 citation on the dashboard.

The driver of the car didn't offer any excuses. No argument was made --- and with good reason. The driver of the car had been shot in the head 10 to 12 hours before but was sitting up, stiff as a board, slumped slightly forward, with blood on his face. He was dead.

The officer, preoccupied with ticket-writing, was oblivious to anything but the offense. He returned to his car and drove away.

Many people around us are "dead in transgressions and sins." What should catch our attention most is their need, not their offenses. They don't need a citation, they need a Savior.

Jesus saw the need in people. In fact, seeing our need was the reason for His coming to earth.

"For the son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost," Luke 19:10.

While Jesus cared about our need, we can be quick to spot the offenses of others, and then stubborn about seeing anything else about them. Such tunnel vision results in a lot of judgment and little love.

Do you see the need for a Savior in those around you? Do you care? Or are you too busy focusing on their offenses?

You Stand Between God and Sinners ...

Abraham had a remarkable relationship with God. His faith in his Creator distinguished him among men, but his compassion for sinners was also something we should take note of.

Genesis 18:16-33 tells how Abraham pleaded for mercy on behalf of the sinners in Sodom. These sinners were of the bold kind, so much so, this is how the Lord described the situation:

“So the Lord told Abraham, ‘I have heard a great outcry from Sodom and Gomorrah, because their sin is so flagrant,’” Genesis 18:20.

So Abraham began to bargain with the Lord, asking him to spare the city if enough righteous people could be found in it. If Abraham cared only for the righteous, he would have made a different request of God, but he cared about the destruction of sinners as well. So he placed himself between them and God, and pleaded on their behalf.

That was then, this is now.

Our “now” is that you and I, as Christians, are now standing between God and sinners. This time, it was God who put us in this position, but before doing so, He equipped us for this vital stance.

“And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, ‘Come back to God!’” 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.

God doesn’t want to see anyone destroyed because of sin, but desires that everyone repent of their sins (2 Peter 3:9). To warn people and to encourage them to turn from their sins

and make peace with God, we have been made His ambassadors and equipped with a message of reconciliation. God has put us between Himself and sinners so that He may make His appeal through us!

So there you stand, between God and sinners. What are you doing?

So Adamant You Go Through the Roof!

Many of the greatest things anyone has ever accomplished in life are the things we have become the most *adamant* about.

Now there's a word you don't hear very often. One dictionary defines the word "adamant" as "*utterly unyielding in attitude or opinion in spite of all appeals, urgings, etc.*" It's often when we have become the most adamant about achieving a pursuit that we have experienced our greatest "successes" in life.

In Mark 2:1-5, we read the story of four men who were adamant about helping a friend, and we get to read of the dramatic outcome of their efforts:

"When Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later, the news spread quickly that he was back home. Soon the house where he was staying was so packed with visitors that there was no more room, even outside the door. While he was preaching God's word to them, four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. They couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, 'My child, your sins are forgiven'."

Before these four men could accomplish anything, *they first had to see their friend's need, care enough about his healing to do something, and see Jesus as being his only answer.*

It's easy to surround ourselves with people who call

themselves our friends but never take the time to understand what's going on in our lives and what our real needs are, or even more, to actually *care* about our needs. And it's easy to be that kind of "friend" as well.

But such wasn't the case for the paralyzed man Mark writes about. He was blessed with four friends who cared so deeply about his needs they became adamant about achieving a solution for him.

To get their friend to Jesus so that he may be healed, these four men *worked together on a task they couldn't accomplish on their own*. It would take the combined strength of all four men to carry their paralyzed friend to Jesus. They didn't individually see the challenge of helping their friend as too big to handle and so pass it off, but instead, they pooled together so they would be capable of accomplishing the task.

Having united in their cause, and being adamant about their objective, these four men *did whatever it took to get their friend to the feet of Jesus*. They didn't let a crowd blocking their way discourage them. Instead, they climbed on top of the house Jesus was in, tore a hole in the roof of the dwelling, and lowered their friend down in front of the Savior. They were determined to overcome any obstacle that tried to deter them from getting their friend to Jesus.

The result was everything they hoped for: "*Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, 'My child, your sins are forgiven.'*"

There's likely one other thing these four men did that isn't mentioned in this passage. *They probably paid the cost involved in getting their friend to Jesus*. In order to get around the crowd and get their friend in front of Jesus, they had to tear up someone's roof. Someone would have to pay to fix that, and the cost for repairs was likely factored into the adamant mission of these men.

Like this man Mark writes about, it's going to take some real effort to get *your* friends to Jesus. But first, you have to

see their need for salvation, care about their current condition without Christ, and see Jesus as their only answer. And then you have to get adamant about helping them get to Jesus.

Just how adamant are you about bringing your friends to Christ?

Do you care enough to do something?

Well ... Are You?

A few years ago, on my way home from a Sunday evening Bible study, I turned the radio on in the car and was captivated by a special news report.

The story was about a unique non-profit organization that assists soldiers who are battle weary from their time in Iraq and Afghanistan to re-assimilate into life State-side by taking them fly fishing, and slowly bringing them back to a different time and place. It's a phenomenal organization making a difference in the life of returning military personnel.

But what really captivated me was a 23-year-old medic telling the story of how, in the intensity of one battle, he came upon a terminally wounded 18-year-old American soldier who, when seeing the medic, looked up at him and asked, "Are you going to do anything?" and then died.

The first thing that impacted me was the 18-year-old dying for his country. *Just eighteen years old!* I don't know anything about this young man. Maybe he went into the Army because he came from a patriotic family; maybe it was to earn a college education after a hitch in the military; or maybe he was getting into trouble and needed some structure and discipline. I have no idea. But I do know at age eighteen you're not that far into life, and I would imagine going into the Army was his first --- and last --- great adventure after getting out of high school. But there would be no more adventures.

The medic said every night the words of that young soldier haunt him. I can understand that. Imagine what he must have felt when a dying 18-year-old looks *him* in the eye and asks *him* if *he* is going to do anything!

I couldn't help but catch the parallel, though.

As human beings, we are in the midst of a spiritual battle that will not end until Christ returns. All around us are those who are terminally wounded by sin. The question, then, falls to us: "***Are YOU going to do anything?***"

We're supposed to! You know the words, that Great Commission that Jesus gave His followers before departing this world: "*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 ...*" (Mt. 28:19-20a).

Those are marching orders. We're to care enough about those dying in their sin around us that we do something, that we minister to them by leading them to the One --- *the only One* --- who can give them life, give it abundantly, and give it everlasting.

So the question falls to each one of us: "*Are you going to do something?*"

Well ... are you?

Questions for consideration and/or discussion

1. As you read through the chapter, did you understand that truly caring about others isn't an intellectual exercise but requires action?
2. If we say we care, but don't act to provide care, do we really care?

3. How does caring about people have anything to do with being an effective disciple-maker?
4. Is it possible to act without actually caring? How does not caring (or caring) impact our actions with others?
5. How did Jesus' caring for us impact the action He took for our benefit?
6. What are some of the consequences others may face if we fail to care about them?
7. What are some of the consequences others may face if we apply action to genuinely caring about them?
8. What are tangible ways you currently show those who are lost without Christ that you care about them?

Chapter Two

Engage

“Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.” – Philippians 2:4

I recently read an article where, believe it or not, the person was actually promoting the idea of “evangelism by osmosis”!

It doesn’t work that way!

To make disciples, we must engage with people. It cannot be done by osmosis, just by the example of our lives, just by “letting our light shine,” and not even by good works alone.

At some point, we must open our mouths and share the Gospel.

That requires engaging with people, building (at the least) the most basic of relationships, and earning an opportunity to be heard.

Following are a few short writings offering an assortment of thoughts on the topic of “Engage.”

You Are Not A Tree ...

Hymns have long gone by the wayside in many churches, but perhaps at some time you stumbled across this old one with the words, “Just like a tree that’s planted by the living waters, I shall not be moved.”

The words to that old hymn sound a lot like these words from the prophet Jeremiah:

“They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought ...” Jeremiah 17:8a.

Jeremiah is describing what a person who trusts the Lord is like. In the previous verse he writes, *“But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence”* (Jeremiah 17:7).

Those who trust the Lord to the point their hope and confidence is sourced by roots running deep into the fertile soil of God’s Word, drawing sustenance from the Living Water that is Christ, are portrayed as sturdy and steady during difficult times of troubles and trials.

Like a tree planted by waters, they will not be moved.

One problem, though, is some Christians take an aspect of this description too literally. Like a planted tree, they won’t be moved; they remain planted just where they are. They may draw from scripture, but they remain planted where they are in spite of it.

You cannot engage the world as an ambassador for Christ with your feet planted!

“For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and



you must follow in his steps,” 1 Peter 2:21.

Those who try to be a follower of Christ with their feet planted miss the last sentence of the passage in Jeremiah:

*“Their leaves stay green, and **they never stop producing fruit,**”* Jeremiah 17:8b.

The rich soil of scripture and the life-sustaining Living Water are given so that, like a tree, we are always producing fruit. If you were a tree, you could do that by being planted in good soil alongside water.

But you are not a tree.

As a disciple of Jesus Christ, you cannot produce fruit by staying planted in place. As a disciple, you must go in order to grow; you have to actively live out the trust, hope, and confidence you have in Christ. Doing that will result in a continual production of fruit.

Are you planted on the couch, comfortable with life? Or are you engaging the world by living out your trust in Christ, producing fruit as a disciple of Jesus?

Lighting the Way for Others ...

The pilot of a small, single engine airplane was behind schedule on his flight taking him to a small country airport. The sun had just set, which meant it was late enough that no one was on duty at the tiny, rural airport.

As the pilot approached his destination, he was alarmed that there weren't any lights on anywhere at the little airstrip, making it impossible for him to distinguish the runway from the terrain around it. Not knowing what to do, he circled the area for two hours, trying to figure out some way to safely land.

With his fuel running low, the pilot realized he could only make two more circles around the airport. If he attempted to land without any lights, he would surely crash and probably die.

ing of the airplane around the airport and figured out why the plane continued to circle. He got into his car and rushed to the airport. The man turned on the high beams of his car headlights and drove the length of the runway a couple times, then parked his car at the end of the airstrip so his headlights illuminated the runway.

Because of the car headlights shining on the airstrip, the pilot was able to see the runway and brought his plane in for a perfect landing.

Christians understand the danger of the darkness, for we were plucked from it and provided a safe landing in the light of Christ.

“But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light,” 1 Peter 2:9.

Now we are to provide the light others need to pierce their darkness and see God.

“You are the light of the world — like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father,” Matthew 5:14-16.

Are you engaging the world by living as a light to it? Or are you leaving those in the dark to face their own peril?

The Packaging Matters ...

Are you a ripper or a wrapper and bow saver?

Some people I know open their Christmas and birthday presents and other gifts with great care because they save the wrapping paper and bows for reuse. That’s not how I learned to open presents as a kid. My seven siblings and I took pride in just how fast we could get a gift ripped open! Forget the

wrapping, we wanted to get to what was inside!

That's harder to do these days. With the kind of packaging items come in today, you very nearly need a freshly sharpened hedge trimmer to free the contents from its package. Products today are packaged more to keep thieves out than to allow buyers in!

I sometimes wonder if that isn't how we "package" the church, more about keeping in who's already there than to welcome and bring in those who are outside.

The Apostle Paul was a "ripper." He tore away anything that kept those outside of Christ from coming to Christ. Paul explained his methods this way:

*"Even though I am a free man with no master, I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ. When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too lived under that law. Even though I am not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to Christ those who are under the law. When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ. When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. **Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some.** I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings" (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).*

Paul "packaged" himself to attract others to the Gospel, tearing away anything that would hinder anyone from clearly accessing the Gospel message. His intent had a simple focus, found in verse 23: *"I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings."*

Are you finding ways to engage people so you may have opportunities to share the Gospel, or do you make it difficult for non-believers to find Christ? How can you clear away

impediments to the Gospel so that others might be saved?

Are You Losing the Human Touch?

You find your friend's name in "Contacts" on your smart-phone, select it and the phone number. Your smartphone dials automatically, and after a couple rings you're startled to hear, "Hello?"

"Mark?" you stutter, surprised to hear a live human voice.

"John? Is that you?" your friend asks.

"Uh ... yeah ... hi ..." you stammer.

"Hi! What's up?" he asks.

"Uh ... I was just calling to leave a message for you ..."

In our constantly connected world, we have become accustomed to not actually connecting with people in a live format. We send text messages, we tweet, we post, we email, we leave voicemail messages, but we don't really *talk* to each other. In fact, many people report they prefer to reach a person's voicemail to leave a message than actually call someone with the intent of having a live conversation.

Some say not connecting live allows them to multi-task but still stay connected; others say it's a way to maintain control of their time. The bottom line is that we're becoming more personally *distant* when we lose interest in having a live conversation with other human beings. This attitude prompts us to turn inward, feed our selfishness, and minimize having to have genuine fellowship with other human beings.

The more impersonal we become with how we connect, the more detached we become from others, the more we care about ourselves and the less we care about others. Connections that are purposely limited to impersonal communication are more about exchanging sentences than sharing life together.

I'm not saying we can't make and have significant connections with others through a variety of means of communicating, but when we *prefer* not to have live human interaction, we are moving away from the authentic means of

human relationship.

If you're finding yourself preferring to reach someone's voicemail than engaging with an actual person, you know it's time for a social media fast and time to go be with other live human beings. It's time to engage!

A RELATIONAL APPROACH: F.O.R.M.

Okay, so you really do care that the majority of people in this world inhabited by more than seven billion human beings are lost in sin. They don't know Jesus Christ, and most have not heard the Good News about Him. This includes some people you know personally.

You care enough about these people that you're willing to engage with them in order to seek an opportunity to share the Gospel.

But how?

Relationally.

Notice we didn't write, "through relationships."

You have probably heard different church leaders preach a mantra that sharing the Gospel requires having a personal relationship with someone. That's sort of true.

Sort of.

Nabeel Qureshi, in his book, *"Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus,"* noted the impersonal approaches, such as "street evangelism," that some Christians attempt to use to share the Good News, or how a Christian may share just a verse or two from the Bible and then press a person to surrender their life to Christ on hearing just a "sliver" of the Gospel. Qureshi wrote the following about his experience:

"Unfortunately, I have found that many Christians think of evangelism the same way, foisting Christian beliefs on strangers in chance encounters. The problem with this approach is that the Gospel requires a radical life change, and not many people are about to listen to strangers telling them to change the way they live. What do they know about others' lives? On the other hand, if a true friend shares the exact

same message with heartfelt sincerity, speaking to specific circumstances and struggles then the message is heard loud and clear. Effective evangelism requires relationships. There are very few exceptions. In my case, I knew of no Christian who truly cared about me, no one who had been a part of my life through thick and thin. I had plenty of Christian acquaintances, and I'm sure they would have been my friends if I had become a Christian, but that kind of friendship is conditional. There were none that I knew who cared about me unconditionally. Since no Christian cared about me, I did not care about their message.”

Certainly, the most effective environment for extending an invitation to a non-Christian for hearing the Gospel is within the context of a positive relationship. But it's not the only context that works. By applying a couple of elements from a relationship --- that of demonstrating you care about the person *as a person*, and simply *being friendly* --- we can *often* earn a hearing for presenting the Good News.

We have found a relational approach that expresses warmth and care, and engages people in a friendly manner, has been effective in opening opportunities to share the Gospel with not just people we know well, but people we may have met just a half hour earlier. We refer to that relational approach as “F.O.R.M.” which stands for “Family,” “Occupation,” “Religion,” and “Message.”

Family
Occupation
Religion
Message

M. is a simple approach that has proven to be extraordinarily effective for engaging people in conversation in a friendly manner, but also with the intent to lead²⁴ to a non-threatening, no-

strings-attached offer for going through

the IAAR Gospel presentation.

This relational approach begins by engaging people in conversation. What should you talk about?

The “F” in F.O.R.M. stands for “*Family*.” People love to talk about themselves and the people they care about the most, their family. Simple questions prompt others to talk about their family ...

“How long have you lived here?”

“Where did you come from?”

“Do you have any family in the area?”

These are simple questions that prompt people into conversation that interests them. Your willingness to learn about someone’s family is usually received as a demonstration that you’re interested in them personally, and that you’re interested in what is *important* to them.

Next is “O,” for “Occupation.”

“What line of work are you in?”

“How long have been in that line of work?”

“What do you enjoy about your job?”

“What do you find challenging about your work?”

By taking the time to learn about the important people in someone’s life, and the work that is important to them, we are establishing a friendly (albeit simple) relationship with them.

Next comes “R,” for “Religion.”

“Do you have a particular religious background?”

“Do you belong to a church around here?”

This relational approach is used most often with people who are not followers of Christ, so we have as a goal extending an offer to take them through the IAAR disciple-making tool. That leads us to “M” for “Message.” By using a sentence to transition from “Religion” to “Message” we invite the person to an opportunity to hear the Gospel (this is the relational approach to the “Offer” element of the process in

the IAAR model). The following is an example:

“I understand, I used to not have any involvement with the church for part of my life, but since then I’ve come to understand having a relationship with God is about so much more than practicing a religion or going to a church. ***If you would be interested***, I’d be willing to share with you what I learned through a simple study called ‘*It’s All About Relationship*.’ It’s just four simple studies I share with people which take about 30-40 minutes once a week for four weeks. I think you’d find them to be very insightful, if you’d be interested ...”

Key to our “Message” is the willingness of the person to hear the Gospel. We only present the IAAR with people who are interested in going through the study. We don’t push people to listen to a mini-message right then and there, and then make an immediate decision about Christ. Instead, we only seek an opportunity to share the IAAR with them. If they’re interested and willing, we schedule a time to meet with them, usually in their home, for the first of the four weekly presentations; and gaining the opportunity to be in their homes on four different occasions lends itself to further relationship-building. If they aren’t willing to engage in the IAAR presentations, we let them know if they decide in the future they would like to take us up on the offer, that we’re available to them.

This relational approach sounds almost simplistic, but the beauty and effectiveness of it is that it is simple. Yet, this simple relational approach has been used to open the opportunity for thousands of people to have the Gospel presented to them through the IAAR disciple-making tool, with many of them responding by surrendering their lives to Jesus Christ.

Questions for consideration and/or discussion

1. Do you care enough about the spiritual condition of others to engage in their lives?
2. How are you currently engaging with non-Christians? What has been the outcome of how you engage with others?
3. If you're not intentionally engaging with non-Christians, why aren't you?
4. How can you make disciples of Jesus Christ among non-believers without engaging with them personally?
5. What are some of the ways that you are comfortable engaging with others? How could that lead to an invitation for hearing the Gospel?

Chapter Three

Offer

“Now go out to the street corners and invite everyone you see.” – Matthew 22:9

When many people hear the word “evangelism” they often think of a person being put on the spot by someone to make a decision for Christ. At some point, when sharing the Gospel with someone, you do arrive at that time when a response is needed.

But in effective disciple-making, long before anyone is put “on the spot,” we begin with a simple, friendly invitation (offer) to hear a full rendering of the Gospel message. By offering to share the Good News with people who want to hear it, you’ll be more effective in leading people into a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ.

Following are a few short writings offering an assortment of thoughts on the topic of “Offer.”

Are You A Holy Aglet?

Some of the most brilliant ideas are hatched from practicality. Take, for example, the aglet.

You know that very small piece of plastic at the end of your shoe lace? That’s an aglet. You never give it a moment’s consideration ... until you lose



an aglet. The result is, the end of the shoe lace frays and you have great difficulty getting the lace through the holes to tighten up your shoes.

The word aglet (or aiglet) comes from Old French “aguillette,” meaning “needle.” This comes from “acus,” a Latin word for a needle. An aglet is thus like a small needle at the end of a cord, defining the function it retains until today.

Aglets have been around at least since the days of the ancient Roman empire, only back then they weren’t made of plastic. Originally aglets were made from metal, glass, stone, or whatever else could be shaped as necessary. Rich people would have aglets made of precious metals like brass or silver. Aglets were used in place of buttons at the end of ribbons to help fasten closed a person’s clothes.

Without that cheap little piece of plastic at the end of laces, ribbons, or whatever it’s attached to, things become frayed, unraveled, causing the function of larger things to fail.

Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is a little like being an aglet used by the Holy Spirit. God puts us little ole’ Christians at the tip of a lost person’s life, attached to a message of reconciliation. As the disciple weaves themselves, and the Gospel, into the lives of the lost, the message of God’s Word is like a needle sewing up the broken and reconciling the lost to the Lord.

“And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, ‘Come back to God!’” 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.

Are you weaving yourself into the lives of the lost with

the offer of God's message of reconciliation? Are you mak-

ing yourself available to God for Him to make His appeal through you?

The Bible Salesman ...

There's a story about a man who wanted to be a salesman, but he stuttered very badly. An ad for a job as a Bible salesman for the Bible Society caught his attention, and he thought perhaps God would help him be able to do that job.

At the interview for the position, the supervisors interviewing the man heard him stutter and quickly said, "We're sorry, but there's no way you could do this job with that kind of stutter."

"Please," he said. "Just give me a chance!"

They asked him to leave the room so they could discuss it. When he had gone, one of them said, "I have an idea. Let's just give him fifty Bibles and leave him to it. It'll take him years to sell them."

So that's what they did. A week later, the man returned.

"I've sold all the Bibles you gave me. Can I have some more?" the salesman asked.

Incredulous at the salesman's claim, his supervisors asked him how he was able to sell all of his Bibles so quickly.

"Easy," he said. "I just ask them, 'Would you like to buy a Bible, or would you like me to read it to you?'"

Some people tend to think of asking someone for an opportunity to share the Gospel with them is like selling them the Bible. It isn't, and as an ambassador for Christ, you aren't selling *anything*.

What makes using the IAAR model for disciple-making so effective is that we have a simple key objective: we want to develop a relationship with people that provides us with a chance to offer to non-Christians an opportunity to go through the IAAR presentations. We're not trying to convince someone of something, or sell anyone anything, and we only want to schedule an IAAR study with someone who

is interested. There's no convincing or pushing, it's as simple as "If you're interested ...". If they are, you then have an exciting opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus Christ! If they aren't, just let them know the offer is always open to them, and at least you made the offer.

Some people (many!) will say yes, and some will say no. Pray for both!

Understanding the Offer ...

British prime minister Herbert Asquith once spent a weekend at the Waddesdon estate of the 19th-century Rothschild family. One day, as Asquith was being waited on at teatime by the butler, the following conversation ensued:

"Tea, coffee, or a peach from off the wall, sir?"

"Tea, please," answered Asquith.

"China, India, or Ceylon, sir?" asked the butler.

"China, please."

"Lemon, milk, or cream, sir?"

"Milk, please," replied Asquith.

"Jersey, Hereford, or Shorthorn, sir?" asked the butler.

Life is overflowing with choices to be made; some are easy, some more difficult, some seemingly impossible to make.

Many attempts at evangelism center on putting people in what feels like an impossible decision-making situation for them. A well-meaning but over-zealous disciple verbally pins down a person with a couple of scriptures from the Bible and then challenges them to make a decision for or against "coming to Christ."

A key problem with that scenario is the person that has been cornered likely doesn't understand the full scope of what is being asked of them, and they certainly don't have an understanding of a whole Gospel message. The Christian pushing for a response may have been taught by his or her pastor the "Romans Road" method of witnessing, but what

is missing for most people is enough of the Gospel story for a non-believer to have adequate information and understanding with which to make a real decision.

In the IAAR model for making disciples, we don't push non-Christians to make a decision they are not prepared to make. In fact, the "Offer" part of the process isn't an invitation to "accept Christ," but instead is an offer to learn about Christ by going through the Gospel presentations that comprise the IAAR disciple-making tool.

Sharing the Gospel message in a comprehensive, yet concise manner allows non-Christians to hear the whole message God has for them, and provides them with a complete message with which to make a decision. A whole Gospel message is lacking in most evangelism models, but the push for a response is still strong.

For example, did you know that God offers relationship with Him through a covenant relationship? The average Christian is unable to explain what a "covenant" relationship with God means, or what our covenant with God is. How, then, can we expect a non-Christian to surrender their lives based upon a quick exposure to a couple of scriptures that don't tell the whole story God has provided in the Gospel? The IAAR disciple-making tool provides a more comprehensive sharing of the Gospel, including the concept of "covenant," and this more thorough sharing of the Gospel is a key reason why so many people who have gone through the IAAR presentations have finally responded by surrendering their lives to Jesus Christ.

Another reason is that we only share the IAAR with people who are interested in going through the presentations. That's why we always broach our "Offer" by saying, "If you're interested ..."

"Don't say that! If they're not interested, they'll say no!" some tell us.

Guess what: if they aren't interested, you cannot force

them to be interested!

So we always start our offer by saying, “If you’re interested ...” If they are, they will be more receptive to a full hearing and genuine consideration of the Gospel presentation. If they aren’t, they won’t be open to the message even if they claim to be willing to sit through the IAAR presentations.

When someone says they aren’t interested, we always let them know the offer for going through the IAAR presentations is always open to them, and on several occasions people have come back to us at a later date (sometimes a much later date!) to say they would now like to take us up on our original offer.

So remember, *as we make our way through FO.R.M., “Message” means we are transitioning from the “Engage” element of our process to the “Offer” part of the process where it’s time to make our offer to go through the IAAR presentations.* That’s always our first objective we seek to accomplish. When someone is willing to go through the presentation of the Gospel, we become a simple instrument as the Holy Spirit does a supernatural work with the Word of God in the minds and hearts of those we share with. The outcome belongs to God; our effort is to at least make an offer to everyone we possibly can to hear the Gospel message.

Questions for consideration and/or discussion

1. Why is it important to offer someone an opportunity for a comprehensive presentation of the Gospel instead of sharing just a few key verses and then urge them to make a decision for Christ immediately?
2. The first objective of the IAAR model is to be able to make an offer to go through the IAAR presentation of the Gospel. What should you do if you make the offer and it’s refused?

3. How can a non-Christian respond with understanding to an offer to “accept Christ” if they haven’t heard the Gospel?

4. If you offer a chance to go through the IAAR with someone and they say no, should you try to convince them to change their minds? Why or why not?

Chapter Four

Present

“And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him ... So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, ‘Come back to God!’” – 2 Corinthians 5:18, 20

Few things are as exciting as when we have an opportunity to tell others of the Good News of Jesus Christ! When you get that opportunity, it’s important to tell the whole story.

That’s a key distinguishing factor in effective disciple-making.

When we simply share a couple of select Bible verses and then press someone to make a decision and pray a prayer, we’re often disappointed with a refusal. That’s because we really haven’t presented the life-changing message of the Gospel.

But when we tell a fuller, more comprehensive story, we see people adequately informed and respond in a more thoughtful way. And often with a decision to surrender their lives to Christ!

Following are a few short writings offering an assortment of thoughts on the topic of “Present.”

More Than A Friendly Diplomat ...

“HELP WANTED” are welcome words in today’s econ-

omy. It's also one that fits well regarding the mission of the church, and there is a job opening Jesus is recruiting you for.

The job I'm talking about is being an Ambassador for Christ, a position probably best spotlighted by this writing from the Apostle Paul:

*“And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So **we are Christ's ambassadors**; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, ‘Come back to God!’”* 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.

When we think of the work of an ambassador, we tend to make the cultural mistake of seeing it only like the work of a modern-day ambassador representing one country to others. There certainly are similarities. As an ambassador for Christ, we do represent the King and His kingdom to the world. But there's a little deeper meaning when we consider in *context* the work of an ambassador.

The context in this situation would be what serving as an ambassador would be like during Paul's day. When the apostle penned the word “ambassador,” he knew his readers would immediately know exactly what he meant.

At the time Paul wrote this passage of scripture, there was a *primary* responsibility that fell to the ambassador. As countries waged war, it was the job of the ambassador of the victor nation to go to the defeated nation and, as a personal representative of the king, declare what the terms and conditions for peace were as established by the victorious king.

Romans 5:10 tells us we were enemies of God when we lived in sin. But Jesus Christ defeated sin and death and is the vanquishing King! Now, He enlists us as His ambassadors to declare to those who ~~are~~ still enemies what His terms

and conditions are for peace with God.

“ ... And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him ...”

“ ... God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, ‘Come back to God!’”

The position of ambassador Jesus has delegated to His followers is more than a quiet, boring assignment at some remote outpost. It's to present to the world good news that peace is offered by the King on terms so gracious it would be foolish to rebuff them.

That is the primary task of an ambassador. Jesus has appointed you as His ambassador. Are you proclaiming the terms for peace on behalf of your King?

This Is the Kind of Thinking That Keeps the World Lost and Broken ...

Reading through my Twitter feed yesterday, this tweet from a lady jumped out at me:

“When will the world wake up and realize it needs Jesus?”

Here's what I think the response to such a question has to be: “When will Christians carry out their responsibility to be Christ's ambassadors and share the Gospel message with the world?”

The world is not going to suddenly “wake up” and realize they need Someone that the majority of the seven-plus billion people on this planet have never heard of, and those who have heard something usually haven't heard the *Gospel*. There is a reason that Jesus told His church to GO, into all the world, and MAKE disciples!

“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How³⁴ beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’” Romans 10:14-15.

This particular lady isn't the only one to voice such indignation about the world and suggest people need Jesus. Social media is filled each day with Christians complaining about how disgusting this world is and pondering why people don't wake up to the fact they're lost and Jesus Christ is their only hope.

The reason is because the vast majority of Christians NEVER present the Gospel to anyone! They may know the world needs Jesus, but they don't share the Good News about Christ with the lost people in this world.

But sharing the Gospel, being an ambassador for Christ, being the conduit of God's plea to the world is exactly what EVERY Christian is supposed to do and be ...

“And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, ‘Come back to God!’” 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.

If you REALLY want to see the world find Jesus Christ, go tell the world about Him!

You Won't Need Spray Paint For This ...

Graffiti from the 1800's discovered by workers renovating the Washington Monument has very different tone and substance from that usually found today on the sides of buildings and subway cars.

The graffiti on the Washington Monument states: “Whoever is the human instrument under God in the conversion of one soul, erects a monument to his own memory and more lofty and enduring (sic) than this.” The inscription is signed by “BFB” and can now be viewed by visitors to the monument.

With everyone we come across in life, we leave a mark. With some, it's more like graffiti, only not of the eloquent nature. With others, it's the words of a witness and can be life-changing.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere --- in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth,” Acts 1:8.

It was Jesus' intent that we scrawl a witness across the lives of people we encounter so that they may all hear His good news and be saved.

Are you a witness?

Are you telling everyone, everywhere, about Jesus Christ?

What are you writing onto the lives of the people who cross your path?

If Hell Could Speak ...

Too few Christians today know anything of the courage and boldness the likes of the Apostle Paul ...

“For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile,” Romans 1:16.

We've become so afraid of offending someone with the Gospel, we either don't share it, or we change it to the point it's unrecognizable. Being “culturally relevant” is the flawed reasoning given for our failure to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

It's a lousy excuse.

If someone could speak to us from the perspective of suffering the hellish circumstance of life without God, what would they say?

Someone has done just that.

In Luke 16, we read the story of a rich man and a poor man ...

“Jesus said, ‘There was a certain rich man who was splendidly clothed in purple and fine linen and who lived each day in luxury. At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus who was covered with sores. As Lazarus lay there longing for scraps from the rich man’s table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores. Finally, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, and his soul went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Abraham in the far distance with Lazarus at his side’,” Luke 16:19-23.

The first thing the rich man does is plead for the formerly poor man, Lazarus, to come to him and place just a drop of water on his tongue. After being refused the slightest easing of his torment, the rich man, in his agony, makes one more plea.

“Then the rich man said, ‘Please, Father Abraham, at least send him to my father’s home. For I have five brothers, and I want him to warn them so they don’t end up in this place of torment’,” Luke 16:27-28.

This anguished soul begs that others be warned so they may escape the eternal agony he was suffering. If hell could speak, it would plead for us to preach the Gospel!

Warn them!

That’s exactly what Paul did with great courage and boldness. The apostle lays out for us his mission statement in Colossians 1:28-29:

“So we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ. That’s why I work and struggle so hard, depending on Christ’s mighty power that works within me.”

If the example of the great ministry of Paul isn’t enough to motivate us to present the Gospel, then perhaps we should listen to that voice that speaks from hellish experience.

Warn them!

Tell Them His Name!

Talking about a friend of his, Paul Newsham once told a story that relates how the Holy Spirit keeps a testimony in different cultures.

A missionary went to an African tribe that had had little contact with white people. When he arrived, they were in the middle of a ceremony which was remarkably like our Communion. Because he was a linguist, he was able to understand a lot of what was said. When they got to the end of the ceremony they said, “We do this in memory of him whose name we cannot remember.”

At that point, the missionary stood and said, “I want to tell you His name. His name is Jesus!”

The Holy Spirit continues to testify of Jesus Christ in the lives of people, but they need to know His name.

Tell them His name!

“There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved,” Acts 4:12.

“Therefore, God elevated Him to the place of highest honor and gave Him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father;” Philipians 2:9-11.

It’s one thing for the Gospel to be *demonstrated* in our lives, but we still need to *tell* others the name of the One we serve who can save their souls.

Tell them His name!

Troubleshooting the Gospel ...

I’ve been so delighted with the quality of function with my MacBook Pro I don’t ever want to go back to using a PC!

It’s been a nice experience being able to use a computer

without having to fight it just to get it to function properly.

However ...

... I have run across my first problem with this laptop.

I was able to salvage some documents and photos onto a disc from an almost dead PC. I was so happy I had been able to save the data! So I inserted the disc into the disc drive on my laptop ... and it kicked it right back out.

I tried again, with the same result.

I tried a few more times, always with the disc being immediately rejected.

So I tried a few *different* discs in the drive to see if the problem was with the disc or the laptop. With each attempt, every disc was ejected.

The problem wasn't with the disc, the problem is in the laptop.

That incident made me think about how some people reject the Gospel. It often is not an issue of the source of the message or how it's delivered, *it's the message itself that's being rejected*. Even so, many churches try so hard to change up how and who delivers the message in an attempt to make it more appealing that the message itself suffers.

The problem is not the content of the Gospel message, but with the unreceptive minds and hearts of some who hear. No matter how you may try to package the message of Christ, there are some who will always reject Him.

"The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God," 1 Corinthians 1:18.

Don't make the mistake of trying to tweak the Gospel to make it more palatable to some. You cannot improve on the work of Christ. You cannot make grace any more wondrous and beautiful than it already is. All you can do is present it and demonstrate it.

What makes using the IAAR tool such an effective means of presenting the Gospel?

There's a lot to be said for organization. Without it, our lives, families, businesses, even ministries and their missions, can become so haphazard that we're unable to accomplish much due to our lack of organization.

Isaac Asimov shared the following story in his book, *"Book of Facts"*:

"Historians have related the heartwarming story of Abdul Kassem Ismael, the scholarly grand-vizier of Persia in the tenth century, and his library of 117,000 volumes. On his many travels as a warrior and statesman, he never parted with his beloved books. They were carried about by 400 camels trained to walk in alphabetical order. His camel-driver librarians could put their hands instantly on any book their master asked for."

That might be taking organization to the extreme, but good organization can achieve great results!

That is what we have discovered to be the case with the disciple-making tool called *"It's All About Relationship"* (IAAR). While someone might be tempted to immediately think of a printed means of sharing the Gospel as a "canned" evangelistic tool, the development of the IAAR has proven to be a highly effective way of organizing the essential components of the Gospel in a way that the Good News can be shared in a comprehensive, yet concise manner and be easily understood by those it is presented to. The result of this organization has been thousands of people around the world coming into a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ in response to going through the presentations that make up the IAAR.

Along with organizing how we present our message of Good News, here are a few ⁴⁴more strengths you'll discover

about using the IAAR to make disciples:

- We always use a relational approach in extending invitations to go through the IAAR, which means we only share this disciple-making tool with people who are interested in going through it. Our relational approach also helps build interest in going through the presentations!
- The IAAR is actually structured to create relationship since we are meeting with people on four different occasions for four presentations. Most presentations are conducted in the homes of those who are interested; the opportunity to visit someone's home on four different occasions lends itself to relationship-building.
- Since we are sharing a more comprehensive (but still concise) presentation of the Gospel over four weeks, using the IAAR provides a patient approach of sharing the Good News with people. This relational approach doesn't try to force someone to make a decision or do something they're not ready for or don't understand adequately.
- The relational approach of presenting the IAAR is respectful to the people we share it with. We aren't providing them with just a "sliver" of the Gospel and expecting them to "get it," then make a life-changing decision on the spot. Instead, the organization of the material provides for a more comprehensive presentation of the Gospel. And, by leaving a copy of each week's presentation with those we share with, they have the time and opportunity to absorb what you've shared with them between presentations. That's why so many people who have gone through the IAAR have made more sure, more informed responses to the Gospel message.

- By organizing our message, we always have a known starting and ending point, and we know what content we'll be sharing in-between. That helps us make sure we don't forget to include any of the essential components of the Gospel message. It also means we don't have to memorize a comprehensive presentation, but have the scriptures along with helpful visuals to use in every presentation.
- This organization of our message means we don't have to rely on having a dynamic personality, we don't have to have great memories, be Bible scholars, be aggressive and skilled debaters, or long-time Christians with decades of Bible study knowledge. We just need to share the message as we've organized it!

Another benefit of using the IAAR as a disciple-making tool is that *you're always prepared to make a disciple!* It can be shared with the many people you already know (family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, associates, acquaintances, and many others) and our relational approach has been very effective at creating *opportunities* with people you've just met and may have known for less than an hour.

These are some of the key characteristics of the IAAR that distinguish it from being just a simple "evangelistic tool" to being an organized and highly effective disciple-making tool.

Questions for consideration and/or discussion

1. Augustine has been credited as saying, “Preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words.” A lot of emphasis in the church today is on “living out” our message. Do you see a weakness in Augustine’s philosophy?
2. Have you ever presented the Gospel to someone? If so, how did you do it?
3. How would you summarize the content of each of the four presentations comprising the IAAR disciple-making tool?
4. What are some of the benefits of using a printed tool like the IAAR to present the Gospel?
5. If you didn’t use a printed disciple-making tool to present the Gospel message, how would you make sure you included all the essential elements of the Gospel?

Chapter Five

Baptize

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” – Matthew 28:19

As disciple-makers, we gain direction about our assignment from the Great Commission that Jesus provided to His church. In Matthew 28:18-20, we see three distinct steps: (1) Go *make* disciples, and then (2) *baptize* them, and (3) *teach* them to observe everything He taught.

This helps us answer the question, “Now that I’ve made a disciple, what do I do with him?!” The first step is to baptize them.

While this instruction from Jesus is so simple, baptism has been discussed, debated, and argued about until this day. Our purpose here isn’t to generate a new debate about baptism, but to provide a simple study of it. To do that, we’re sharing with you a concise look at baptism provided by pastor Gene Rogers.

A Look At Christian Baptism ...

Christian baptism is referred to in New Testament scripture by several terms. In Titus 3:5 it is called a “washing of regeneration.” In Acts 22:16 it is characterized as a washing when Ananias exhorts Paul to “rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name.” In Ephesians 5:26 Paul spoke of the church as having been cleansed “by the washing

of water with the word.” Many take the declaration of Jesus in John 3:5, where He calls for a birth of “water and spirit” to mean Christian baptism when speaking of water.

The word *baptism* is not an English word at all. It is an anglicized form of the Greek word *baptizo*. In fact, it is the transliteration of this Greek word. As you can see, all that has been done to the Greek word has been to add an English ending to it. When the Greek word *baptizo* is translated into English, it translates “to dip,” “immerse,” “sink,” “overwhelm,” or “plunge.” The word as used in the language of the New Testament refers to the initiatory act entered into by converts wherein they are immersed in water.

Baptizing disciples as an initiatory rite was employed by many others prior to its use by Christ and His disciples. Jesus’ forerunner, John the Baptist, had baptized those who came to repent of their sins. For many years before that the Jews had baptized gentile proselytes to Judaism. As a matter of fact, baptism as an initiatory rite was used by various religions all over the Mediterranean world for some time, even before the advent of Christianity. It was particularly used by those religions and cults that are referred to as the “mystery religions.” It is easy to see, therefore, that baptism had become a commonly accepted means of expressing a departure from a former way of life and an initiation into one altogether new.

As He had often done, God took a commonplace practice, sanctified it, and gave it a significance that it never had before. He took the commonplace practice of baptism and made of it the means of one declaring his Christian discipleship and entrance into the kingdom of God.

BAPTISM – OF GOD OR OF MAN?

In Matthew 21:25 the chief ⁴⁴priests and elders of the people came to Jesus questioning His authority to do some of

the things that He had done. They wanted to know by what authority He was doing them. He told them that He would tell them if they would answer a question for Him. The question was, "The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or from man?" If it came from man, then one is certainly left to do with it as he pleases. He can take it or leave it, and if he takes it, he can subscribe to whatever mode he may personally choose. But if it is from God, one must receive it as God gave it and must enter into it as He has prescribed.

We are living in a day when baptism has been relegated to a "take it or leave it" or "do it however you want to" matter of mere human whim. But, if it came from God, we must receive it as He has given it to us or we must discard a good portion of New Testament scripture, which is devoted to directing us in this observance.

Baptism is indeed ordained of God. It is one of the things commanded by our Lord Jesus in His great commission, when in His final words He said, "*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*" Matthew 28:19. Baptism is the one thing alone that is to be done in the name of all three, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

There is no mistaking the place of importance baptism held among the first Christians. The account of the infant church, as recorded in the book of Acts, witnesses to its importance repeatedly. In every clear-cut example of conversion cited in the book of Acts, and there are nine or more of them; baptism is called for in every instance. Whenever you read of one coming to faith in the Lord Jesus, they are almost immediately baptized (cf. Acts 2:38; 8:36-38; 10:47; 16:14; 15; 16:33).

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

In considering Christian⁴⁶ baptism, one of the most im-

portant questions to be considered is, “Who should be baptized?” This has been a subject of debate for centuries, but it need not have been, for the scriptures are quite clear on the matter.

In the first place, *disciples* should be baptized. Let us go back again to Jesus’ great commission in Matthew 28:19 where He says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...” Do you see what Jesus is saying there? He is saying make disciples and then baptize those disciples. In order to understand who should be baptized, we must ask, “Who is a disciple?” A disciple is a “learner” or “follower”; one who has been taught and has begun to follow the teaching, or teacher, or both. Therefore, one is a candidate for Christian baptism who has first been taught the gospel and has subsequently decided to follow Jesus as the way of life. This would exclude certain groups of being baptized. For one, it would exclude babies, for they cannot be disciplined or taught. For another, it would exclude those who have never heard the gospel, for they too have not been disciplined or taught. And, it would exclude those whose mental ability prohibits learning.

In the second place, those who believe should be baptized. In Mark 16:126 Jesus said, “*He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*” There have often been those who have wondered why Jesus did not say “But he who does not believe and is not baptized will be condemned.” The solution to such a quandary is simple. Jesus is pointing out that baptism is a means of expressing one’s faith and if one is faithless the act is meaningless. Therefore, if one does not believe, there is no need to consider being baptized. He will be condemned on the basis of his unbelief, not his failure to be baptized. It is as one believes in the Lord Jesus Christ that he proceeds to express that faith in Christian baptism. This is clearly seen

in the account of the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch in

Acts 8 where, after having heard the good news of Jesus, and having come to water, he asked to be baptized. In verse 37 Phillip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." It is obvious that Philip was not going to baptize the Eunuch until he was sure that he had faith, that he believed,

In the third place, Christian baptism is to be administered to those who believe with all their heart. Look again to the account of the conversion of the Ethiopian. Philip told him he could be baptized if he believed with all his heart. Baptism is for those who believe with all their heart.

That is, one must believe in Jesus and His gospel with the whole of one's intellect, emotion and will – with his entire being. Paul said in Romans 10:9-10, *"If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved."*

There are many people who have, in the name of Christian baptism, been dipped in water without having been taught the Gospel and consequently without having come to faith in Jesus Christ.

There are those, who, on occasion, laden with problems, have attended a worship hour hoping to find some solution to those problems. When the invitation to receive Christ was extended at the close of the hour, being unfamiliar with the meaning or purpose of it, they responded thinking that this might be the means of finding a solution to their pressing problem. Before they really understood what was going on, they found themselves mumbling some words about Jesus and being dipped in a pool of water, after which everyone began calling them "brother." All this can and has happened to many persons without their having either heard the gospel or having come to faith in Jesus Christ.

There are children who have gone to the front of the

sanctuary with their parents as their parents went through the formality of transferring their membership from one congregation to another. It was noted that the children were not transferring their membership. They hadn't become Christians yet. So they were quickly asked to repeat some words, which for all practical purposes, were meaningless to them at the time, and they were dipped in water and declared to be Christians, members of the Church of the Lord Jesus. All this happened to them without their having been discipled and without their having come to personal faith in Jesus Christ. You might say this was an attempt to save them by "piggy-backing" on the back of their parents.

Others have been in attendance at a moving camp vesper or youth rally where many around them were outwardly moved to make a decision for Christ. They didn't want to remain seated and appear odd so they joined the group. They said some words about Jesus and were hastily dipped in water without having been discipled or having come to personal faith in Jesus.

All of these illustrate what has all too often been done in the name of Christian baptism but which in reality has amounted to nothing more than a mere dipping in water. Christian baptism must be the (1) faith-response of one who has been taught the gospel of Jesus Christ, (2) has come to personal faith in Him, and (3) is committed to following Him in faithful discipleship. Anything less than this is not Christian baptism.

Very often the New Testament epistles call upon believers to look back in remembrance to their baptism. Baptism must be something one is able to remember. After having entered into it there must be something to recall at a later date. It must be an expression of a faith that grips the heart and moves one to determine to follow Jesus Christ till death.

THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

Now that we have given consideration to who should be baptized, let us devote the remainder of this study to the meaning of Christian baptism.

1. First of all we may learn a great deal about the meaning of Christian baptism by looking to the baptism of Jesus. His baptism obviously meant at least two things for Him: (1) It was a point of departure from the past and (2) it was a launching out into the altogether new. Until His baptism, Jesus had lived in a home in Nazareth of Galilee with His mother, three brothers and His sisters. In all probability, He was the head of the household, being the elder brother. When He came to Jordan to be baptized by John, this became a point of departure from His life in the Nazareth home and launched Him out into an altogether new and different life – the life of an Itinerant preacher. Baptism must have this same meaning in it for everyone who would enter into it. It must serve as a point of departure from one's past and entrance into an altogether new and different life. It must mean a break with the past and an entrance into life where all begins to become new.
2. In the second place, baptism is a means of declaring one's faith in Jesus Christ and His Gospel. There is nothing that God requires of man that more beautifully portrays the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ than the believer's baptism. It is in baptism that one declares his belief that Jesus died for his sins, entered into death for him, was raised victoriously and triumphantly over death as the first fruits from the

dead, and shall in due time, call him to share in that resurrection.

3. In the third place, Christian baptism is the means of bringing us into union with Christ and His body the church. In Romans 6:5 we are told that it is by means of baptism that “we have been united with him in a resurrection like his.” In Galatians 3:27 we are told that it is by baptism that we “put on Christ,” when Paul says, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” And as we are brought into union with Christ the Head we are also brought into union with His body the church. In I Corinthians 12:13 we read, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.”
4. Baptism is our pledge of loyalty to Jesus. In 1 Peter 3:21 we read, “*Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*” The word “appeal” in this passage could well be translated “pledge.” It is the Greek word *eperotema* or the Latin word *stipulatio*. It is a technical business and legal word. In every business contract drawn up during New Testament times there was a definite question and answer which made the contract legal and binding. The individual was asked, “Do you accept the terms of this contract and bind yourself to observe them?” And if the individual did, this answer before witnesses was “yes.” Without such a question and an ensuing answer, no contract was binding. Baptism becomes the culmination point in the development of our faith where we are faced with God’s question,

“Do you receive my Son as your Lord and Savior,

and do you accept the conditions of my service with all its privileges and responsibilities and with all of its promises and demands?” And as we accept God’s terms, we declare our “yes” in Christian baptism whereupon God is bound to fulfill His side of the covenant as we declare intention of fulfilling ours.

5. Baptism is a starting point from where we begin to build our Christian life and to which we look back for a frame of reference for the duration of that life. We human beings are earth bound enough to need a starting point, a place to begin. In all the important adventures of life there is the need of a starting point. For example, in marriage there needs to be a starting point from where married life starts. Be it very elaborate or ever so simple, there is a need for this. And from this point, two people proceed to build their wedded life together.

We need just such a starting point in our Christian life. And thank God He has made provision for us to have it in one of the most beautiful and meaningful experiences that one could hope for – Christian Baptism.

Baptism Presented in the IAAR ...

The topic of baptism comprises a simple one-page presentation in the “*It’s All About Relationship*” disciple-making tool. With just a little commentary, the focus is to present what the Bible says about baptism by reading scripture passages on the subject.

That’s where most debate about baptism begins ... by debating *opinions* rather than opening our *Bibles* and actually reading what the Word of God states about baptism.

Below are the five Bible verses relating to baptism that are in the IAAR one-page presentation on this topic. Take a moment to read each verse on the left, then on the right, write in your understanding of what the scripture actually states.

Scripture	Your Understanding of the Scripture
<p>“Jesus came and told his disciples, ‘I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit’,” Matthew</p>	
<p>“And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” 1</p>	
<p>“What are you waiting for? Get up and be baptized. Have your sins washed away by calling on the name of the Lord,” Acts 22:16</p>	
<p>“And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes,” Galatians 3:27</p>	
<p>“Peter replied, ‘Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’,” Acts 2:38</p>	

Questions for consideration and/or discussion

1. Have you been baptized? Why or why not?
2. Is baptism something commanded for us to do, or something optional for individuals to decide about personally?
3. As you read the verses relating to baptism that are in the IAAR and noted your understanding of them, what are some of the things you learned about baptism just from reading the scriptures?
4. Who should be baptized? What is the meaning of baptism?

Chapter Six

Establish

*“Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands
I have given you ...” – Matthew 28:20a*

When a baby is first born in a hospital, you don’t smile at them, pat them on the head, and say “Good luck!” and then walk off and leave them on their own. They need care, support, nurture, food, and much more.

The same is true when someone is born again. A new believer needs to be established in their new-found faith with the nurture of God’s Word, and the discipling nurture of Christian fellowship.

Following are a few short writings offering an assortment of thoughts on the topic of “Establish.”

Getting Past the Door ...

A little boy constantly fell out of bed. No matter what his parents did, the boy couldn’t sleep without rolling out of bed. An uncle came to visit and in the middle of the night the usual thump and cry was heard. In the morning the uncle teased the boy and asked him why he fell out so often. The little fellow thought for a moment and then said, “I don’t know, unless it’s because I stay too close to the place where I get in.”

This story highlights our individual need for discipleship.

Many who enter into a New Covenant relationship with

Jesus Christ struggle with falling back into former life patterns. Why? Because they stay too close to the place where they got in; they need to go and grow in Christ. They need to move past the “door,” and walk the Way with the One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6).

When we become new disciples of Christ, we need that teaching experience which Jesus instructed every disciple to have when He commissioned the church:

“Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you,” Matthew 28:20a.

Disciples are to be taught how to take on both the character and skills of Christ, so that we become like the One we’re following.

“Students are not greater than their teacher. But the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher,” Luke 6:40.

As disciples of Jesus, we should be in a discipling relationship with a seasoned saint so we can learn to become more like Christ; or, we should be discipling new disciples. Better yet, *we should be doing both!* As we are walking the Way with Christ, learning to become like Him, we should be sharing the Good News with others and discipling those we introduce to Jesus.

To be like our Lord, we need to be disciples who are making disciples.

Are you learning and growing as a disciple of Christ, or are you hanging around the entry point, failing to venture into the Way with Jesus? Are you sharing Christ with others, and discipling those who join you in the journey on the Way?

First Church of IKEA ...

Processes don’t disciple people, people do.

In today’s church, we ask, “What process is in place to disciple new believers?” The question should be, “*WHO* is in place to disciple new believers?”

Leaving discipleship to a “process” is to establish a do-it-yourself system of discipleship; you lay out a process, and leave the new disciple to move themselves along to spiritual maturity.

There is no question that discipleship requires, and begins with, the new believer taking the *personal responsibility* to grow in Christ. But Jesus Christ gave the Church --- more specifically, its leaders --- the responsibility for *doing the work* of discipling those new believers in the faith:

“Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. 13 This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ,” Ephesians 4:11-13.

Our churches are full of slick processes, but they aren’t full of mature disciples. That’s because we’ve replaced *disciplers* with *processes*, and reap the empty reward of doing so.

Do you have spiritually mature people ready to come alongside every believer in your congregation to disciple them to spiritual maturity? If not, you’re either relying on a process, or ignoring discipleship altogether.

Being A Disciple Is More Than Discipling ...

Words can’t express the joy I feel in seeing the topic of discipleship becoming increasingly important (and discussed more frequently) in the church. But as we engage more in talking about discipleship, sometimes we make it a little too simplistic.

Sometimes we see discipleship described only in terms of the evangelistic mission of *making new* disciples, and often it’s spoken of in terms of one who *disciples* new believers.

But there's more to being a disciple than either of these two aspects of making *other* disciples. That's why scripture describes discipleship from a "big picture" point of view, showing us what it means for us to *be* a disciple, with the idea of what a disciple *does* will flow from our new being as a Christ follower.

To understand this better, look closely at Colossians 3:10, "*Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like Him.*"

Discipleship is our becoming alive in Christ. In this new life, we put on an entirely new nature, something we need to do every day as we walk with God. And as we walk with God each day, he continues to renew or transform us. During this life-long experience, we continuously are learning about God and becoming more and more like Him.

It's because we put on this new nature ...

It's because we are being renewed ...

It's because we are learning to know our Creator ...

It's because we are becoming more like Him ...

... that we share the Gospel with others to make new disciples, and then disciple them in the Way of Christ.

Discipleship starts with *being* a disciple who puts on that new nature, continues to be changed, continues to learn and grow, and because we are becoming more like our Savior, we increasingly think, feel, and act like Him.

Our "doing" flows from our new "being."

Part of the problem we see in some discipleship efforts today is trying to force the "doing" without first experiencing the "being." You cannot do the work of a disciple with the power of God without first *being* a disciple.

So if you really want to be a disciple of Christ, what should you do?

"Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like Him," Colossians

3:10.

That's A Little Freaky ...

I'm a freak.

I am one of those people who actually enjoyed more than a decade of higher education. I could easily be a *perpetual* student, but I couldn't be a *professional* one.

While pursuing three different degrees, I relished the learning environment. I thrived on digging into books, soaking in lectures, participating in discussions, conducting research, articulating positions in writing, serving an internship, and all the various means of challenging one to think, learn, and grow.

But the reason I enjoyed being a student was primarily because of the opportunity to put to use what I learned. Whether it was to improve myself, or in service to others (it was both), my educational pursuits were connected to a purpose greater than simple theoretical exercise.

That's why I couldn't be a professional student. To simply bury myself in study for the sake of the intellectual exercise alone is empty. Knowledge and understanding are intended to have meaning through application. Applying the understanding one has developed by growing in knowledge is the difference between the perpetual student and the professional student.

It's also the difference between being a disciple and being a professional student.

As disciples, we're perpetual students of Christ, but with the intent that we apply to our lives all that we are learning. The Apostle Paul described this kind of discipleship for us:

"So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know

God better and better;” Colossians 1:9-10.

Paul describes learning as a means of personal growth that yields fruit. Growing in knowledge should lead to greater understanding and wisdom, and the application of such resulting in producing “... *every kind of good fruit.*” That’s why Paul put such a great emphasis on application when he wrote, “*Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me — everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you,*” Philippians 4:9.

The Apostle Peter echoes Paul in encouraging us to be students who apply what we learn.

“Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” 2 Peter 3:18.

It is possible to grow in knowledge through book learning, but you cannot grow in grace that way. To grow in grace requires us to imitate Christ, to live out in all our relationships what we have both received from and learned of Him. Growing as a disciple is living out one’s learning, becoming wiser not only in our thinking but also in our doing, until both become more and more like the One we are students of. Peter urges us to become “freaks,” disciples who “crave” this kind of learning.

“Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, now that you have had a taste of the Lord’s kindness,” 1 Peter 2:2.

What kind of student are you? Are you a lurker, one who looks at the things of Christ without applying them? Or a learner, a student of Christ who puts into practice all that he or she learns? Or are you a student at all?

Living the Undeveloped Life ...

As a kid, did you ever have a teacher who had the habit of asking a lot of questions and randomly calling on students

for answers?

Yeah, I did, too.

So you've probably also experienced that time when the teacher asks something you have no idea about. As the teacher begins to call on students for answers, you're panicking inside and saying to yourself, "Please don't call on me! Please don't call on me! Please don't call on me!"

That's when the teacher calls on you ...

A lot of us are happier when we can just fade into the background, when we can observe without being noticed, certainly without being singled out.

That's how a lot of us "do church" together.

We're willing to sit in, and we might even be interested in what's going on, but we don't want to be called on. We don't want anyone to see what we really don't know, what we really don't understand, or just how ignorant we are when it comes to the Bible or the truth about following Jesus.

Here's the problem with that: just sitting in leaves you undeveloped.

Being a disciple --- one who is a student or learner of Jesus --- requires engagement in order to develop.

"As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend,"
Proverbs 27:17.

As a Christian, are you stagnating or regressing spiritually because you're just sitting in? Or are you making yourself vulnerable so you can develop as a disciple?

You Cannot Make A Difference Without Being Different ...

"The world is watching to see whether Christians really are different or not." – Alistair Begg.

That truth from pastor Alistair Begg is opposite of what we have heard from too many pastors for far too long. *Embracing* culture instead of *engaging* it, too many leaders have pressured the people of their congregations to look and live

like the world, and have led the way by insisting on offering services that mimic culture.

But when someone steps out of their broken cultural norms to look for truth among the church, they don't want --- and will not benefit from --- a church that is a mirror image of society.

Without the Gospel of Jesus Christ, lived fully in a counter-cultural openness, the church has nothing of lasting benefit to offer the world.

“Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect,” Romans 12:2.

“I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world,” John 17:14-18.

“You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God,” James 4:4.

“Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret,” Ephesians 5:10-12.

“The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you,” John 15:19.

Be different!

“Imitate God, therefore, ~~in~~ everything you do, because

you are his dear children,” Ephesians 5:1.

“For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps,” 1 Peter 2:21.

Is Culture-Making Supplanting the Mind of Christ?

In today’s church, we’ve seen a dramatic shift in the role of church leaders to that of being “culture makers.”

From their own statements, they strive to create a culture of compassion, a culture of service, a culture of caring, a culture of ...

Many of them are striving to create some well-intentioned “cultures,” but that as a *focus* could be their problem. Many of them are trying to create a “*culture*” of following Christ from the outside-in instead of that occurring from a transformation of the person from the inside out.

When you ignore, or de-emphasize discipleship and the work of the Holy Spirit, which is the natural or “organic” means of spiritual growth, the result is you do not have the fruit of the Spirit growing and manifesting itself naturally from followers of Christ. So you’re left with attempting to create an artificial environment --- or creating a “culture.”

The Apostle Paul wrote the following:

“When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit’s words to explain spiritual truths. But people who aren’t spiritual can’t receive these truths from God’s Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can’t understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means. Those who are spiritual can evaluate all things, but they themselves cannot be evaluated by others. For, ‘Who can know the LORD’s thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him?’ But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ,” 1 Corinthians 2:13-16.

Where there are genuine followers of Christ who “... have the mind of Christ,” you will find Christians who think and act as Christ would. You don’t have to create an external “culture” to simulate authentic biblical Christianity because the Holy Spirit is generating the real thing from the inside out.

Too often, leaders attempt to construct the outward manifestation of following Christ rather than focus on the inside-out approach of life transformation. That’s why many churches have scores of programs that function as an external effort to do what should come naturally if only more people possessed the “mind of Christ.”

Deeply engrained in secular culture --- and taught broadly within the church as well --- is the idea that we should do what we want to become (act it out), and eventually reality will catch up with us.

It doesn’t quite work that way in God’s kingdom.

Jesus spoke to this issue rather bluntly:

*“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy — full of greed and self-indulgence! You blind Pharisee! **First wash the inside of the cup and the dish, and then the outside will become clean, too,**” Matthew 23:25-26.*

In the church today, we’ve reversed this teaching of Jesus to be “First have a clean looking, appealing cup on the outside [a culture], and some way the inside will become clean, too.” We’re content with acting out some of the external attributes of following Christ without transformation occurring internally.

But imagine what could happen if we reversed that and applied to our lives what scripture actually teaches. Imagine a church where the focus of the “leadership” was that of discipling new believers and equipping them in the Word of

God. Imagine a church where every member was moved and

motivated by the Holy Spirit in them, who taught them the way of all truth (John 16:13)? Imagine a church where the members lived lives fully expressing the Christ who dwells in them.

Imagine a church where a simulation of following Christ from the outside-in was replaced with an authentic transformation from the inside out.

The church becomes more biblically authentic when we apply ourselves to focused discipleship that enables us to have the mind of Christ rather than creating an external culture to mask our spiritual deficiencies.

Perhaps, then, our “culture” should be that of disciple-making.

Questions for consideration and/or discussion

1. What did Jesus mean when He said, “*Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you*”?
2. What is the difference between *making a disciple* and *discipling* someone?
3. What is the purpose and value of becoming established in your faith as a new disciple?
4. What are the possible dangers to a new disciple who lives an “undeveloped” life?
5. What are some reasons a Christian may want to live an “undeveloped” life?
6. Explain this statement: “Our *doing* flows from our *being*.”

7. In what way does the Apostle Peter want us to be a “freak”?
8. How is it possible to “make a difference” if you aren’t different?
9. Should a Christian *want* to be different from others? How so? Why?
10. What is meant by “culture-making” in the church?

Chapter Seven

Equip

“Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.” – Ephesians 4:11-12

The Bible verses above tells us that one of the most important responsibilities of church leaders is to equip the saints for ministry. Unfortunately, this isn’t being done in most churches. The average Christian has never been equipped to know how to share the Gospel with a non-Christian. What more basic equipping is needed for an ambassador of Christ?

If leaders are not equipping the saints to be effective disciple-makers, what are they doing? How do they expect Christians to do the work of making disciples if they are untrained?

Following are a few short writings offering an assortment of thoughts on the topic of “Equip.”

CPR and an AED Can’t Do This ...

Every two years I have to renew my CPR/AED certification. So I spent yesterday evening with a CPR dummy, honing my skills to the revised CPR standards.

CPR/AED training is one part of my education I hope I never have to use.

I wouldn’t hesitate in helping someone with a medical

emergency, my concern is making sure I remember how to apply assistance correctly so as to be able to help someone. Would I apply the compressions correctly? Not too hard to try to avoid breaking ribs. Hard enough and fast enough to keep the blood flowing. Now that's 30 compressions followed by two breaths ...

And using an AED? That would be a shocking experience for more than the patient!

I've never had to use these critical skills, and I hope I don't come across a situation where I have to.

I have, however, spent much of my adult life studying and training to help others in critical need. Their problem isn't a medical emergency, but a spiritual one. I've never come across someone experiencing a heart attack or cardiac arrest in public, but we are all continuously crossing paths with people who are already spiritually dead.

There's a treatment for that.

You can learn and apply it.

It's called the Good News of Jesus Christ.

That's right, by applying this treatment, the spiritually dead can have life. Not the old life that led them to their condition, but a whole new life created in Christ.

But these spiritually dead people need someone to see their condition and apply the treatment.

Surely you wouldn't walk by someone having a heart attack in public ... right?

Surely you wouldn't walk by someone dead in their sins ... right?

Get equipped. Learn how to concisely and clearly share the Gospel with another person. Then apply to lives in need. It'll make more difference than a CPR course would ever make to you and those you serve.

"But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have

never heard about him? And how can they hear about him

unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, 'How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!'" Romans 10:14-15.

How Do You Play This Game?

Does anyone really understand the sport of cricket?

I was in Melbourne, Australia when the renovation of the cricket stadium was opening and a massive crowd was expected. I had never been to (or even watched) a cricket game and so I thought it would be a great thing to do while in Australia.

To prepare myself, I spoke with a few people at the hotel I was staying at about the game. I asked them if they could explain the sport to me so I could understand it when I went to watch the competition at the stadium.

They could not.

Literally, they looked at each other, fumbled with their words, and finally suggested I ask people at the stadium to explain the game to me.

So I made my way to the stadium and, once seated, asked some people sitting around me if they would explain the sport to me.

They could not.

A few managed to describe a couple aspects about the game, but they finally gave up and suggested I simply watch the competition and learn by observation.

So I did.

The competition started at about 9 a.m. By around noon, I was “getting it” ... a little. But the play continued throughout the afternoon. By 4 p.m. I decided I had enough of cricket (the competition actually continued on until about 6 p.m.!). I had taken in a new Aussie experience, enjoyed my time with the crowd, remained somewhat perplexed by the sport, and still had not found anyone who could really explain the

game to me.

Not a single person!

That may sound odd, until you compare it to how few Christians can tell you what they believe and why.

First Peter 3:15 says, *“Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it.”*

Just like my experience wanting to understand the sport of cricket, there will be people who will want to understand your faith. Are you prepared to give an answer? Or would you find yourself, like my Aussie friends, fumbling for words and give up even trying?

Let me encourage you to prepare yourself with answers to your faith. Think through what you believe and why you believe it, and then simplify that into a cohesive and concise message you can communicate to others. If this preparation seems daunting to you, ask for help from leaders in your church. I am confident you will find help in your church to prepare you to be able to communicate your faith to others.

Being prepared to communicate your faith will make you more confident to do so, and might even motivate you to *look* for opportunities to share.

And the good news? Explaining your faith is a lot easier than explaining the sport of cricket!

Something Is Seriously Wrong ...

What is wrong when someone attends a church for one to 50 years and is never TRAINED how to share the Gospel with other people one-on-one?

What is wrong when church planting organizations send out church planters who have not been thoroughly TRAINED in how to effectively share the Gospel with other people one-on-one, plus how to train those in the church they are trying to plant in how to share the Gospel with the people they know?

What is wrong with a mission agency that sends people all over the world but doesn't insure that those who are sent are thoroughly TRAINED how to share the Gospel with other people one-on-one, plus how to train those in the country they go to how to effectively share the Gospel with the people they know?

What is wrong with a Christian college that spends years educating people for their future life but doesn't attempt to teach or TRAIN those students how to effectively share the Gospel with other people one-on-one, plus how they can train other Christians to do the same?

What is wrong with a Christian ministry or organization that can build staffs, resources, programs, etc., but they don't ever TRAIN that staff how to share the Gospel with other people one-on-one, plus train their staff how to train other Christians how to do the same?

What is wrong with Christian non-profits that do all kinds of nice things, helping all kinds of people in crisis all over the world, but they don't TRAIN their staff how to effectively share the Gospel with people one-on-one, much less train others how to do the same?

What is wrong when we hold or attend national conventions for our leaders and people, and then we have a smorgasbord of all kinds of popular seminars and conferences offered to and attended by preachers and staff members year after year but they don't ever focus on TRAINING people at their events how to share the Gospel with others one-on-one, or how those people can train others to do the same?

Oh, we have classes, preaching, teaching, seminars, and retreats on every subject under the sun ...

How to improve your marriage.

How to manage your finances.

How to deal with all kinds of personal problems.

How to preach better. 74

How to disciple people.

How to “grow” your congregation.
How to use social media.
How to improve your music and worship team.
How to raise more money.
How to manage your staff.
How to, how to, how to, how to, ad infinitum!
It wears me out!
It blows me away!

We have a serious problem!

Okay, some of those offerings are helpful but when we leave out effective, ongoing TRAINING for Christians in how to share the Gospel with others we have a **GIANT BLACK HOLE** in the middle of all we are doing.

There is a renewed emphasis on discipling people going on right now. I listen. I read. And 99 percent of what is talked about is what to do with those who have already become Christians, from spiritual infancy to death.

Yes, I find that winning the lost is briefly addressed. But where is the TRAINING? In the Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28, disciple-making starts with *unbelievers*. Come on!

I remember reading some interviews of some Southern Baptist leaders before one of their national conventions a couple years ago. I so appreciate their honesty and awareness. Three things they said jumped out at me:

1. We have lost our passion for evangelism (and I thought, they aren't alone).
2. Everyone loves talking about it as long as someone else is doing it (and I thought, they aren't alone).
3. Our preachers are not equipping their people how to share the Gospel with the people they know (and I thought, BINGO! You hit it! Congratulations! And again, you aren't alone).

I agree with them on all points. And it applies to more than just them. Now the question is, what are we doing about it?

And I wonder, is anyone listening?

Some might get tired of hearing me (John) address this issue but address it I will, till I die. We have got to turn this around!

The world is waiting for us to get focused on what we are supposed to be doing and what they need. Our work in offering the IAAR training at Hope International University is a bold and important response to this needed training. If you haven't taken the course yet, let's get you signed up! And if you're a graduate of the course, recruit a team from your church and let's get them trained! Just contact me at john.hendee@cox.net.

The World Needs A Simple Man ...

As I write this, it's a wet, rainy day in northern California. A much needed watering in a drought-stricken place. Just the kind of morning to slow down, enjoy the pitter-patter sounds of the falling rain, and warm oneself with a cup of coffee.

A pleasant setting for a simple morning.

The rain often causes people to cancel all sorts of things they intended to do on what has become an inclement Saturday. Funny how many of those things suddenly become not-so-essential, and a rainy Saturday turns into time that a family can enjoy simple things together.

I remember when the greatest challenge of my Saturday mornings was to have a bowl of cereal and a glass of chocolate milk prepared and in front of the television by 6 a.m., ready for a morning of cartoons. It's the one time my parents let me indulge in TV viewing. Following the cartoons would be an old John Wayne "B" western, then it was time to square away my room and get outside for the afternoon.

Such simple things brought a great deal of satisfaction in that moment. Yet, it's often those simple moments we remember as we ponder life's blessings.

That often goes against the flow of what we're taught as adults. There seems to be no limit to the leaders who tell us we should be constantly striving to achieve great things and greatness itself. And if we listen to them, we find ourselves missing the simple, common moments in each day because we become focused on living for only those few big events that might happen in any given year.

We miss much of life when we live that way.

We also fail to achieve so much more when we think we have to make everything a massive attempt at something great. We mistakenly think that weeks of toil to produce a big Sunday show, complete with fog machines and complex productions, is greater than Joe standing out in his driveway praying with a neighbor or Susan sharing the Gospel with a co-worker while on her lunch break. The simple things done throughout the week in the lives of common Christians living out their faith have more impact on the kingdom of God than a man attempting to be great on a Sunday morning.

A good example of this is found in "*Streams of Living Water*," as author Richard Foster tells of Billy Graham preaching at Cambridge back in 1955. For three consecutive nights, Graham tried to make his preaching academic and enlightened, but with no effect. He finally realized that presenting the intellectual side of faith was not his gift, so he returned to preaching the simple message of Jesus rescuing us from our problem with sin. Foster wrote, "The results were astonishing: hundreds of sophisticated students responded to this clear presentation of the gospel. It was a lesson in clarity and simplicity that he never forgot."

God confounds those who would be great among us. He accomplishes more great things through ordinary people liv-

ing simple lives of faithful obedience than men trying to be-

come great. And He makes great the response to a man who stands and shares the Gospel in simple, plain, clear language than to those who lose the Gospel message in the grandeur of a production or complexity of a philosophical debate. To be great, we have to become simple, as simple as a child ...

“Jesus called a little child to him and put the child among them. Then he said, ‘I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven,’” Matthew 18:2-4.

The world doesn't need more men trying to become great. The world needs more simple men.

Are you one of them?

Questions for consideration and/or discussion

1. What value is there in equipping Christians specifically in being able to share the Gospel with non-Christians rather than just “teaching them the Bible” and leaving it to individual Christians to develop their own way to make new disciples?
2. If someone asked you what you believe as a Christian and why, are you equipped to provide an answer? What kind of answer would you give?
3. Why do you think most churches and Christian organizations don't provide any kind of evangelistic training?
4. What impact, if any, do you think churches and Christian organizations would experience if they trained all their members to be able to effectively share the Gospel?

5. How effective do you think it is to depend on non-Christians visiting a church service as a church's method for evangelism?

Chapter Eight

Reproduce

“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.’”

– Matthew 28:18-20

To be a follower of Jesus Christ is to be a disciple-maker.

Now that you’ve come to Christ, are becoming established in your faith, and have been equipped to be an effective ambassador for Christ, it’s time to reproduce the whole process you’ve gone through: *care* about others, *engage* with them, *offer* to share the Gospel with them, *present* the Good News of Jesus to them, *baptize* those who respond in surrender to Jesus, help them become *established* in their faith, and *equip* them to serve with you as an ambassador for Christ!

Following are a few short writings offering an assortment of thoughts on the topic of “Reproduce.”

Batter Up!

It’s the bottom of the ninth.

The bases are loaded.

You’re down by 3 runs, and you are up to bat.

You would really like your team to win, so you swing at

the pitch ...

In that moment, your team needs you because you're the person who has the opportunity to make the greatest difference at that moment.

That baseball scenario is similar to your role in making disciples of Jesus Christ.

The harvest is plentiful.

There are a few billion souls to be saved.

The enemy keeps on lying and leading people astray and he's currently ahead in the head count; now your neighbor asks you a question about your faith.

You are up to bat!

Quite literally, from a disciple-making perspective.

God doesn't *need* us in order to bring the lost to Him, but He has chosen to use us as His instruments in taking His message of reconciliation to the lost ...

*“And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. **And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him.** For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. **And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, ‘Come back to God!’”** 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.*

What do you do? Will you take a swing at the pitch ... will you speak for Christ when there's an opportunity? Or will you just stand there and allow a strike-out because of your passivity?

Batter up!

Christians Should Stop Eating Fish ...

Christians need to stop eating fish.

No, I don't mean the scaly ones you reel in from water. I mean the new disciples you make when fishing for men.

Making disciples has one thing in common with sport

fishing: it's a "catch and release" process.

Sport fishermen revel in the joy of finding and reeling in a fish, then release it back into the waters from which the fish came, and then search for a different fish to catch. Discipleship is supposed to be sharing the Good News with the lost to make new disciples, then releasing them back into their communities so they can join the fishing for lost souls.

However, instead of releasing the new disciples, we entrench them in programs, activities, and various endeavors all in the name of "doing life" together. We're supposed to release them so we can fish together.

Scripture says Jesus came to set the captives free; we tend to grab those freed captives and entangle them in a lot of things other than the purpose for which they were saved.

Are you releasing new disciples to go fishing? Or are you entangling them in the nets of activity?

Does the Church Need A Deadline?

Famous American composer, pianist, and jazz orchestra leader, Duke Ellington, once said, "Without a deadline, baby, I wouldn't do nothing."

Now there's a sentiment many can relate to!

Without a deadline, formal or informal, much of what is needed to be done, or is most beneficial for us, often wouldn't get done. At least, not in a timely way. We're often too busy doing the things we would rather do than the things we should be doing.

Perhaps that's a contributing factor as to why the church is so lackadaisical about its commission by Jesus Christ to go make disciples of the entire world --- there's no date specific for completing the task.

But there is a deadline.

Yes, the return of Jesus Christ is certainly a deadline, simply because time to complete the commission will then have run out. There's also another "natural" deadline, and

that is a certain number of people die each day; their chance to respond to the Gospel message ends with their last breath.

But we never know who will be here today and gone tomorrow, and we don't know when Christ will return. In that case, carrying out the responsibility of making disciples of all nations becomes an urgent mission, to reach with the Gospel today who can be reached before their earthly life expires, or before the Lord returns.

Time is ticking!

Are you acting urgently to be Christ's ambassador to the lost? Is your church urgently sharing the Gospel with your community? Or are you busy doing what you'd rather be doing while time goes by?

Breaking A Sweat ...

Making disciples is a supernatural work. To accomplish this task, it must be God working *through* us.

*“And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. **So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us.** We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!” 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.*

With that said, making disciples isn't something that falls from the sky and just happens. It requires of us work ---*hard work!* The Apostle Paul spoke specifically about this when he laid out his own mission statement in Colossians 1:28-29.

*“So we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ. **That's why I work and struggle so hard,** depending on Christ's mighty power that works within me.”*

Paul's success at being a disciple maker came by pairing

a dependence on the power of Christ working in him with hard work on his own part!

How are you working at reaching the lost for Christ? How are you laboring to be an ambassador who makes disciples?

When Service Becomes Sacrifice ...

What are some of the things you've been supplied with when starting a new job or different position with a company?

A uniform?

Cell phone?

Cubicle or office?

Laptop computer?

Company car?

Business cards?

Tools or equipment?

Apron?

One of the most unique items issued to a beginner must go to American military personnel. When a person enlists in the military, part of their new gear includes "dog tags," that small piece of metal with your personal identification stamped on it worn on a chain around the neck.

Military personnel are issued dog tags in anticipation they may give their lives in the carrying out of their new duties; the dog tags might be needed to help identify the person who gave their life.

Have you ever started something with the anticipation that you may give your life doing it?

You did if you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

When you are adopted by God into His family, you give up your life for a new one. Gone is the old person, he or she has been buried with Christ and you have been raised into a whole new life (Col. 2:12).⁸⁴ This new life is designed, and being equipped, to also be spent in the line of duty, that of an

ambassador for Christ.

The Apostle Paul served God to the point that it cost him his life. Paul encouraged us to have the same faithfulness in our service to God when he wrote, *“But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy,”* Philippians 2:17.

Are you pouring your life out as an ambassador for Christ? Or are you AWOL in the spiritual skirmish for the salvation of souls?

Questions for consideration and/or discussion

1. Why is “Reproduce” a critical element in completing the IAAR model?
2. How can a new disciple freshly equipped to share the Gospel with others begin serving Christ as His ambassador?
3. What would be some of the results if new disciples didn’t carry out the “Reproduce” part of the process?
4. How do we hinder new disciples from being “fishers of men”?
5. Have you ever felt you sacrificed in some way as part of your service to Jesus Christ?

Chapter Nine

What's Next

The process for making disciples is simple. So is learning how to effectively engage with others. And the IAAR provides you with a powerful tool for presenting the Gospel to non-Christians. So now what?

Following are a few short writings offering an assortment of challenges for going forward.

Mountaintop Experience ...

For a while, all of the television talk shows were into “makeover mania.” You could hardly turn on a show that wasn’t featuring someone being “made over.” Sometimes it would be an audience member who would be taken for a “complete makeover” ... new hair style, new wardrobe, new make-up. The frumpy housewife would be taken away and brought back looking a lot less “frumpy.”

In fact, a few shows just about making people (or places!) over came out, to some level of popularity. People liked seeing someone transformed and being so much better looking than when they started.

In that case, people would have loved the transfiguration of Jesus!

Peter, James and John did. Especially Peter. Perhaps too much so!

Matthew 17:1-8 tells the story of Jesus taking Peter, James and John up a high mountain and, once there, Jesus

experienced a “makeover.” Actually, it wasn’t really a makeover because it wasn’t improving on the current, it was the real character busting through the layer of flesh! The passages say that Jesus’ face shined brighter than the sun and His clothes were more brilliant than any earthly launderer could make them. Suddenly, appearing with Him were a couple of heavyweights from the Old Testament --- Moses and Elijah.

Here was Jesus, in a glorified form, standing in the midst of Moses, who represented the Law, and Elijah, who represented the prophets, both from the Old Covenant, with Jesus easily the superior to both as He represented the New Covenant.

It was a true “mountaintop experience” for the three apostles. Peter was especially taken with the experience, as we see in Matthew 17:4, *“Peter exclaimed, ‘Lord, it’s wonderful for us to be here! If you want, I’ll make three shelters as memorials—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’”*

Peter’s outburst reminds me of a commercial I remember seeing as a kid for Kodak film. The commercial showed the cutest little boy playing in a field with the most adorable puppy you’ve ever seen. The two playing together was a heartwarming picture, it just wanted to make you say, “Awww, how cute!” Then suddenly there was a clicking sound like that of a camera shutter when taking a picture, and then an announcer spoke the commercial tag line: “Kodak: because time goes by.”

The idea in the commercial was that this moment of play between the boy and the puppy was so heartwarming and so adorable that you just wanted to capture that moment forever, you never wanted to let something so innocent and beautiful pass. So, hang onto it forever by capturing it in a picture.

Peter wanted to do something like that during this time of Jesus’ transfiguration. He didn’t have a camera, so instead

of taking a picture, he suggested he build three temporary

shelters so they could linger on in that glorious moment, and the shelters would also serve as memorials of the experience.

Peter was so caught up in the “spiritual high” he was missing the lesson of the moment. The mistake he made was putting Moses and Elijah on an equal footing with Jesus, offering to build *three* shelters (or tabernacles) ... one for Jesus, *as well as* one for Moses and one for Elijah. The passage tells us while he was yet speaking God interrupts the scene to correct Peter: “*But even as he spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. Listen to him.’ The disciples were terrified and fell face down on the ground.*”

Peter was so captivated with this mountaintop experience that he wanted to hang onto that moment forever, he wanted to linger there as long as possible, to not let such a significant experience pass.

All of us like the “high” of a mountaintop experience. But what Peter didn’t initially understand was that *mountaintop experiences are just for the moment*, given to us by God to refresh, inspire, and stretch us. *They aren’t a place to stay permanently*. But they are given to us to help us better see Jesus as He is. Once God corrected Peter, the only one they saw was “... *only Jesus*” (v.8).

That’s what mountaintop experiences are for, to help us see “only Jesus.” To clear out the clutter and get focused on Jesus as He is, the glorified, risen Savior. These experiences help motivate us on to where the real ministry is, which is down in the valley, those times off the mountaintop.

Look at verse 14a, “*At the foot of the mountain, a large crowd was waiting for them ...*” The mountaintop was personally inspirational, *but it wasn’t a place for ministry*. But at the bottom of the mountain was a mass of people in need. People who were hurting and suffering. People who needed healing, who needed a Savior

Ministry is in the valley!

God is gracious in giving us mountaintop experiences where we are refreshed, inspired, and see Jesus better. But those times are for the moment, to be appreciated and a part of cherished memories. But real service, real life, real Christianity, real Christlikeness, is in getting off the mountain, down into the valley, and serving those in need.

Are you living in the past? Are you wallowing in the comfort of the status quo with your church, your home group, the heartwarming fellowship you experience? Are you doing everything you can to hang onto the mountaintop experiences of yesterday while avoiding the ministry down in the valley?

Or have you gotten off the mountaintop and into the middle of the need found in the valley?

Ministry is in the valley ... come on down and serve in true Christlikeness!

Excuses, excuses ...

“I’m waiting on the leading of the Lord ...”

That line is one of the biggest excuses uttered by Christians.

Don’t get me wrong, I’m completely in favor of Christians being led by the Lord! However, many Christians use the excuse of supposedly “waiting on the Lord to lead” for them to get up and do anything for Him!

Guess what ... the Lord has “already led!”

If you’re wondering what God would have you do as a Christian, here’s at least one clear leading: “*Therefore, GO and make disciples of all the nations ...*” (Mt. 28:19a). That should keep you busy for a while!

The problem is that too many Christians sit around waiting for God to direct them in some special task. And they sit. And they sit. And they sit!

God may have some specific work for you to do, but He definitely has something for all of His children to do ... **GO!** Get out into this world ... whether it’s your own community,

your region, your state, your country, or off into some far-flung corner of the globe ... but get out there and make some disciples.

GO!

Erwin McManus is the pastor of the church, “Mosaic,” in the Los Angeles area. He has a saying I love: “Go until there’s a no.” If you’re not sure what God would have you do in serving in His kingdom, launch out and do *something* ... go until or unless you get a “no” from God ... and if you do, *then* He will redirect you. But regardless of whatever specific task God may have for you, there’s something we can and should be doing all the time: making disciples.

McManus says at Mosaic, when a Christian comes to join as a member of that local church, they publicly commission the new member as a missionary to the Los Angeles area. I love that idea! After all, making disciples of Jesus Christ in that area would be the responsibility of Christians living in that area. The “commissioning” puts an emphasis and encouragement for the church members to ***GO!*** into their communities and make disciples.

Every week when we gather together, shouldn’t we really be sharing with each other what we’ve been able to do in reaching the lost for Christ? After all, if we’ve gotten out there and lived out our faith, striving to make disciples for Christ, shouldn’t we have some exciting news of making some in-roads among unbelievers?

We really should, shouldn’t we?

But for such things to happen, we have to get beyond ourselves and ***GO!***

GO to work and be a light for Christ so that others will wonder why you’re different, in a good way, and eventually seek what you’ve got.

GO into your community and serve those in need in the name of Christ, loving them ^{as} Christ loves them, so they

will ask about the source of your kindness and generosity

and you have a chance to share the love of Christ with them.

GO into your school ... GO into your friendships ... GO into your own family ... GO next door ... GO down the street ... GO across a room ... just get up and GO! for Christ. You don't need any special "leading" from the Lord in order to get up and **GO!**

Jesus Christ does not have to strike you with a lightning bolt for you to get the clear message that He wants us to GO! ... into our local area, our region, our state, our country, and throughout the world, making disciples.

Some of us will literally go. Some of us will clean out our clutter, pack some bags, and wind up some place on this globe we thought we would never be, doing something we thought we would never do, in order to share Christ with people of another land we never thought we would ever meet. Some of us will become involved in national efforts ... perhaps to start churches, or distribute Bibles, etc. Some of us will become great supporters of missionaries with our prayers and financial resources. Others of us will live out our faith each day among our co-workers and neighbors and others in an effort to make disciples right where we are.

And some of us will sit.

Waiting for the Lord ... "to lead."

What will you do?

Who Wants In?

As the teacher is in the midst of speaking, multiple students are anticipating the question. As soon as she finishes her sentence, more than a dozen arms spring upward with hands waving for attention. They want in on the discussion.

Johnny is barely sitting on the bench. He's been watching the action for most of the game ... for most of the season. Waiting for a chance. The coach turns in his direction and, once again, he pleads. "Put me in the game Coach! Put me in!"

The rising star pushes his chair outside the confines of his cubicle, peering down the aisle to the corner office with the big windows. "One day soon," he again thinks to himself.

The SEAL commander asks for volunteers from among his men. All of his men step forward. He wouldn't have expected anything less.

We all want in on the discussion ... in on the game ... in on where the real action is.

Right?

There's a massive battle waging ... a spiritual warfare. The war has already been won, but the enemy wants to take as many with him as he can before perishing. Jesus wants to save as many *from* perishing as possible. He's looking for those who want to do more than just get into the discussion ... those who want something more than to be a star. He's looking for those who are trying to get into the game, dying to get into the fight.

Who wants in?

"For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost," Luke 19:10.

"For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places." Ephesians 6:12.

"But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, 'How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!'" Romans 10:14-15.

Who wants in?

Questions for consideration and/or discussion

1. Are you sitting in a spiritual comfort zone, day-dreaming about past “mountaintop experiences,” or are you laboring with the Lord in the valley?
2. What excuses do you currently make to keep you from full service and obedience to Jesus Christ?
3. How would your life demonstrate that you want “in the fight?”

Conclusion

The IAAR model isn't the only means of sharing the Gospel with non-Christians. Perhaps you've been taught another model, or even developed your own method, and it's proven to be effective for you in making new disciples.

If so, we say, "Praise God!"

Our goal is to see every Christian trained to be effective at making disciples, not to get hung up on the method used or the model applied.

But over the decades that we have been serving in the church, the IAAR model for making disciples is the most effective model we have seen practiced. Our own experiences of each of us personally leading hundreds to Christ by directly sharing the IAAR presentations has demonstrated to us, personally, the effectiveness of the relational approach, the powerfulness of the IAAR tool, and the overall successfulness of the model and its simple process.

We both have also had the privilege over the years of introducing the model to other churches and have seen by its full implementation how a church can transition from an attractional (or other) model and become a disciple-making church.

I (Dr. Scott) have used the IAAR model to plant a church, and John has personally used it on the mission field. We have seen its effectiveness in a variety of settings and cultures. Both the *model* and the *training* are proven to be fully reproducible and able to be effective by anyone, from the "aver-

age” Christian to evangelists, pastors, church staff, mission agencies and missionaries, and church planters.

To reference just one “success” story, when John was still Minister of Evangelism at Central Christian Church in Mesa, Arizona, the church had one year where 750 new members were added to the congregation in a single year. Hundreds of those new members came to the church through the use of the IAAR model. There are many more stories like this!

Because we know how effective this model and its training can be, John is now training individuals, churches, and organizations in the model through his online “Relational Evangelism” course at Hope International University. If you’re just learning about the IAAR model for making disciples through this book, we want to encourage you to enroll in the online course through HIU. The cost is only \$50 per person. If you have been through the course, we encourage you to practice the “Equip” and “Reproduce” elements of the model by leading others to become equipped in using the IAAR model by enrolling for the course.

If you’re a church leader and your church isn’t effectively making new disciples for Jesus Christ every year, we encourage and challenge you to adopt the IAAR model by enrolling a team of leaders in the HIU course. We will also make ourselves available to consult with you to help you launch a successful IAAR ministry in your church or organization.

To enroll in the course, contact Phil Towne at HIU at pbtowne@hiu.edu. If you have any questions about the course, or about the IAAR model in general, contact John Hendee directly at john.hendee@cox.net.

To help you successfully transition from the virtual classroom back into the world to share the Gospel, we have developed Partnership for Ambassador Training from which we offer participation in an ambassador support and coaching network to everyone who has successfully completed the

online “Relational Evangelism” course with HIU.

With a *proven* model for making disciples, and *proven* training, and the offer of continued support and coaching within the fellowship of other ambassadors, you have available everything you need to heed Christ's command to GO! and make disciples. We pray you won't let anything stand in your way of being obedient to that command, and also pray God's richest blessings on your disciple-making endeavors.

About the Authors

John Hendee

John Hendee was born in Wisconsin, met his wife, Carla, in college, and later ministered in Arizona for 17 years before moving to Chile, South America where they served for 12 years. Upon returning to the U.S., John founded and was the Executive Director of Project New Hope International until late 2013.



For nine years he “commuted” to Peru, S.A. He is now living in California and is writing and teaching at Hope International University in his position as Chair of World Evangelism, and is also working with Team Expansion.

Dr. James Scott, Jr.

Dr. Scott has served as a minister for almost three decades and a clinical therapist for nearly as long. His ministry has included serving as both an Associate and Senior Pastor, planting a church and assisting with other church plants, and he is also a prolific writer. “Scotty” resides in California where he now serves as Founder and President of the Scott Free Clinic.

