

Inspire

Are we really making disciples?

Across the body of Christ it seems that fewer and fewer people are putting their hands up to plant a church, to pastor an established church, or even to be involved in some level of Senior Leadership.

I am not sure whether it is the failure stories of the past that have frightened future candidates, or whether it is our consumer generation, with people unwilling to make the sacrifices necessary to position themselves to be used by God.

No doubt these reasons are part of the problem, but I would have to say that we are not producing as many disciples as we once did. At one time people would say: "What does the Lord require of me?" but today, it seems that we have swapped the price tags. Now, it's, "What do I require of the Lord and His church?"

What is a disciple?

To see if discipleship is lacking, we must first ask "What is a disciple?" The word 'disciple' is derived from the Greek word meaning 'disciplined one', 'called out', 'a learner', 'an apprentice', 'a follower'. A disciple is someone who is on a journey, one who is committed to change and growth. It's someone who is being mentored...a doer. It's someone who doesn't just believe in Jesus—he or she follows and obeys! Jesus Himself said to His followers: "You call me Lord, but you do not do what I say." Jesus doesn't want to simply be our Saviour; He wants to be Lord of our lives. And that means obedience to His Word. A disciple is someone who has made Jesus not just their Saviour, but also the Lord of their entire lives, including their time, talent money and morals!

So we see that a disciple isn't someone who just comes to church; it's the person who leave church carrying something within his life that others can see.

In the Bible, the word 'Christian' is used three times, but the word 'disciple' is mentioned more than 200 times. It seems that God is committed to you becoming a disciple more than just a Christian. Paul was certainly committed to the end result. Look at what he says in Colossians 1:28-29 "*We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which is so powerfully works in me.*" That sounds like a guy that is committed to discipleship.

Sought Out

The word 'apostle' means 'sent out' not "went out". It was the Lord that sent them! In some way, I suppose that word 'disciple' means 'sought out'.

When I was younger, I was in the Army Reserve—the 'cut-lunch commando's' or the 'weekend warriors' as the regulars liked to call us.

The three weeks of boot camp I did in 1981 were quite tuff. I saw young men drop out, fall out and be kicked out as those three weeks progressed.

God spoke to me during this time concerning discipleship and my training and development time. He said: "Unless you are sought out before you are sent out you will either drop out, fall out or get kicked out how I have seen this over the years."

There is a discipleship that comes in every arena of life. Sadly, some people don't pass the test or qualify. If we are forever bucking, dodging or avoiding the discipline of life, we will never grow up.

Discipleship

If that is what a disciple is then discipleship is the process that makes you into one. The ship or the vessel that navigates you through the process that results in maturity. It's the experiences we need to go through that bring growth.

We all need to work out what some of those processes are within our church, our businesses or even our

marriage. An example of a process might be our coming through a dispute with a good spirit (1Corinthians 11:17). It could be serving in willingly in a seemingly minor task, or it could be our giving (Luke 16:10). Perhaps it could be our completing a Bible study course or a Recovery program.

Let me share with you some principles that promote discipleship.

1. Be Connected

In general, most people who are connected to a local church grow in their faith. People who are disgruntled and break away, doing their own thing and forming their own little groups rarely progress to maturity. I'm not talking people running home groups who have a vision to grow, who embrace new people and have a strong desire to serve others. Rather, the ones who just run a group because they don't want to be part of a church, or who feel they don't fit in Proverbs 18 describes these people well!

Generally they are:

- ◆ lazy when it comes to service,
- ◆ stingy when it comes to giving, and
- ◆ independent when it comes to leadership and vision.

In Ephesians 4:11, Paul writes, "*It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.*"

These ministry gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher are part of the local church—usually the people who lead them. We see that these leaders are to:

- ◆ Prepare and equip,
- ◆ rehearse ahead of time,
- ◆ train, and develop for service.

You are part of a church not to be entertained but equipped, not to be babysat but to

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become, not simply to be blessed but to be a blessing. This happens when you get connected and become involved in your local church—not by just attending on Sundays but by getting involved in some small group where you are studying what you've heard on Sunday. The truth is just hearing a sermon will only guarantee that you receive about 10 percent of it. Studying the sermon will increase that to approximately 30 percent. Being encouraged by a mentor or mate to activate the sermon in your life will increase your understanding and action to 100 percent.

2. Be Active

Discovering your gift, your part, your calling or your talent and then putting it into practice will move you forward in your relationship with God. Look at what Paul said in Philemon 1:6 *"I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ."* (NIV)

- You only grow when you go.
- You only develop when you do.
- You only activate when you act.

I could honestly say that this is one of the main things that has accelerated my growth. Even now as I prepare sermons, minister to others, and lead, train and mentor people, I discover more about God. So get involved! Be active! During the first year I was saved:

- ♦ I was a Sunday School Teacher
- ♦ I was in the drama team
- ♦ I visited a juvenile prison every week
- ♦ I shared my faith at work, and saw a number of my co-workers come to the Lord.

In the second year:

- ♦ I was doing Beach Mission
- ♦ I became a Youth Leader (which I continued for three years)
- ♦ I was a worship leader (Can you believe that!)
- ♦ I ran a small group

Kevin's Travel

Kevin travels into churches he has friendship with to encourage and build into those churches. During the year he will be traveling to:

30th to 31st May	Canberra
19th to 21st June	Shellharbour
10th to 12th July	Thirroul
29th to 30th August	Campbelltown
27th September	Mittagong
23rd to 25th October	Brisbane

In my fourth year after coming to the Lord I became an assistant minister preaching twice a month and travelling to other churches and youth groups. By my sixth year I had taken on my first church. I was preaching every week, running a Bible College, counseling, caring and leading. I did all of this before I was working full time in the ministry. I was just 23 years old and hadn't been to Bible college! I just got involved and had a go at what ever needed doing.

3. Be empowered

It's a simple thing to equip people. It's a matter of teaching the job profile...the ministry, to them. To empower people is to develop them to be the kind of person they need to be in order to achieve success in the job. They're the kind of people that don't give up at the slightest whim. They move on because of vision and calling

Jesus equipped and empowered people. He equipped the 12 and 72 as seen in Luke 9:1-6 and Luke 10:1-12. He taught them how to heal the sick and cast out demons. He taught them how to trust in God, how to bless and receive hospitality, how to handle rejection and so on. But He took some disciples to a whole new level. He was tougher, stronger, more challenging with them. What He was doing was empowering them. James and John returned from preaching to the Samaritans, but they had not been welcomed by them. In response, they wanted to call down fire from heaven to destroy them but Jesus corrected them, thus empowering them through his correction empowering them to handle conflict.

Think about some of the things Jesus said to His followers:

"Let the dead bury their own dead but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God" Luke 9:60

In John 6:60-67 we see many disciple's leaving Jesus on account of what He was saying to them. In verse 61 Jesus asks: *"Does this offend you?"* In verse 67 He asks: *"You do not want to leave too, do you?"* In verse 70 Jesus replied: *"Have I not chosen you, the twelve? Yet one of you is the devil!"*

Kevin's CD packs

Kevin has recently produced some fantastic sermons for people to give away to friends journeying in their faith. Sermon titles include:

- ♦ Regrets if I could turn back time
- ♦ Shame
- ♦ Doubt

Also this sermon on Discipleship is on CD Minimum order of Packs of 5 per CD sent at \$20.00 which includes postage & handling. Ph 4961 0211 to order your CD's today.

It was as if He was really shaking them up testing them to the very core of their commitment. He seemed to be saying: *"Hey guys, if you don't want to play with the big dogs stay on the porch."*

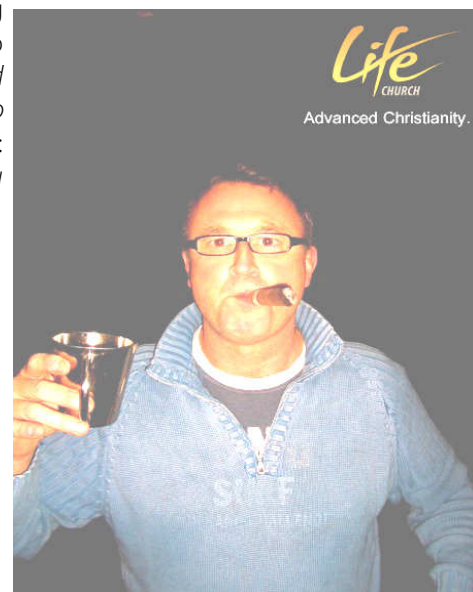
What about Peter! How much did he cop it from the Lord, like when Jesus said: *"Get behind me satan."* or *"Put your sword back in its place...for all who draw the sword will die by the sword."* He also said: *"... before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times."* And *"Satan has asked to sift you as wheat."*

Jesus was empowering Peter. What He said would have seemed negative at the time but there was Peter on the Day of Pentecost witnessing, 3000 people being swept into the Kingdom. So in this new age of extra sensitivity, it is not the time to hold back in challenging people, even testing people's commitment to the cause, through minimal tasks and giving.

Let them handle conflict—both the conflict that might be within them and the conflict around them. Don't totally protect people. God is empowering them! Over the years I have been quite strong and deliberate in my leadership, but then again there are dozens of people that are missionaries, senior ministers and other full time workers in various positions within the body of Christ as a result.

As we train people and raise them up they will move into more of what God has called them to, being ready, mature, complete and lacking nothing.

Kevin



**Only the strong
apply for this course**



GlobeReach some of the works we support overseas

Fiji—Peter Schultz

Reflections & Observations

On Tuesday 4 November, Rob Fryer (Bel Air Baptist), David & Merrill Barr (Thornleigh Baptist) and myself, Phil Skinner, departed Sydney for Fiji to spend time with Peter, Jill and the family.

After a four hour flight followed by a local four hour bus ride we arrived in Suva to be met by a very excited Schultz family. For the next week we visited with prisoners and spoke several times at Nasinu Prison. We had meals and fellowship with various missionaries, we visited Central Baptist Church and Lami SPEF Church, we met with ex-prisoners and spent many hours talking with Peter and Jill about ministry challenges and directions.

In our short stay we observed much and got to appreciate more of the ministry and its diversity. In brief the ministry has a number of arms:

- ♦ A ministry to prisoners in the prison
- ♦ A ministry to released prisoners and their families
- ♦ A ministry of hospitality to other missionaries serving in Fiji.

Peter can be booked for ministry while in Australia

- ♦ A Ministry to two local churches through preaching, workshops and retreats.

We found that Peter and Jill have a unique ministry of pastoral support to quite a wide and diverse group of people. This is costly in time, energy and dollars.

What we have also observed is that Peter and Jill have built quite a network of people who are supportive, appreciative and helpful in the ministry—including those in the leadership of the Fiji Prison System.

Rob, David and I came together in early 2007 to form a Board—or accountability body, for Peter, Jill and family and it is our pleasure and privilege to bring you some of our perspectives of their ministry as we write this particular Report. So this month you will see Peter and Jill and the ministry through our eyes.

We found Peter and Jill well and in good spirits albeit tired and somewhat overwhelmed by the ministry opportunities. We want to thank you all sincerely for your support of the Schultz

family and ask for your continued prayerful and where possible, financial support.

Phil Skinner

Senior Pastor—Wallsend Baptist Church

SOME BASIC FACTS

Prisons in Fiji	13
Prison inmate population	950+
Avg age of inmates in Nasinu	24
Avg length of sentence in Nasinu	2.4yrs
Life Prisoners in Nasinu	8
Total inmates ministered to	500+
Total ex-inmates worked with	120

Fiji Living Expenses

Cheese	\$11.50	500g
Weetbix	\$10.00	500g
Vegetemite	\$10.90	400g
Fish	\$18.00	bundle



Peter Schultz

Email: peter.d.schultz@gmail.com

Cambodia—Donna Byham

Here & Now

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God." Jesus

Whenever I return to Australia I always find it difficult. It is great to spend time with family and friends, but what is difficult is coming into the abundance—abundance of space, food, time, technology and abundance of things, wants and not needs.

Most people in Australia are on an upward journey in this abundance, moving towards prosperity. My journey though is a downward one into simplicity, which is how I live when I live among the poor in Yangon. And this is a downward journey of simplicity which I think our faith calls us all to.

I recently came across a quote by Thomas Merton written back in 1956, which stopped me in my tracks:

"The great tragedy of our age is the fact, if one may dare to say it, that there are so many godless Christians—Christians, that is, whose religion is a matter of pure

conformism and expediency. Their "faith" is little more than a permanent evasion of reality—a compromise with life. In order to avoid admitting the uncomfortable truth that they no longer have any real need for God or any vital faith in Him, they conform to the outward conduct of others like themselves. And these "believers" cling together, offering one another an apparent justification for lives that are essentially the same as the lives of their materialistic neighbours whose horizons are purely those of the world and its transient values."

Sadly not much has changed in this age! So for this time that I'm in Australia there is a clash of worlds within me between the materialistic values of this world and the simplicity of the poor in God's Kingdom.

Praise points:

- ♦ The staff and Board are doing a great job in Cambodia, JH and DH continue to go very well with my transition out of Cambodia
- ♦ Two of our Burma Team members had a very valuable and productive foundational trip into Yangon.

Prayer Points:

- ♦ For the secondment from Sure Destiny to Servants Asia. That a good balance can be found between my responsibilities with SD Cambodia and with Servants.
- ♦ Preparation physically, emotionally and spiritually for Burma during this transition time in Australia

"The present is the mother of the future"
Maha Ghosananda, revered Cambodian Monk

Many Blessings

Donna Byham

Email: donnabyham@gmail.com



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Having Life Outside of the Ministry - Emil (pastor of South Coast City Church Shellharbour)

Family Holiday

Well surely this year will be for me the case. Karin and I are going to Europe for ten weeks. For me, it will be my first holiday that is longer than four days in 20 years. On top of that it will be the first time I have gone to my old homeland (Czech Republic) in 29 years! Wow!

I left the old home, running from the law and communist regime just five minutes before being arrested and facing jail or even death in a labour camp...I was a very bad man in my old country, involved in organized crime and political rebellion as well. My life was very dark then, violence, alcohol, prostitution...you name it I have done it.

After escaping to Austria (run the border with two daughters and my first wife) we came to Australia. Within six months my wife left me for another man. A time of despair, alcohol and drugs found me in

hospital where during a routine operation with kidney stones, doctors lost me on the operating table. I was dead for six hours. Then something brought me back. A year later I found Jesus! I believe He was the one who brought me back even before I knew Him. Today after twenty seven years of serving Him, I am packing my luggage to make a trip back where I came from. Mixed feelings as you can imagine.

Someone asked me: "How do you feel to go back after such a long time?" Good question! First of all it means for me letting go of my ministry and church for that length of time! I am from a family of four children! All scattered across the world. It will be the first time in 43 years that all four of us will be together in one room—that on its own is huge.

Unfortunately our parents are not alive anymore. The emotions will be high—can you imagine.

The other part of the trip is even more personal. As I have already mentioned, I was a very bad boy. It will have an amazing impact on me because most of my life in that country was in a very dark and violent scene and now I will see all of it in the light, through the eyes of a changed, restored and saved man. This time I will be there as a human being full of passion for life, joyful for living, free to move around and enjoy the amazing experience of life. Only one thing could spoil my trip. That is if I would come across some of the people I used to be involved with, but again this time I am no longer he who lives but He who lives in me.

Thanks for letting me share with you a little bit about my "Life Outside of Ministry" or is it?

Emil Varga
Email: emil@sccc.com.au



NO PERFECT PEOPLE ALLOWED

Creating A Come As You Are Culture

John Burke
serves as lead pastor at Gateway Community Church in Austin, Texas, a congregation dedicated to helping unchurched people become a unified community of growing Christ-followers, no matter what their background or past. He is also the president of Emerging Leadership Initiative (ELI), a non-profit organization founded to help establish a multiplying network of missional churches that envision, equip, and empower young emerging leaders to plant innovative churches. Before starting Gateway, John was the executive director of ministries at Willow Creek Community Church. John is the author of *No Perfect People Allowed* and *Soul Revolution*. He and Kathy are the parents of two children, Ashley and Justin.

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