

## **The Pastor as a Disciple-Maker**

### **The Pastor's calling**

Becoming a pastor should be a “God calling” not a just a job or profession. Being a pastor is in fact a spiritual gifting. Paul the apostle, describes the fivefold gifted Church leaders in **Ephesians 4:11-12** “ *and he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ...* ” We notice that these leaders are “given” to the church by Christ. They are gifted and called to serve the body of Christ (the church.) Each of the gifted and called leaders has a specific job to do.

### **The Pastor/teacher**

Uniquely, the role of the pastor is described as that of “*shepherd/teacher.*” It is a combined gifting. Obviously the pastor is a shepherd of God's flock, the church. He is to do what a shepherd does for his sheep. He guides, protects, feeds, and cares for them as a loving shepherd. He also has the dual role of teaching them Kingdom values and Kingdom truths. In his teaching role he feeds his flock the bread of life-God's Word. This is most often done through the pastor's role as preacher of God's Word. However, there is much more to being a Shepherd than just telling the sheep what to do in a sermon. He is to grow the saints into mature men and women who can then equip and train others to do ministry work. Experience has shown us that you cannot disciple a congregation through preaching. It helps, and is a part of teaching, but is not adequate to grow men & women into mature Christ-followers. Paul's admonition in **Ephesians 4:11-13** requires that a pastor become a disciple maker. The Pastor is to be a trainer, resulting in reproducing himself in others.

### **Teacher/trainer**

The African church is full of preaching, not much teaching, and almost no training. However, making disciples is the one thing Christ called Church leaders to do. Jesus set the example for us. He had the Twelve and spent three years preparing them to change the world. So, much good can be done following Christ's example. This example included training the Twelve, not just preaching to them and teaching them. Jesus equipped them to carry on his ministry after he was gone.

As we have already noted in the Disciple Leader Manual (pages 155-157) Jesus had a strategy for training the Twelve. We can learn from his strategy and apply it today in guiding our churches. In his wonderful book, The Master Plan of Evangelism, Robert Coleman reveals the plan Jesus followed with his disciples. There are four parts to it:

#### **1. Selection**

Christ's first method was to select the right men. Have you noticed that Jesus was very selective in the men He chose to be His “twelve?” He didn't call everybody, or just anybody. He only

called a select few. They were not much to look at from the world's perspective, just ordinary men,

but they were men who would follow Him. They were "fat" guys- faithful, available, and teachable. There was a plan in Christ's choosing of those twelve men. They were not perfect or even supermen as the world values talent, but Jesus saw their potential and built His purpose into them.

Likewise, every pastor should be praying for, looking for, and calling forth select men to be his disciples. The Apostle Paul saw Jesus' method and copied it. Paul knew that the only way to fulfill the Great Commission of **Matthew 28:19** was to do as Jesus did- train more men. Paul was a reproducer. Paul says to Timothy, his beloved son in ministry, "*The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.* (**2nd Tim 2:2**) Here we see Pastor Paul, who planted so many churches, was working out Jesus method of selecting key men to invest his time with.

### **Pastor- where is your Timothy?**

Even so we are to "go" and witness to all who will listen. We are to then baptize that new convert. The next step is to make a disciple out of him. Here is where we can learn from Christ. Even Jesus

could not make a faithful follower out of Judas. Paul could not disciple John Mark. Being selective is important to the plan. Find the person who will follow you and learn from you. A Pastor can lead a congregation, but he cannot disciple a whole congregation. What he can do is what Jesus did. He can prayerfully select two or three good men who have a heart for God and want to learn.

Every pastor should be able to point to his "guy" and say, that's my Timothy!

### **2. Association**

Christ's second method was the "**with Him**" principle. Dr. Coleman in his book makes much of this strategy. He says it was Christ's plan to keep the Twelve near Him those first three years. Long after they might forget where they went, or whom they met, they would always remember Him! This being "associated" with Christ would forever change these men. The command to "follow me" was a deliberate plan and purpose to mentor the Twelve. They "caught" as much as they were taught. Just being with Christ intimately day in and day out, won their hearts. They would eventually die for Him. Christ understood the "**with Him**" principle of leadership.

We too, must adopt the "with me" strategy. You cannot reproduce your life and lifestyle in another person without spending much quality time with him. This is true in raising children and it's true in rising up spiritual disciples. Parents who spend long hours with their child will forever imprint themselves in the soul of the child. Discipleship is "caught" as much as it is "taught." It was said of the early disciples, "*they took notice of them that they had been with Jesus.*" He who would lead others must be as available to his disciples as Christ was to His. Spiritual reproduction is a birthing process, and takes time and consistent, often painful labor.

### **3. Consecration**

Jesus' plan included getting those men He called to "*seek first the kingdom*" Priorities are primary to the disciple. In Luke 14, Jesus parables are all about counting the cost. Three times in Luke 14, our Lord says, "*you cannot be my disciple,*" unless you love me more than people, places and

things. His plan calls men to a holy, disciplined walk with Him. Over and over again during those three years they traveled together, Jesus let the disciples see His commitment to God's Kingdom and He challenged them to be as He was.

We too, must live consecrated lives in order to lead others. It is a spiritual principle of leadership, that you cannot lead others where you've never been. You cannot lead others out into the deep, when you yourself cannot swim. You cannot lead another man to live any closer to God, than you yourself live. Why? Because he spends much time with you and he will "find you out." If you tell him to pray, but he does not see and hear you pray often, then he will not believe he should make prayer a priority. Do you think the twelve ever forgot their hours in prayer with Jesus? Never! When Jesus prayed to His Father, those men hungered to know God like that! Leading others to be disciples is about "being" a disciple first, then telling others about it.

#### 4. Principle of Multiplication

It is amazing to think that Jesus could look at that odd collection of men; fishermen, tax collectors, Zealots, and common men, and see the Kingdom of God in them. He saw what no one else could see; he saw the world being saved through their witness. Not one of those men had ever traveled a hundred miles from home, yet Jesus commanded them to tell "all the nations" about Him! He must have had a plan. He did. His vision was for each man to win one other man, and train that man to win another. The plan is spiritual reproduction. It is the principle of multiplication.

How does this work, and does it work? It is so simple that few have really tried it. It works like this. If a disciple wins one person to Christ and spends the 1<sup>st</sup> year training that person to win another; meanwhile the disciple is also winning his second person. The convert that he has trained now wins his 1<sup>st</sup> person to Christ. So, at the end of a year there will be four of them. This doesn't sound like a very successful plan to win the world. Few pastors could build a church this slowly. You might think this will never win the world.

Think again. Now the **second year**, there will be eight disciples, because each disciple is winning and training one each year. In **ten years** there will be **1,024** disciples doing the same strategy. In **twenty years** the world will have **1,048,576** followers of Jesus. This isn't so bad is it? Then if just each one will win and train one, in **thirty years** there will be **1,073,741,824!** In one generation, **forty years**, over **one trillion** will come to Christ in salvation! Think about the Master's plan for a second. This figure of one trillion people is such a staggering number the church has had enough time since Jesus gave us this plan to win the world a 100 times over! The church could have fulfilled the Great Commission in the first generation through those twelve men. It's not a bad plan; it's just not been tried very faithfully.

#### Training/ Skills

If a pastor is to fulfill his calling he must learn to train others. Paul told Timothy (his disciple) "*all scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.*" **2nd Timothy 3:16** Notice the profit to us "*training in righteousness*"

A good pastor is a trainer! He must learn how to develop "skills" in his disciples. What exactly does this mean?

**For example:** If a pastor is a man of prayer, that is a good thing; but until he trains others to pray, very little is accomplished thru the power of prayer. How does he train his people to pray?

He SHOWS THEM HOW TO PRAY! Until they pray with him, hearing him pray, learning to pray like he prays, they will not be passionate about prayer. Jesus spent long hours in prayer with his men. After watching him pray and hearing him talk to his Father, the disciple cried out *“Lord, teach us to pray like that!”* (Luke 11:1)

There are many skills that a pastor can sharpen in his disciples. What he knows how to do, he can train someone else to do. He can train them to witness, to pray, to teach, to lead others, to serve humbly, to be good stewards, to trust God, to even become disciple makers themselves.

### **The African Church**

Every African pastor has a choice to make. He can continue to lead his congregation in the traditional African manner, or he can choose to lead the way Christ led his men. He can follow his tribal, traditional model; or he can become a Biblical pastor leading his people according to Ephesians 4. If he chooses to become a disciple maker; some remarkable things will result.

1. His Timothys (both male & female) will become an extension of himself. He multiplies himself in others.
2. These new disciples are potential elders, evangelists, even pastors to plant new churches. Through his disciple making, he becomes an apostolic leader, a bishop in the biblical sense of the word. He becomes a mentor to many.
3. He will set an example to others in the African Church that there is a better way to lead than the denominational model he was raised up in. When many men and women begin to multiply themselves, the word will spread that God is indeed at work here.
4. Making disciples will become the pastor's true legacy. He will leave behind him changed lives, mature leaders who can carry on the work he started. If he does not make disciples, the work dies when he dies. It is that simple.

### **Which Generation are you living for?**

The Disciple Making leader is not living for the immediate generation. He is a future, forward thinking leader. He wants to leave a changed culture behind him when he is gone. By training a generation of disciples, he leaves behind an army of those who can change a culture for years to come. What he does now with his Timothys will be like waves upon the seashore, forever reshaping the landscape.

So, pastor, what kind of leader are you determined to be? We challenge you to follow Christ, Paul, Peter, Titus, Timothy and many other New Testament leaders who changed their world by making disciples of all the nations.