

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF TO EVERY TRIBE ■ DECEMBER 2017 ■ TOEVERYTRIBE.ORG

EKBALLO

SPECIAL EDITION

PHASES IN PIONEERING



EKBALLO



To Every Tribe

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF TO EVERY TRIBE

December 2017 Edition
ToEveryTribe.org/ekballo

TO EVERY TRIBE'S MISSION

To Every Tribe exists to extend the worship of Christ among all peoples by mobilizing the church, training disciplemakers, and sending missionary teams to plant churches among the unreached.

TO EVERY TRIBE

Post Office Box 1572
Los Fresnos, Texas 78566
Phone & Fax (956) 233-4353
© 2017 To Every Tribe

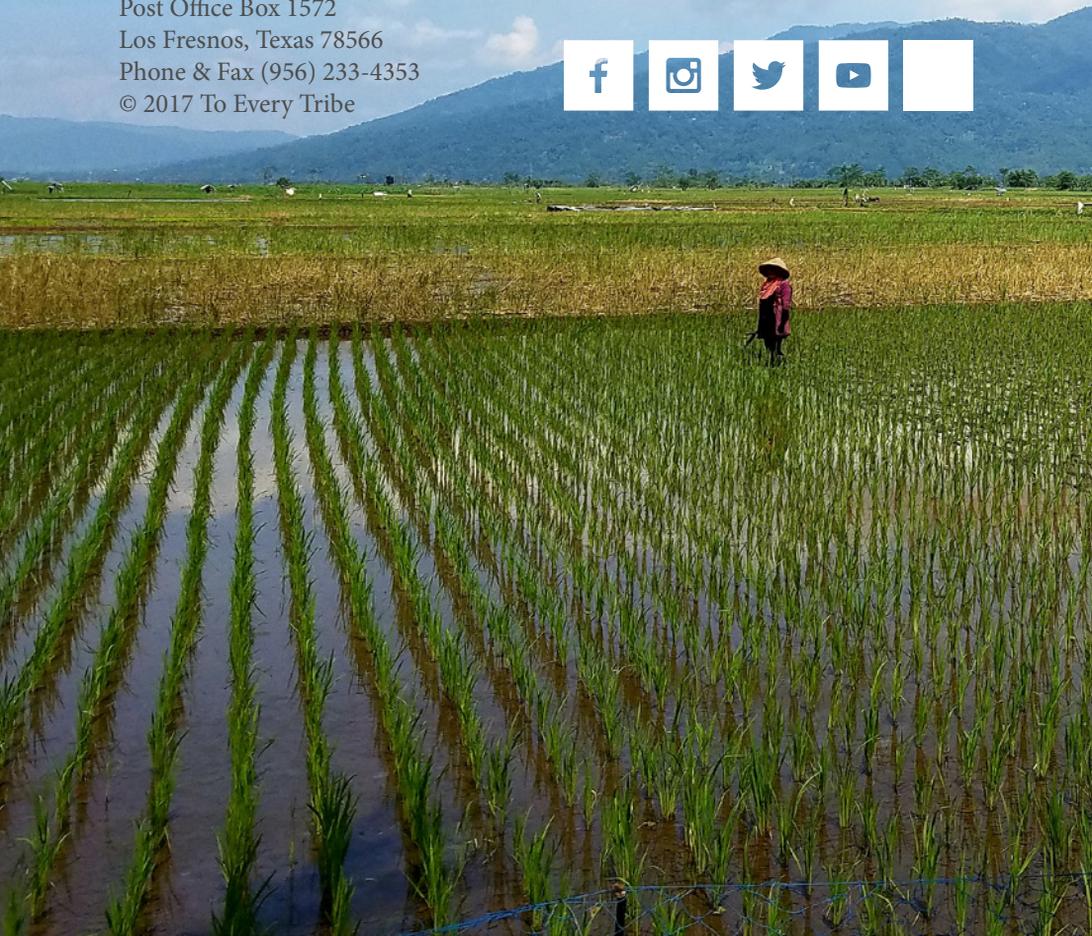
WHAT DOES EKBALLO MEAN?

Ekballo is the Greek word for *propel*, *thrust out*, and *fling*. It is the word for *send out* used by Christ in Matthew 9:38 and the word used for *cast out* in Matthew 10:1.

EDITING & DESIGN TEAM

Scott Perry, Randy Turner,
Justin Vander Ark, and Paul W.

For additional copies of *Ekballo*, please email justin.vanderark@toeverytribe.org



PHASES **IN** PIONEERING

By Dr. Steve Leston, President of To Every Tribe

- 04** INTRODUCTION
- 08** ARRIVAL AND TRUST
- 12** SPIRITUAL AND GOSPEL
- 18** NURTURE AND HELP
- 22** DISCOVER AND AFFIRM





INTRODUCTION

PHASES IN PIONEERING



People often ask me, “How do you actually do the job of pioneer church planting? When a missionary arrives on the ground what are they actually doing with their time?” This is a great question, and it is one that must be answered. It is one thing to be committed to the idea of church planting among the unreached, yet it is another to actually know what it is that you are doing when you arrive in country.

Unfortunately, there are many people who have left their homes and traveled far to reach the unreached only to discover they were not welcomed by the people they came to serve, were rejected by the community, and now do not know what to do with their lives in this new and adversarial context. Many missionaries have felt the sting of depression as they sit in a foreign land discouraged and frustrated with no path forward. It is important for me, as one who is responsible for preparing missionary teams to go to the nations, to help missionaries learn how to understand the work of pioneer church planting.

There is not a simple formula or program that can be employed that can reduce pioneer church planting into a nice neat system. The world is a bit more complicated than that, so trying to apply a cookie cutter approach to church planting will only leave the missionary frustrated and the unreached potentially inoculated to the gospel and hostile to the efforts of the missionary.

What is needed in the work of pioneer church planting among the



unreached and unengaged are general phases that serve as a mindset or framework that the missionary can use to govern the way they approach their work. Most of the time, a missionary finds themselves moving at God's speed and the opportunities that He gives for relationships and trust to be developed. We do not control this, God does. For that reason, it is important that the missionary be able to assess the real state of relationships so that they can move at the pace that God is taking their work.

As I have reflected on how God has moved in the work in which I have participated over the years, I have observed the Lord moving me through eight different relational phases in doing the work of evangelism, discipleship, nurturing, planting, and sending. I view these eight phases as phases of relationships with people. One of the undeniable realities of ministry is that there is no way to fulfill the mission to make disciples absent of relationships. It is a very relational work teaching someone to observe all things Christ has commanded. It is not a static transaction, but a dynamic relationship requiring discernment to understand when someone is weak, fainthearted, or rebellious (1 Thessalonians 5:14). It requires understanding of the way people think, how they process the world, and how they understand God. Relationships do not come quickly; they take time. We must understand where we are at in

our relationships with people so that we can invest and grow at the pace at which God allows us to move.

When we cross a culture and move to a location to bring the good news of Christ Jesus to an unreached or unengaged people group we must take the time to build healthy relationships with people. These relationships are where trust forms so that we can move from the gospel, to maturity in Jesus, to the formation of a local indigenous church, to the sending of people to repeat this process somewhere else. I see this work occurring through eight relational phases:

Phase 1: Arrival

Showing people you are here and you care, and taking the time to serve the community by coming alongside the people to live in their world and to serve them as you do.

Phase 2: Trust

Building trust between you and the people through your actions and conversations.

Phase 3: Spiritual Conversations

Taking the time to understand how people process God, religion, and spiritual things.

Phase 4: Gospel Conversations

As the Lord opens doors, sharing the whole gospel, taking the time to show how Jesus deals with our shame and guilt and has overcome the evil that is in the world.



Phase 5: Nurture

As the Lord provides the converts, it is important to nurture the new believers in what it means to live as a follower of Jesus.

Phase 6: Help

For many converts, following Jesus can cause problems in their life. Being a Christian can cause people to be at odds with their family, extended family, cultures, and even cause them to be killed. It is the role of the missionary to help people understand how to apply the Bible to the complexities of following Jesus.

Phase 7: Discover

Throughout the discipleship process, it is important that the missionary seeks the wisdom of the Lord to help converts understand their gifts and their role on the work of the gospel and the body of Christ. One of the great joys of ministry is helping people find their place in the kingdom.

Phase 8: Affirm

Once a disciple has discovered their gifts it is important that the missionary publicly affirm that gift in front of all. In many cultures the idea of mutual submission and service is not accepted. The idea of a church, where all serve each other, is novel. We must affirm people publicly to make a way for people to serve in the new community. In addition, we also must affirm the leadership in the church. As we complete the church

planting process, we must appoint elders and deacons and give them the public affirmation they require.

These eight phases are nothing new to the missions world. There are many other people who have gone before me who have made similar observations.¹ The distinction of these eight phases is that they do not measure activity, but relationships.

Because these are phases of a relationship, it is possible that the Lord can move someone through these phases quickly or slowly—that is all in the hands of God. It is the role and function of the missionary to respond to these phases as the Lord moves rather than treat this like a checklist to be marched through in static order.

In this edition of *Ekballo* we will be unpacking these eight phases with the goal of helping you understand the work of pioneer church planting. It is my prayer and deepest desire that this would help you engage and enter into the work of the missionary with more focus, and to find your place in this mission. It is also my heart and desire that this be a guide for our prayers for our missionaries as they move through these phases. It is my heart that you would use this as a means of knowing how to pray for the development of the depth of relationships with people so that disciples are made, churches are planted, and these churches would reproduce until the Lord returns.

PHASES ONE AND TWO

ARRIVAL AND TRUST



The first two phases of pioneering are the most critical aspects of missionary work, and often are the most neglected. The platform for your ministry is not your desire to make disciples, but the life and love that you show by living in the same world as they do. It is important that we view the people we are serving as future partners in the mission and not as projects. For this reason, it is

important to break down the arrival into a new community and trust-building into two separate phases to help the missionary understand what they are doing upon arrival.

Phase 1: Arrival
Showing People You
Are There and That You Care

When missionaries arrive on the field, the common impulse is to jump into the work of ministry imme-





diately. Yet, it is important that the missionary understands that the first days of arrival are very crucial because they set the tone for the ministry going forward. If a missionary does not take arrival seriously, then they have the potential of undercutting their work in the future. By not taking the time to serve a community it is easy for the missionary to see the people as projects who need to be converted rather than people whom God has made, placed in this context to live, and is calling to be part of this glorious mission to make the name of Christ known among the nations. For this reason, it is important that the missionary arrives showing a desire to live in the community with the people, sharing in their life, and serving them in any way that is appropriate—thereby, modeling the gospel lived out in their context.

Phase 2: Trust
Building Trust Through
Actions and Words

Showing people that you are there and that you care, over time, builds trust. Ministry grows in the soil of trust. I have a good friend and colleague from the Czech Republic, a national ministry leader and church planter, who says, “Ministry can only move at the speed of trust.”² I agree with this. Once trust is earned, doors are opened. Where trust is not earned you will never know where people are really at with you and your ministry. It is natural for all humans to hide their real selves from people they do not trust. Just because you moved across an ocean to be a missionary does not give you automatic trust.

On one visit to a tribal community I had a conversation with a chief



who told me “Our people know how to ‘repent.’ Every time missionaries come here for outreach events our people know how to come forward and ‘repent’ to get the free gifts. We know how to give them the pictures they need for their letters back home.”

Another factor in building trust is that many cultures are indirect in their communication. What this means is that many people will never tell you to your face what they really think or believe. What you will hear is what they think you want to hear. Therefore, if you are doing something that is offensive, there is a good chance that person will not tell you. So, if they think that you want to hear you are making an impact in their life, they might tell you that you are changing their lives when in reality they are lying to you. Without

trust, you will never know if they are hearing what you are saying.

It goes without saying that trust is important and without it you will never know where you are truly at with someone. To reiterate this point, trust is not given because you raised support, went to training, and crossed the ocean to come and live with them. Trust is earned by living with people, serving them, taking the time to listen to them, and showing them that you are concerned about them as people and not just projects.

If a missionary takes the time to build trust, then mission will eventually occur at an exponential rate. As trust is built, ministry happens, and as God changes people’s lives, more and more ministry will occur. A missionary who tries for movement and growth without trust will forfeit both movement and growth in the end.



PHASES THREE AND FOUR

SPIRITUAL AND GOSPEL

As trust is built, one of the main relational goals of a missionary is to understand how a person thinks about God, spirituality, life, death, meaning, etc. The reason this is important is that across the world there are terms used in the Bible that are also used by oth-

er religions. Yet, those religions do not mean the same thing a Christian means when using these terms. For example, if I say, “God created the world”, there are many people who would affirm that truth yet we would not be saying the same thing. There are many religions in the world that teach that there is a god who creat-



ed the world, yet their god and our God are not the same God. If I do not understand this about a person I am talking to, then when I share truths about God they will use their definition of those terms, not the Bible's definition. If this happens, what you have done without knowing it, is participated in syncretism.³ Syn-

cretism is the combining of different religious beliefs into one. When this occurs, Christianity becomes reshaped and reformed into something that eventually becomes contrary to the Scriptures and the gospel. For this reason, after trust is built we move into spiritual conversations.



Phase 3: Spiritual Conversations *Understanding How People Process God, Religion, and Spiritual Things*

To understand this phase we must first define what constitutes a spiritual conversation. A spiritual conversation is a conversation in which you have an honest conversation with someone through which they share their understanding and beliefs about all things spiritual. It is a time when you, as a missionary, talk about what someone believes and consequently how they behave in relation to their spiritual worldview.

One of the benefits of a spiritual conversation is that the missionary can enter into the belief system so that they can eventually bring the gospel to the person. If a missionary is able to have this kind of conversation they are on track to do ministry in the same manner as the apostle Paul as recorded in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23: “For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.”

It takes an understanding of the Jews to become like the Jews, as it takes an understanding of those outside the law to be outside the law. This understanding is not so that Paul can change the gospel to fit the audience. God forbid! This was done so that Paul could present a gospel where no added offense would shroud the gospel. His heart was to make sure that culture did not get in the way of the gospel. We share the same heart. We want to make sure that we know and understand the culture so that we can bring the gospel with clarity.

How do we do this? We look for opportunities to ask questions such as:

- Who made man?
- What happens when you die?
- Is there a spirit world and if so how does it work?
- What are some of the traditions and practices that are important to you?
- How do you connect with the spirit world?
- Who made the world?
- Who controls the world?
- How does mankind deal with their sin, shame, and guilt?
- Where does ultimate power lie?

These types of questions are designed to aid the missionary in understanding the way people interact with the spiritual dimension of life. In understanding this dimension, the missionary has what it takes to comprehend the foundations that govern a person's world and, when the Lord opens the door, they can frame Scripture and truth to address their heart and avoid syncretism.

It is important for me to restate

that this kind of conversation moves at the speed of trust. As the Lord provides trust, the opportunity to address spiritual thoughts and ideas opens wider. In the West, it is easy to think that you can move to the spiritual questions right away because we open our hearts a bit faster than other cultures. Yet, in many cultures, religion and spirituality are private, sacred, and even ethnic realities that are not open for discussion. Central to Christianity is evangelism, so reaching out to others is natural. In some cultures, religion is tied to their ethnic heritage and thus converting the nations is not part of the worldview. Therefore, having someone come and ask you about what you believe and engaging you on this level is a foreign concept. Therefore, a Christian missionary must take the time to wait for trust to be built so that spiritual conversations can occur. When they do occur, the great thing is, doors open fully.

As the Lord allows understanding to occur on a spiritual level, this will lead to an opportunity for the next phase: gospel conversations.

Phase 4: Gospel Conversations ***Sharing the Whole Gospel***

The gospel is an amazing truth. It addresses all areas of human need. It addresses the fact that we disobeyed the law of God and stand guilty before Him; stand ashamed before God and man and have brought dishonor to our creator, family, and community; and walked according to the power of the air, according to the ways of Satan. The gospel declares

to us that Jesus died on a cross to take our punishment and forgive our sin and guilt; removed the reproach of sin and allows us to stand in the presence of God blameless and with great joy; and conquered Satan and disarmed the rule and authority of the evil one.

Our goal is to make sure that we share the good news of what Jesus has done. All that we do in all of our relationship building is to lead to this point and then beyond to making a disciple of Jesus. In Ephesians 1:10 we are told that God's plan of salvation is motivated by His agenda to unite all things in Jesus Christ. We get the great honor of bringing this message to people so that they would be brought into Jesus, be part of His body, and join a new life and community in Him.

As we bring the gospel we focus on the three great parts of the gospel that we must proclaim. As you look at the previous statements made about the gospel you can observe that the gospel addresses:

Guilt - It is true that all have sinned and stand guilty before God. This is the aspect of the gospel message that we in the West are the most familiar with (Romans 3). Through Jesus we have our sins forgiven and our guilt removed.

Shame - The gospel also addresses shame. Shame was the first experience that Adam and Eve had after they sinned (Genesis 3:7). When Adam and Eve were first in the garden the scriptures tell us that they were both naked and not ashamed (Genesis 2:25). After they sinned,



they knew that they were naked. In other words, their nakedness was now a source of shame before each other so they were motivated to cover their bodies with leaves. Right after they sinned they hid themselves from God because they were naked (Genesis 3:10). God killed an animal to cover their bodies and remove the shame they felt toward each other (Genesis 3:21). The good news of the gospel is that Christ has removed our shame (1 Peter 2:6). For many people in many parts of the world, this is the news they need to hear and understand.

Power - The gospel is also the good news that Jesus has conquered Satan (Colossians 2:15). Christ crushed the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15) and took away all the power of the evil one. For many cultures there is

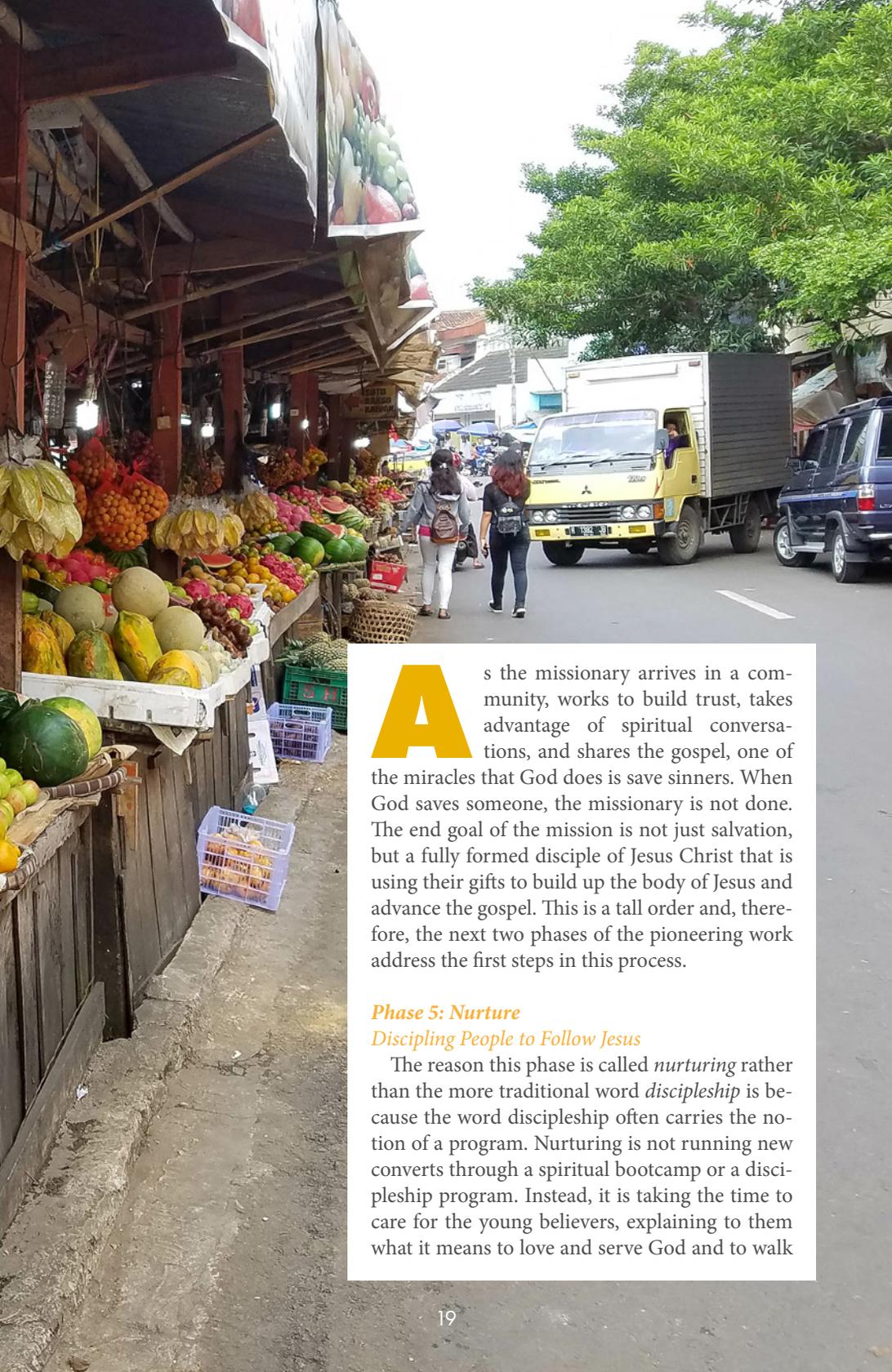
a fear of the spirit world. They need to know that Jesus has disarmed the rulers and authorities and is the one who controls all of nature. Missionaries get to declare to people who live in fear of the spirit world that Jesus is the one who controls both nature and the spirit world. There is nothing to fear in this world when you are united to Jesus.

The point of this phase is to bring the whole gospel to the whole world. The gospel is the power of salvation (Romans 1:16) and the good news that Christ has resolved all the consequences of the fall of mankind. When we can take the time to understand the spiritual mindset of the people, we become armed to carefully bring the truth of the gospel to the people and see the power of God at work saving people for His glory.

PHASES FIVE AND SIX

NURTURE AND HELP





As the missionary arrives in a community, works to build trust, takes advantage of spiritual conversations, and shares the gospel, one of the miracles that God does is save sinners. When God saves someone, the missionary is not done. The end goal of the mission is not just salvation, but a fully formed disciple of Jesus Christ that is using their gifts to build up the body of Jesus and advance the gospel. This is a tall order and, therefore, the next two phases of the pioneering work address the first steps in this process.

Phase 5: Nurture
Discipling People to Follow Jesus

The reason this phase is called *nurturing* rather than the more traditional word *discipleship* is because the word *discipleship* often carries the notion of a program. *Nurturing* is not running new converts through a spiritual bootcamp or a discipleship program. Instead, it is taking the time to care for the young believers, explaining to them what it means to love and serve God and to walk



before Him as an act of worship. It is helping these new believers to understand the Bible and shepherding them through the process of thinking and acting like a Christian.

Nurturing is critical to the work of disciple-making because it is coming alongside the young believer as a guide, answering questions, and giving them a platform to learn and grow as a follower of Jesus.

At the heart of the Great Commission, as recorded in Matthew 28, is the notion of teaching a disciple to obey everything that Jesus Comanded. This is a daunting task, especially with a convert who is from a culture whose values are opposed to the Scriptures. Special care and concern must be taken to truly help these new converts adjust to being part of the body of Christ.

The words of the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians resonates when thinking about nurturing: “For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us” (1 Thess. 2:5-8).

When Paul entered Thessalonica

he did not come seeking glory for himself, but instead, came to this place and nurtured these people with the same heart as a mother who is caring for a newborn baby. This image is what we are talking about when we speak of nurturing converts.

The goal of this work is to establish the new believer in their understanding of four great, foundational, and wonderful truths. From these truths stem the rest of the establishing process—such as marriage, vocation, children, work, etc. The four foundational truths are:

- *The Gospel* - All that God has done to bring reconciliation to His people
- *The Church* - All those called out to be His body
- *The Mission* - All that we do to advance His kingdom
- *The Scriptures* - All that He has revealed to us for life and godliness

When it comes to the Scriptures, we must keep in mind that in some contexts people do not have the Scriptures translated into their language. For others, they might not be a literate culture and, therefore, do not read. In those cases we still teach them the Bible, but it would be done using an oral approach (which means to teach the Scriptures in a narrative fashion). Whatever the delivery system, grounding the new believer in the Word of God is a non-negotiable.

In the course of nurturing, the new believer will no doubt face a very



real hardship. For many converts to Christianity following Jesus creates more problems on earth than it solves. In other words, for some, following Jesus can cause them to be at odds with family, friends, communities, and even governments. Because of this, special care must be taken to help the new convert navigate through these waters. This leads us to the next phase, the phase of helping.

***Phase 6: Helping
Solving Problems that
Emerge from Following Jesus***

One of the most important passages a missionary must understand when entering into helping a new believer navigate the cost to following Jesus is Mark 13:9-13: “But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. And you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”

For many new converts this pas-

sage defines what it is like to be a follower of Jesus. Some pay the cost upfront and deal with hostility and rejection from day one. It is important that the missionary take the time to help people deal with the potential loss of family, friends, jobs, etc. It is important that we help people understand that persecution is part of being a follower of Jesus and enduring to the end has great rewards.

It is critical that the missionary have an understanding of pain, suffering, loss, and the kingdom of God. As people understand these very important issues we can shepherd new believers through the difficult waters of trials and suffering to show them that part of the mission is to make up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions (Colossians 1:24). In short, we want to tell people that when Christ invites us into the mission, we are invited into all of it, both the suffering and the glory. We must be ready for it all.

This is the hard part of missions. We must show people that the person of Jesus and the glory of heaven are far greater than any loss we have on this earth. We must stand with people in the pain and suffering, shouldering some of the weight and encouraging them to endure to the end.

When nurturing and helping are part of the foundational work of the missionary, then the new believer has a foundation that will support them as they serve Jesus.

PHASES SEVEN AND EIGHT

DISCOVER AND AFFIRM



A large red boat is positioned on the left side of the frame, partially obscured by green foliage. The water is calm, reflecting the sky and the distant mountains. In the background, there are several small structures and what appears to be a fishing or aquaculture setup with wooden frames. The sky is overcast with soft, diffused light.

When a missionary goes to the field they should never go thinking that the people they are serving are projects. The people we minister to are our partners in the mission. As we go out, we are gathering more mission partners to exponentially expand the mission force. One of the great joys of ministry is seeing someone go from darkness to light, from being an enemy of God to being used by God to advance His kingdom. The work of the missionary is to see that believers are not only established but that their gifts are identified and that they are able to find their place in the kingdom.

Our eventual desire is to see a healthy, reproducing, indigenous church be established. We seek to train obedience-oriented disciples who make other disciples in planting indigenous churches that are self-led, self-supporting, self-theologizing, and self-repro-

ducing. How do we get to this step in the process? After we arrive, build trust, have spiritual conversations, share the gospel, nurture, and help new believers, we then help people discover their gifts and affirm them publicly in their role in the local church.

Phase 7: Discover
*Helping People Find
Their Place in the Kingdom*

Discipleship is ultimately about mission. That statement might seem controversial because it could easily be said that discipleship is about worship. In one sense, it is true that discipleship should lead people to live in a manner that all of life is done as worship towards Jesus. But, if you drill down, Jesus wanted us to think about discipleship in the context of obedience. We are to teach people to obey all things Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:18-20). It is the role of the missionary to see people follow Jesus, which means they will use their gifts, talents, and skills to serve the advancement of the mission. Ephesians 2:8-10 says that God not only saves us by grace through faith, but also that we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, that God prepared beforehand, before the foundation of the world. God has saved us for works. As the Apostle Paul will say in chapter 4 of Ephesians, the church is to be equipped for the work of service; ministry to the body of Christ.

With this as an understanding, discipleship is about helping people find their place in the kingdom. Our

mission is not done when we have a convert walking with the Lord - our goal is to help them serve the Lord by using all that God has given them for kingdom work.

How do we do this? How do we help people find their place in the kingdom? The key to this kind of work is observation and equipping.

Observation: to observe is to watch a person's life to see what gifts and talents emerge. If people in the community are following them, then they might have leadership skills. If they seem to do well teaching and people go to them for understanding, then they might be a teacher. This is not difficult, but it does take time and patience. It is the fruit of a relationship built on time and trust.

As we observe people we can share what we have witnessed in them and open up a dialog with the person. In this dialog, we hear their responses to our observations and see if they have any other latent gifts that they might have identified. In the course of this kind of interactive shepherding, we can come alongside them to help them discover their gifts.

Along with observation, there is something else that we must do to help them discover their gifts, which is, equipping.

Equipping: to equip means to give formal training on understanding their gifts and how they are used in the kingdom of God. It is important that we help the believer understand what leadership looks like in the kingdom of God. We must also show them what the Scriptures say about their gifts. Giving people an under-



standing of how to use their gifts for God's glory will help the convert be productive with their lives.

We cannot assume that people will use their gifts and talents in a manner that will be consistent with the gospel without help. The ethic of the gospel is counter to the ethic of the world. It takes time to understand this as a believer living in a culture where the ethic is in contradiction to the Scriptures. For example, leadership in the world is marked by pride and honor, while in the church it is marked by humility and service. In the world, people use their talents as a point of comparison with others, while in the church we see all gifts and talents as necessary and useful for the building up of the body of Christ.

The role of the missionary is to help someone discover their gifts and talents and then help them to use their gifts for the advancement of the kingdom in accordance with the Scriptures.

Once a gift has been discovered and cultivated, it is important that the missionary do the final step in our process, affirmation.

Phase 8: Affirm
Publicly Affirming the Ministry

There are two aspects of the affirmation process that are important for the missionary to do. One is to affirm all people in their gifts publicly. The other is to affirm the next generation of shepherds for the church.

Affirmation of Everyone: In a new Christian community, the idea of



people serving one another and using their gifts to build each other up can be a new concept. In many cultures, the idea of mutual submission (Ephesians 5:20) is not a common ethic. It is important that as people emerge in their gifts that the missionary publicly identify the gifts to allow people to have a place of service. We must make room for people so that they can serve and work. Some cultures will not make room for people so we must, as missionaries, lovingly help people find their space. We do this by affirming someone in their gifts.

For example, to honor a young man who has a teaching gift by giving him a platform to teach is so crucial to his development and to the mindset of the church. This will allow you, as the missionary, to give someone space to operate.

One practice I like to have is to take some of the believers who have a teaching gift, and train them to teach through a book of the Bible. Then, I schedule a Bible study and announce that I will not be teaching but the young man I trained will

be. When the study begins, I leave the room, leaving him to teach the study. Because the teacher has been trained, I am confident that they will do well. Even if they do not, we will debrief after the study to talk about what happened. This introduces the notion of the body building itself up in love and helps train people to use their gifts to serve each other. It takes time for this kind of culture to be developed.

From personal experience, it can take a while for this to become the norm, but when it does, it unleashes a church.

Yet, there is one more aspect of affirmation—the affirmation of the next generation of leaders.

Affirmation of the Next Generation of Shepherds: As the church body begins to grow in love for each other, the Lord will raise up leaders, (elders, deacons, pastors, evangelists, etc). As these gifts emerge, it is important that the missionary helps the body affirm and appoint the leadership. 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus unpack what is required for these gifts. This work involves helping the church



identify the men who fit the biblical qualification and are ready and prepared for this important work.

It is important that the missionary take the time to read through the Pastoral Epistles to understand what it means to prepare and affirm people for this work. There is much written about this process that is bigger than the scope of this article. My focus here is to make sure that the missionary recognizes the need to affirm the next generation of leadership to help cultivate a culture of leadership development in the church.

I know of one church I worked with that was planted in a former communist country that decided to make this their culture. Several years ago, the current elders that have been serving in this role since the fall of communism, invested into the lives of their next generation of leaders. Then they gathered the new leaders, encircled themselves around them, and laid hands on them. This was a moment where the culture of this church was set—it is important to be equipping and affirming the next generation of leaders. The whole

body witnessed the existing leaders affirming another generation of leaders. It was powerful!

When the missionary focuses on this work, they are reaching the final stages of the church planting work and should be preparing a team to move on to reproduce this work in another location. As we leave the church with healthy leadership we are supporting the longevity of the church.

Discovering and Affirming are essential to the mission. They are the keys to completing the process of the development of a healthy, reproducing, indigenous church.

Part of the mission of To Every Tribe is to send out “missionary teams to plant churches among the unreached,” and so we take seriously this work. May God find us faithful as we do. ■

All photos by Sarah V., To Every Tribe Missionary Trainee | Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. | Footnotes: (1) See *Missionary Methods: St. Paul or Ours?*, by Roland Allen; *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: North America and Beyond*, by David F. Hesselgrave; *A Vision of the Possible: Pioneer Church Planting in Teams*, by Daniel Sindair. (2) Milian Michalko, Director of KAM Czech Republic and Church Planter with City Church Czech. (3) See *Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents*, edited by Dr. Gailyn Van Rheenen for a deeper look into this issue.

EKBALLO