**I. Strategy Overview**

*“As in a building, which, however fair and beautiful the superstructure, is radically marred and imperfect if the foundation be insecure—so, if the strategy be wrong, the skill of the general on the battlefield, the valor of the soldier, the brilliancy of the victory, however decisive, fail of their effect.”* — A.T. Mahan

*“Strategy...is the process of interrelating ends and means... [It] is a specific way of using specified means to achieve distinct ends. Strategy is thus both a process and a product.”* — Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1-1

*“The strategic concept should provide a clear and compelling basis for all subsequent planning and decision making.”* – Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1-1

- Most strategies simply involve developing a program or system; they tend to be limited in scope and stop at accountability partners or with the assignment of mentors.

- We need to develop a broader, grander strategy; one that places discipleship as the grand purpose. One in which all other ministries fall under the umbrella of discipleship and in which they all play a supporting role to overarching mission of making disciples.

- When developing a strategy, we must obviously take into account the mission. As such, we are aided by the Commander’s Intent because our strategy should help us to set the conditions for mission success.

- With a solid, coherent strategy that’s been developed in concert with the mission statement and the Commander’s Intent we can effectively go about our mission.

*“You are Marines. You adapt, you improvise, you overcome.”* — Gunny Highway, *Heartbreak Ridge*

**II. Strategy for Discipleship**

1. **Three Foundational Principles vs. Programmatic Approach[[1]](#footnote-1)**

- Life Investment / Relationships

- Multiplication

- Transformation

**This is our strategy**

- These are the fixed principles upon which we will base our actions

- These are the fixed principles by which we’ll exercise judgment and initiative

- These are the fixed principles which help us establish a context for Real Discipleship

1. **Programmatic Approach**

***Committee ---> Program ---> Disciples***

- Tends towards inviting people in mass to a smorgasbord of activities

- Someone in front of a group speaks to a passive crowd

- The bigger the group, the “better”

1. **Life Investment**

***Covenantal Relationships ---> Time ---> Disciples***

- Intimacy vs. information

- Mutual participation vs. one on behalf of many

- Customized vs. synchronized

- Life change vs. content accountability

- Takes a long-term view

*\* Any fool can draw a crowd, but there is a HUNGER for relationships!*

**BUILD SLOWLY, BUILD SOLIDLY**

*“One must decide where he wants his ministry to count*—*in the momentary applause of popular recognition or in the reproduction of his life in a few chosen ones who will carry on his work after he has gone? Really, it is a question of which generation we are living for.”* — Robert Coleman[[2]](#footnote-2)

*“…we are fooling ourselves to think we can mass-produce disciples today. God’s design for taking the gospel to the world is a slow, intentional, simple process that involves every one of his people sacrificing every facet of their lives to* ***multiply*** *the life of Christ in others...”* — David Platt[[3]](#footnote-3)

*“Discipling is an* ***intentional relationship*** *in which we walk alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ. This includes equipping the disciple to teach others as well.”* — Greg Ogden[[4]](#footnote-4)

*“Discipling implies the* ***responsibility*** *of disciples helping one another grow as disciples.”*

— Michael Wilkins[[5]](#footnote-5)

**ELEMENTS OF DISCIPLESHIP**

- Intentional Relationship:

* Regular schedule
* Purposeful
* Consistent
* ***Covenantal***

- Walk alongside / non-hierarchical

* Encourage: safe, comes alongside
* Equip: skills, disciplines, behaviors, patterns
* Challenge: risk-taking, accountability

- Help one another grow / grow to maturity

- Teach other…***MULTIPLY***

1. **Multiplication**

*“How can we grown self-initiating, reproducing, fully devoted followers of Christ? The most befuddling challenge contained in this question and the conundrum few have solved centers around reproducing.*

*Perhaps an even great challenge than growing fully devoted followers of Christ is growing fully devoted followers who reproduce.* ***Reproduction is the key to fulfilling the Great Commission****…”* — Wilkins[[6]](#footnote-6)

*“Discipleship training is the spiritual work of developing spiritual maturity and spiritual* ***reproduction*** *in the life of a Christian.”* — Greg Ogden[[7]](#footnote-7)

**BIBLICAL MODELS OF DISCIPLESHIP**

*“Each model has correctly accented—at least* ***partially****—biblical teaching. The strength of each model lies in its emphasis upon a particular type of discipleship teaching; the weakness of each lies in its deemphasis of other discipleship teachings.”* — Gary Kuhne[[8]](#footnote-8)

**We need to shift our paradigm of discipleship.**

**Mentoring Model**

- Also called the One-on-One model or the Paul/Timothy model

- Characteristics of the Mentoring Model

* Father/son
* Teacher/Student
* Mature/Immature
* Motivator/Motivated

- Limitations to the Mentoring Model

* Motivator/Motivated
* Disicpler-focused
* Teacher/student
* Hierarchical
* Fosters dependency
* Two-way dialogue
* Limited models
* Tends not to reproduce or multiply

**Triad/Quad Model**

- The “*hothouse of Christian growth*”

- Characteristics of the Triad/Quad Model

* Natural participation (vice being disciple-focused)
* Relational (vice hierarchical)
* Dynamic Interchange (vice two-way dialogue)
* Wisdom in numbers (vice limited input)
* Multiplication (vice addition)

- Year One: 3-4 disciples

- Year Two: 9-12 disciples

- Year Three: 27-64 disciples

1. **Transformation**

*“When we open our hearts in transparent trust to each other around the truth of God’s word in a spirit of mutual accountability, we are in the Holy Spirit’s hothouse of transformation.”* — Greg Ogden[[9]](#footnote-9)

We are not the architects of transformation, but there are three elements of transformation that prepare our hearts and lend ourselves to the shaping and influence of the Holy Spirit.

**ELEMENTS OF TRANSFORMATION**

- **Transparent Trust**: *The extent to which we are willing to reveal to others those areas of our life that need God’s transforming touch is the extent to which we are inviting the Holy Spirit to make us new*.

* Mutual vulnerability
* Prayerful listening
* Mutual confession

- **Truth in Community**: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

* Teaching
* Reproof
* Correction
* Training in righteousness

- **Life-change Accountability**

* Submit to mutually agreed standards
* Give partners authority to call you into account
* Establish minimum commitments
* Periodically review the standards and recommit

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Intimacy** | **Truth** | **Accountability** *[[10]](#footnote-10)* |
| Small Groups | **✓** |  |  |
| Teaching |  | **✓** |  |
| Preaching |  | **✓** |  |
| Triad/Quad | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** |

**III. Conclusion**

*“My mind tends to wander toward grandiose dreams and intricate strategies, and I’m struck when I see Jesus simply, intentionally, systematically, patiently walking alongside twelve men. Jesus reminds me that disciples are not mass-produced. Disciples of Jesus—genuine, committed, self-sacrificing followers of Christ—are not made overnight. Making disciples is not an easy process. It is trying. It is messy. It is slow, tedious, even painful at times. It is all these because it is relational.”* — David Platt[[11]](#footnote-11)

**Our STRATEGY for discipleship:**

- must be relational;

- must focus on people, not programs;

- it must be intentional;

- it must bear fruit in the form of REPRODUCING disciples;

- we must view every aspect of ministry, every part of Gospel-activity as discipleship so that we can leverage every opportunity to disciple others, no matter how limited the window may be;

- it must be covenantal; cost and commitment are MUST-HAVEs.

- it must have as its purpose to make us more like Christ

**It’s not just enough to establish a training program and assign a mentor or an accountability partner.**

**We must view EVERY ministry, every area of life as an opportunity for the Gospel, as a form of discipleship.**

1. Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 121-122 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1998), 32 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2010), 104 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 17 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 41 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 136 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Gary W. Kuhne, “Follow-up–An Overview,” *Discipleship: The Best Writing from the Most Experienced Disciple Makers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 117 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Wilkins, *Following the Master*, 34 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 154 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ibid., 171 (entire table) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Platt, *Radical*, 93 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)