



DYNAMIC

Steward

Exploring Partnership with God

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All we have, all we are

Pointing to the widow placing two copper coins into the offering box, Jesus taught a poignant lesson—that discipleship is dynamic stewardship. He said, *I tell you the truth, this poor widow has . . . put in everything she had to live on (Mk 12:43,44)*. This short narrative is integrated into the larger story of who Jesus is and what it means to be His disciple. For centuries this widow's act has served as a powerful paradigm for Christ's disciples. By giving all she had to live on, this unnamed widow responded to Christ's call to take up one's cross daily and follow Him (*Lk 9:23*). *Only a man . . . totally committed in discipleship can experience the meaning of the cross*—Bonhoffer. Discipleship demands total commitment of all we have (our resources) and all we are (our total self).

Jesus summoned the rich young ruler to model this dynamic stewardship. *He said 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.' At this the man's face fell. He went away sad (Mk 10:21, 22)*. The rich young ruler stands in stark contrast to the poor widow. In giving away his wealth, he would have removed the only obstacle that kept him from true discipleship.

As true disciples of Jesus, we express our trusting relationship with Jesus by being good stewards of our time, talent, and all that is in our domain—our total lifestyle. Stewardship and discipleship are inextricably tied together. At the 1999 International Consultation on Discipleship, *John R W Stott called attention to the 'strange and disturbing paradox' of the contemporary Christianity situation: 'We have experienced enormous statistical growth' he said 'without corresponding growth in discipleship. . . . God is not pleased with superficial discipleship.'* . . . *Tokunboh Adeyemo pointed to the same paradox on his continent, where the phenomenal numerical growth of Christianity is matched only by the mind-boggling butchery of Christians engaging in the horrors of ethnic cleansing. 'The church in Africa,' said Adeyemo, 'is one mile long, but only one inch deep.'*—*Christianity Today*, 43:12, 1999, p 28.

Stewardship summons the disciple to a deeper experience of godliness and godlikeness. In the Tamil language, the word for *Christian* literally means *he/she is a Christ*. *Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus (Phil 2:4,5)*. Yes, a disciple of Christ must be concerned about others and the world around him. Yes stewardship is inclusive and demanding—but that is discipleship.

Melchizedek M Ponniah, Vice President, Adventist World Aviation, Berrien Springs, Michigan

Application



Using John 8:31 (*If you make My Word your home, you will indeed be My disciple, New Jerusalem Version*) as its theme, the small group Bible study program, *Disciple*, encourages its users to find a home in the Word of God; and in that home find love, direction, nurture, and correction. The *Disciple* Bible Study Program is designed to develop strong Christian leaders in local churches through the in-depth study of Scripture. Through *Disciple*, church members will be strengthened in their faith and guided into service and ministry. Strong, biblically-nourished leadership will help churches grow in vitality and Christian discipleship.

The *Disciple* Bible Study Program comes in two formats, one specifically geared for youth and the other for adults.

Studying in three phases

Divided into three phases, *Disciple* aims at transformation, not just information. Students in *Disciple* groups are called upon, each week, to seriously consider their call to discipleship through their personal encounter with the Scriptures, coupled with participation in group sessions. The study is built around a commitment and covenant to *participate, prepare, and be present* in each of the two and one-half hour weekly sessions.

Transforming lives across the globe

Across the world, many have discovered the Bible as their home through the *Disciple* Bible Study Program! Over the last 14 years, *Disciple* has had over 650,000 participants in the United States alone! This number is representative of 32 denominations. The study is translated into Korean, Spanish, German, French, and Chinese (both Mandarin and Cantonese dialects). It is available in Australia, Africa, Belgium, Canada, England, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Ireland, Korea, Malaysia New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland, and the Virgin Islands. Since 1937, 34,000 people, representing 11,000 churches, have been trained to lead one or more phases of *Disciple*.

This data bears strong witness to God's working through the *Disciple* Bible study program. *Disciple* graduates continue to share their stories of how lives have been transformed and people have been called to teach, preach, and serve those who are in need of love and Christian witness.

Challenging one church at a time

Disciple offers congregations and individuals both a challenge and a promise. The challenge is to recognize Scripture as the starting point and foundation for all of the congregation's ministries, and to see the study of Scripture in *Disciple* as a path to renewed and vital ministry through transformed and committed people. The promise is that all who come to Scripture allowing God's Word to have its say will, with the help of the Holy Spirit, experience the power that changes priorities and redirects lives.

The past of the *Disciple* program is filled with great witness, the present is inspiring and challenging, and the future holds awesome opportunities!

Contact information

For additional information, visit *Disciple* at www.umph.org/disciple; call 800-672-1789 or 615-749-6000; or fax 615-749-6049.

Discipling by the Book

Two churches in our local area have used *Disciple* for both youth and adults. The contact persons listed below have graciously agreed to answer specific questions you may have about this Bible study program, and the difference it can make in your congregation.

—DS

Rebecca Brillhart

Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church
7700 Carroll Ave
Takoma Park, MD 20912
Telephone: 301-270-6777

Bonita Shields

Spencerville Seventh-day Adventist Church
16325 New Hampshire Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20905
Telephone: 301-384-2920

Wini Grizzle, Director, Disciple Bible Study Program, Nashville, Tennessee

Discipleship Resources is a publishing unit of the *General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church*. Listed below are some of their discipleship resources designed especially for youth. Using resources such as these will help young people walk with Jesus every day.

***Together in Love*, by David C Sutherland (US\$ 13.95)**

While primarily providing a structured way for youth and college students to grow to be accountable disciples of Jesus Christ, this book is designed to also hold youth and college students accountable to one another. After mutually agreeing to a covenant that includes acts of devotion, worship, compassion, and justice, youth meet regularly for starting, maintaining, and creating youth *Covenant Discipleship Groups*; conducting group meetings; and sharing ideas and information.

***Culture Shifts*, by Craig Miller and Lia Icaza-Willetts (US\$ 15.95)**

Home life and congregational life are constantly bombarded by changes in our culture. Over the course of 10 sessions, this book examines 9 culture shifts that affect youth in their personal and church life. Using this as the foundation of a group study will help develop a daily devotional life and hold one another accountable for discipleship. Included is a *Guide for Daily Devotions* focusing on Psalms.

***Sprouts*, by Edie Genung Harris and Shirley L. Ramsey (US\$ 11.95)**

This weekly program outline for children (grades 3-6) was created with the primary purpose of encouraging children to regularly support one another in their efforts to live as disciples of Christ. It also incorporates life-application by helping them choose deeds that demonstrate their love for God and for others.

***Hand in Hand*, by Sue Downing (US\$ 16.95)**

Designed to help parents rear their children as Christian disciples, this book contains ideas, suggestions, and activities to help children make prayer a vital part of daily life; read the Bible so that it's fun, exciting, and meaningful; and actively integrate Jesus into everyday life.

Walking with Jesus every day

Discipleship Resources

P O Box 1616
Alpharetta, GA 30009-1616
online: discipleshipresources.org
phone: 800-685-4370; 770-442-8633
fax: 770-442-9742

Quotes on discipleship . . .

Jesus Christ didn't commit the gospel to an advertising agency; He commissioned disciples.—*Joseph Bayly*

Salvation is free, but discipleship costs everything we have.—*Billy Graham*

Discipleship means discipline. The disciple is one who has come with his ignorance, superstition, and sin to find learning, truth, and forgiveness from the Savior. Without discipline we are not disciples.—*Victor Raymond Edman*

Discipleship and salvation are two different things: a disciple is one who, realizing the meaning of the atonement, deliberately gives himself up to Jesus Christ in unspeakable gratitude.—*Oswald Chambers*

We should live our lives as though Christ were coming this afternoon.—*Jimmy Carter*

Christianity is something which is meant to be seen. As someone has well said, *There can be no such thing as secret discipleship, for either the secrecy destroys the discipleship, or the discipleship destroys the secrecy.* A man's Christianity should be perfectly visible to all men.—*William Barclay*

A fundamental law of teaching states: You cannot impart what you do not possess.—*Author unknown*

Discipleship is anything that causes what is believed in the heart to have demonstrable consequences in our daily life.—*Eugene Petersen*

The world has yet to see what God can do with and for and through and in a man who is fully and wholly consecrated to Christ.—*Henry Varley*

God doesn't have any part-timers. He calls men to complete self-denial and obedience. That's discipleship.—*John S Barnett*

Waiting . . . becomes a great opportunity to grow. It is one of God's tools to shape us into the image of Jesus.—*Jim Carpenter*

We are on the right track when we define the demands of discipleship not in terms of what we think or feel but in terms of what the cross meant to Jesus.—*Jerry Harvill*

He does not want us to present a sacrifice at the altar; He wants us on the altar.—*Alan Nelson*

Concept



Come, be a part of Me

*In our desire
to preserve
God's divinity
we sometimes
drain Him of
His passion
and make
Him too
unemotional.
We need to
have an image
of Him that
moves us to
tears and
cheers. God is
a passionate
God!
—Phil Davis*

The scene repeats itself daily. God walks into your life and invites you to walk with Him—to open your life to His presence. It's called discipleship, and it is the most exciting privilege available today. In the beginning Adam and Eve began life in an intimate relationship with God. Soon after that perfect beginning, sin distorted and destroyed that relationship. Ever since, God has sought to restore that relationship one person at a time.

Jesus began His ministry by calling 12 to accompany Him on a unique journey of ministry and sacrifice, a journey that would climax at the cross. The 12 were distinguished by their ordinariness, not by their talent, power, or position. Yet the journey took them from a cross to an upper room. From there, 120 disciples went out with a vision to change the world. And they did more than change—they turned the world upside down. Since the 120, the power of Christianity has transformed culture and become the pivotal point in history. Yet today, Christianity has lost its vitality; squandered its power; and become a cultural reflection of the world around it. So perhaps it is time to go back to the basics—*making disciples*.

A disciple is one who walks with, learns from, and lives in submission to a master in order to become like the master. An exploration of the lives of great men and women in Scripture reveals five characteristics of the true disciple.

A disciple is passionately in love with Jesus Christ. We have been God's consuming passion for 6000 years. In 10 different passages, He calls us to love Him with all our hearts, mind, soul, and strength. He invites us to love Him as He loves us—*passionately*. If Jesus Christ is not our consuming passion, then someone or something else will be, and to that degree we would be practicing a form of idolatry.

A disciple maintains intimacy with God. The level of passion in any relationship is in direct proportion to the level of intimacy. The Christian builds intimacy through daily time in prayer, Bible study, scripture memorization, and meditation.

A disciple integrates God into every area of life. This is a second level of intimacy. A marriage needs two forms of intimacy—the physical and the sharing of life together. Without either of these, the passion will grow cold. So also in the walk with God. It is not enough to have just a devotional life—the first level of intimacy. We need the second intimacy of inviting God to share every part of our lives. In this way intimacy and passion grow in the relationship with God.

A disciple makes God a priority in every decision. If God is really God, then He is the most important factor in every area of life. When He is left out of our decision-making, we are in control. Some Christians are learning to decline promotions that offer more money because of the negative impact the promotion could have on their walk with God and their role in the church.

A disciple actively shares Christ with others. This does not mean the ability to explain all doctrines or answer all questions. It simply means sharing the testimony of what God has done in our lives.

These characteristics create a picture of vibrant Christianity that can transform daily life. Each one involves a process of ongoing growth. No one can reach a place where growth stops. Yet, tragically many Christians are such in name only—spiritual infants who never grow into disciples. Paul speaks of this kind of Christian when he prophesies that at the end of time there will be those who will have *a form of godliness, but denying its power* (2 Tim 3:5).

The gospel commission (*Matt 28:18-20*) clearly challenges us to make disciples in the context of Christ's promised presence and His power or authority in heaven and on earth. Could it be that we have been so busy counting converts that we have overlooked making disciples? Have we confused the desired end-product of our evangelism? Are we caught in the trap of institutional greatness that has led us to overlook the essence of our mission—making disciples?

Let's allow the Holy Spirit to move us away from the institutional, numerical dynamics of baptizing for numbers. Let's move to the higher agenda of

discipling. We must recognize that we can only disciple those who have first responded to the wonder of the gospel, finding peace and assurance of salvation. Without this relationship, any attempt to disciple is doomed to the failure of producing legalistic slaves—people focused on their own performance rather than the kingdom of grace.

It is this experience of the gospel that initially awakens the disciple's passion for God. We then nurture this passion as we help the disciple train to be godly (*1 Tim 4:7*). We must teach people to daily feed at God's banquet table instead of relying on secondhand crumbs from others—to focus on the life and ministry of Jesus. As we behold Him, we grow to love Him and trust Him enough to accept Him as lord of our lives.

Still it is not enough to affirm the gospel or accept God as owner. For it is here that the Christian's greatest frustration comes. We know what we should do. We want to do it. Each time we try, we find ourselves frustrated by good but ineffectual efforts. All our attempts are frustrated by our inherent sinful nature which keeps breaking through.

The secret of discipleship is found in accepting the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. He has promised to give us a new heart and to put His Spirit in our hearts (*Eze 36:26, 27*). This is the power that produces the fruit in the life of discipleship. Paul talks about being transformed by the Spirit so that Christ can dwell in our hearts through faith (*Eph 3:15-19*). Discipleship is this intimate and powerful union or partnership with God. It is growing in this friendship as we become one with Him, and it is taking this relationship into every area of life.

Today, once again, God walks into your life and calls *Come, follow Me. Walk with Me. Live with Me. Let Me be part of your life*. He invites you to extend the invitation to others, and then walk beside them to help them become disciples. It is a daily adventure, learning to live with the King of Kings, to live on His throne (*Eph 2:6*). Let God be God each day, in every decision and every area of life.

I believe we have come to a critical crossroad for the institutional church. It is time that we ask ourselves: *Will we grow as the body of Christ, or will we deteriorate into institutional fossilization—destined to a brief moment of glory that fades into the organizational anonymity of one more fragmenting structure?* It is time to return to the basics. It is time to *make disciples*. It is time to let God be God and let the church become the Church—the Body of Christ!

Benjamin C. Maxson, Director, General Conference Stewardship Department

Stewardship Window More from the director's desk . . .



If tithe is worship, where should I tithe? This is a question that we hear repeatedly in many different places around the world. When tithe is seen as a duty, it is easy to also tell where and how the tithe should be given. However, when people discover tithe as worship, some are tempted to think worship means one can use the tithe in any way one chooses. So, are there some biblical principles to guide our thinking as we worship?

The first issue is, what does tithing as worship say? When we return tithe to God, our worship is acknowledging that as Creator and Redeemer, He is owner of all that we have and are. We are accepting an incredible partnership of managing His resources here on earth.

Since tithes are returned to God, where we return our tithe is a statement of where we think God is. God told the Israelites to bring the tithe to the place He had chosen as a dwelling place for His name (*Deut 12:11*). For Israel that meant the Sanctuary. With the New Testament, God's Church becomes the dwelling place for His name. So as we choose where we will return our tithe, we are making a decision and a statement about where we think God's Church is. If we have our membership in one place and return our tithe in another there is a conflict between what our membership says and what our tithe says. Why would we want to be members of a church—thus saying we believe that is where God is—and in turn place our tithe somewhere else—thus saying we don't think the church is where God is?

So the sequence in deciding where we will tithe is simple. First we choose to accept Christ as Savior and become part of what the Holy Spirit leads us to conclude is His church. Then we make a decision acknowledging God as owner. We follow that choice by yielding to the Holy Spirit's conviction to tithe. When you are tempted to send your tithe to simply a place of your choice, ask yourself *What am I saying with where I choose to send my tithe? Do I believe this is God's church? Can I trust God to guide His Church even though church leadership is human and may make mistakes?* Then choose to worship God by returning the tithe to His dwelling place as He has invited.

— Benjamin C Maxson

Sermons

Scripture Reading:
*In the same way,
any of you who does not
give up everything he
has cannot be
my disciple.*
—Luke 14:33

Pursuit of excellence

*This is one of eight
stewardship sermons written
specifically for YOUTH.
Copies of the other seven sermons
are available as an email
attachment or on disk from the
General Conference
Stewardship Department
301-680-6157
gcstewardship@compuserve.com*

Introduction

He was a well known teacher, a great scholar. To have been in his class was an honor. To be called his student was a privilege. Once someone asked the teacher *Do you remember Mr. So and So? He tells me he was one of your students.*

He thought for a moment and responded, *I had no student by that name. Are you sure?*

I am certain. I remember all my students. There are many who sit in my class, listen to my lectures, even pass my class with excellent grades. But only a few are my students. There is a world of difference between attending lectures and being a student. The same is true with Christians. There is a world of difference between a follower of Jesus and a disciple of Jesus.

To be a mere follower is easy. There are a lot of followers in this world. Some follow close enough to see a shadow of Jesus ahead of them. Some follow from a comfortable distance—they cannot quite see Jesus from where they are, but they're content in the knowledge that He is there. Followers believe in Jesus. Followers want everything they can get from God, but they hesitate to give of themselves. The thought of giving makes them stop in their tracks and fall back even more. What will you be for God? A follower or a disciple?

Disciples endure stormy weather

In the initial stages of discipleship you get 'stormy weather,' then you lose the nightmare of your own separate individuality and become part of the personality of Christ, and the thought of yourself never bothers you anymore because you are taken up with your relationship to God.—Oswald Chambers.

When he was 13 years old, John Harper received Jesus as lord of his life. He began to preach, four years later, at the ripe old age of 17. Down the streets of his village he walked, pouring out his soul, entreating all to be reconciled to God. When asked what his doctrine consisted of, he was known to reply *The Word of God!*

Soon after their daughter Nana was born, Harper's wife died. The night of April 14, 1912, Harper and his little girl were aboard the RMS Titanic, the world's largest man-made moveable object. At 11:40 pm on that fateful night, an iceberg scraped the ship's starboard side, showering the decks with ice and ripping open six watertight compartments. As soon as it was apparent that the ship was going to sink, John Harper immediately took his daughter to a lifeboat. He too could have easily gotten on board this boat to safety; however, it never seems to have crossed his mind. He bent down and kissing his precious little girl, told her that she would see him again someday. The flares going off in the dark sky above reflected the tears on his face as he turned and headed towards the crowd of desperate humanity

on the sinking ocean liner, yelling, *Women, children and unsaved into the lifeboats!* It was only minutes before the ship broke in half, and 1528 people went into the frigid waters. John Harper was seen swimming frantically to people. He swam up to one young man who had climbed up on a piece of debris. He asked him between breaths, *Are you saved?* The young man replied that he was not. Harper then tried to lead him to Christ, only to have the young man who was near shock, reply *No.* John Harper then took off his life jacket and threw it to the man and said, *Here then, you need this more than I do.* Harper tried to swim back to help other people, yet, because of the intense cold, grew too weak to swim. His last words before going under in the frigid waters were: *Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus and you will be saved*—The Titanic's Last Hero, Moody Press, 1997.

God's steward leads a life of discipleship. Do you trust God enough to face the storms of your life? Can you look at adversity and say, *Lord, if this is the cross I need to bear today, I will because I love you.*

Disciples pay with their lives

While Jesus ministered to people on earth, He had many followers. People followed Him in throngs. You remember reading about 5000 people who followed Him just to hear him preach. Many followed Him, but only a handful were disciples. Only His disciples took on the responsibility to spread God's word. And what did this commitment of discipleship cost them? What happened to the first 12 disciples? James the brother of Jesus was killed by mobs in Jerusalem. And so was



James the son of Zebedee. Matthew was slain with a sword; Philip was hanged; Bartholomew was flayed alive; Andrew, Simon, and Peter were crucified; Thomas was run through with a lance; Thaddeus was shot to death with arrows; Matthias was beheaded.

Mother Teresa said *Love, to be real, must cost. It must hurt. It must empty us of self.* German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was executed by the Nazis because of his testimony, made this statement: *When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die.* To follow Jesus no matter what the cost—that's the way of the cross.

Disciples turn the world upside down.

From our limited perspective, the work of the apostles was unbelievable, absolutely mystifying. These unknown, uncouth, uneducated men literally turned the world upside down. We are astonished at contemporary figures such as Mother Teresa. How could one so frail, small, and so ordinary, do so much for so many with so little. *What is a yoke really for? Is it to be a burden to the animal which wears it? It is just the opposite. It is to make its burden light. Attached to the oxen in any other way than by a yoke the plough would be intolerable. A yoke is not an instrument of torture; it is an instrument of mercy. It is not a malicious contrivance for making work hard; it is a gentle device to make hard labor light. It is not meant to give pain, but to save pain. And yet men speak of the yoke of Christ as if it were a slavery and look upon those who wear it as objects of compassion.*—John Drummond

When Jesus commissioned His disciples to carry on His work, to go make a difference, the disciples were excited. They didn't say, *How can 12 men change the world?* or *There's no way we can make a difference!* Instead, they took their job seriously. They knew the risks and dangers, yet they did not hesitate. They went out into the unknown and made a difference. Because of those 12 dedicated disciples, Christianity lives today.

What is God commissioning you to do? Be silent and listen. Through His Holy Spirit, God will outline His plan for you. And when you hear it, take it on with pride, without fear; with enthusiasm, without questions. And go out there and make a difference!

Disciples pursue excellence

What does the word *excellence* bring to mind? We often tack the word *excellence* on the backs of the rich and the famous. But not all of the rich and famous were born that way. They had to start somewhere. They had to strive for excellence. They had to work hard. They never settled for mediocrity. Their dreams were ever clear. Ask God to show you what He wants to make excellent in your life.

A life of excellence has nothing to do with appearance, financial status, education, physical strength, or pedigree. Excellence is an attitude, a way of thinking, that pleases God. A lifestyle of discipleship strives at excellence. Where in your life do you desire excellence? Whether it's your job, your marriage, your health, or your walk with God, you have already been commanded to pursue excellence. Christians are called to live by the highest standards of excellence. That means that your life will involve hard work, sacrifice, patience. Are you willing to pay the price? Or would you prefer living within self-imposed expectations and boundaries?

Conclusion

Corrie ten Boom, the woman who endured such brutality from the Nazis in Ravensbruck during World War II, once said that she had learned to hold everything loosely in her hand. She said she discovered, in her years of walking with Him, that when she grasped things tightly, it would hurt when the Lord would have to pry her fingers loose. Disciples hold all *things* loosely.

When you are a disciple, you never know when stormy weather will come your way. You never know what you may have to give up. You never know when you will be called to turn the world upside down. When He calls, will you have a tight grip on your life, or will you hold all earthly things loosely? Remember, you have access to the powers of heaven (*Jn 14:12-14*). Remember to hold all things loosely. Be more than a mere follower. Be a disciple.

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask Me for anything in My name, and I will do it.

—John 14: 12-14

In every heart there is a throne,
And there is a cross.
If Christ is on the throne,
Then self is on the cross.
But if self is on the throne,
Then Christ is on the cross.

*It never cost a
disciple
anything to
follow Jesus:
to talk about
cost when you
are in love
with someone
is an insult.
—Oswald Chambers*

Introduction

It is a logical, natural assumption that if you follow Jesus, you will have good health, money, and great success. Jesus, however, tells us that Christianity comes with a cross. No doubt there are joys—guilt-free through the forgiveness of sins; peace that passes human understanding; confidence that all things work out to our benefit; and hope of heaven. He also taught that there will be suffering, struggles and troubles to be endured.

Jesus taught a balanced gospel. He wanted us to understand the genuine joys of Christianity with a cross, and yet at the same time understand that there must be a personal commitment and a cost of discipleship. During His ministry, people followed Him for various reasons: Some out of curiosity, some for the loaves and the fishes, some to catch Him in false teachings, some because they understood Him to be the Messiah of an earthly kingdom. Detecting their incorrect motives, Jesus said, *Whoever does not take up his cross and follow me, cannot be my disciple*. What do these strange words of Jesus say to those of us who want to follow Him? What does it mean to take up the cross and follow Jesus? Just what is the cost of discipleship?

An instrument of death

The Romans didn't put a man on a cross to discipline, punish, or rehabilitate. The cross was an instrument of execution. Many have mistaken ideas of what it means to take up the cross and follow after Jesus. Some think that Jesus was talking about Him carrying His own cross. Others think that in some way Jesus was telling us to bear His cross. But, in Luke 14, Jesus is not speaking of His crucifixion, but ours! Jesus is not speaking of His death, but our death! Some think of cross-bearing as suffering that must be endured. We've all said, *Well there's nothing I can do about this—it's just my cross to bear*. We see the cross as pain, suffering and trouble.

Jesus is not speaking of suffering. He is not calling us to an endurance of persecution and abuse. The most common thought is that a cross is symbolic of service. We read this passage and see the cross as Christian service, working for Jesus in His Kingdom. True, we must have a sense of duty, but this is not what Jesus is speaking of in Luke 14. He says, *Anyone who does not carry, does not take up HIS cross and follow Me cannot be my disciple*. Jesus is insisting that the cross we take up is our own. *If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple (v 27)*. We don't carry the cross as a service to Jesus or anyone else. The cross we bear is our own.

Bonhoffer wrote, *When Christ calls, He calls us to come and die*. Paul tells us when this dying occurs. *What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin (Rom 6:1-6)*.

You will never be a disciple until you die to sin, die to self, and die to the world. Our discipleship begins in a grave (Rom 6:3, 4). Baptism, being born again, is a death. Baptism, being born again is taking up the cross of Jesus. Not only do we die to sin in the act of baptism, but we also continue to die daily in our Christian walk (Gal 2:20; 1 Cor 15:31; Rom 6). Baptism is not all there is to taking up the cross of Jesus. It is not enough to die once in the act of baptism. We must die daily in the way we live. Paul is saying, *My life is no longer mine: I give it to Jesus daily. I am under His control. He commands, I obey. He directs, I respond. He calls, I answer. His interests are my interests. His agenda is my agenda*.

Dying daily

Why do we struggle in our Christian walk? Why do we experience discontentment? Because we try to follow Jesus' way as well as our own way. We're not willing to allow Jesus total and absolute control. We're not willing to crown



Him lord and king over every facet of our lives. We are not dead yet. No wonder Paul admonished the Philippian church and us, *Let the mind, the heart, be in you that was in Christ*. Not considering His own interest and equality with God as something to be held on to, He emptied Himself, taking on the very nature of a servant, and submitting to death, even the death on a cross. Are we willing to die? The Hebrew writer spoke to us about crucifying the Lord again and again, crucifying Him afresh. That is exactly what we do when we don't enthrone Him, when we don't grant Him lordship over our lives daily. Indeed, discipleship involves a cross.

We tend to compartmentalize our lives. We take six days a week for ourselves and give God one. We take 90% of our salary and give Him 10%. We renounce and repent of many sins, but build a hedge around, and justify, our favorite one. We love everyone and behave ourselves in the company of Christians, but act like the world when we are not in their company. But genuine discipleship, Christianity with a cross, demands we die to this world and place everything, everything under the lordship of Jesus—money, time, talent, energy, emotions, desires, entertainment choices, friendships, dress code, business, golf playing ethics. It all boils down to who is on the throne and who is on the cross. Our personal world must be totally committed to Him.

True friendship

There is a difference between being a disciple and being a pretender. Pretenders just go through the motions. Pretenders do some of the things disciples do, but they are not really disciples. When it comes to friendship, do we want friends committed to us or those who just pretend? When it comes to soldiering, are we satisfied with those just willing to march in the ranks or those willing to fight the battles.

Discipleship is genuine friendship with Jesus, and a willingness to fight for His cause. The phrase *traveling with Jesus*, as used to in the Bible, refers to the multitudes following Jesus. In Greek it means *simply to accompany, to go for a stroll together*. The idea in the Greek is that only a few in this multitude were *cross-bearing disciples*. Most of them were not true disciples—They were just tagging along. They were pretenders. They were following Him for all the wrong reasons. Are we just out for a stroll with Jesus or are we genuine disciples?

Discipleship demands an unrivaled love. *If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple (reference)*. When you compare love and commitment to family with your love and commitment to Him, your love for family must look like hate. Genuine discipleship means that Jesus must come before father, mother, spouse, children, brothers and sisters. Our love for God must be first and foremost. *Love God with all your heart, mind, body, and soul. Thou shall have no others before me.*

Conclusion

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. The bottom line is this: Our loyalty to Christ must come before everything else. Jesus is saying that unless we are willing to grant Him this unreserved devotion, we cannot be His disciple. Jesus tells us that discipleship is neither easy nor painless. In fact it is costly, sometimes very costly. We must be willing to give Him our all—all we have, all we are, all we want to be. Genuine discipleship demands a cross, a commitment, and a cost. Jesus never promised that discipleship would be easy or painless. He did promise it would be worth it all.

My God, I have never thanked thee for my thorn. I have thanked thee a thousand times for my roses, but not once for my thorn. I have been looking forward to a world where I shall get compensation for my cross, but I have never thought of my cross as itself a present glory. Thou divine Love, whose human path has been perfected through sufferings, teach me the glory of my cross, teach me the value of my thorn.

—George Matheson

Like Master, like disciple

*I have found it
easy to say I
believe in
heaven and yet
live as if this
life were all
there is. In our
materialistic
world, I can
proclaim a
hope in heaven
but put my hope
in my career, my
achievements,
or my
possessions.
—Paul Borthwick*

Introduction

A man prayed, *So far today, God, I've done all right. I haven't gossiped. I haven't lost my temper. I haven't been greedy or grumpy. I haven't been nasty or self-centered. Lord, I'm really pleased with myself. I'm glad about that. But in a few minutes, God, I'm going to get out of bed and then I'm going to need a lot of help. Thank you.* We all need a lot of help from the Lord. Not only the minute we get out of bed, but when we go to work each morning. Not just right for the moment, but in the real world where the rubber meets the road. People, today, need the Lord.

In Luke 6:40, Jesus tells us how much we need Him to help us make an impact on people's lives. He says *A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will become like his teacher.* Students learn from the teacher, children from parents. Jesus is the expert teacher. And we as students come to Him, willing to learn, submitting ourselves to Him, opening our hearts to Him so we may receive His instructions. Only by beholding Him, will we become changed in His image.

Not above the teacher

Anyone submissive to Christ is qualified to enter the School of Christ. The School of Christ is much better than universities such as Harvard or Yale where you have to produce proof of your qualifications to be accepted. With Jesus, your greatest qualification is not a high grade point average. It's not a great work of research. Your greatest recommendation is simply your need for Him, and an open heart to Him: *Lord, I'm submissive to you. Please train me. I really want to be a trainee. I don't want to go ahead of you. I don't want to be above you. I want you to be above all. I want you to be in charge.* A disciple is not above his teacher. The teacher is the leader.

Aren't you glad that Jesus knows what He's doing? Because He knows what he's doing in this confusing world, we feel safe and confident to follow Him. We don't feel this confidence in following human leaders. That's what He says in the previous verse. *Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?* There's so much blindness in this world. There are people who are blind and don't know it. Jesus is the light of the world. He knows where He's going because He is the way, the truth, and the light. We'll never fall in the ditch when we follow Him. And that's why verse 40 makes so much sense after He paints a picture of darkness, of blindness, of falling into ditches on either side of the road. Jesus is saying to you *Now I am the teacher. I want to train you. I want to fully train you. Work with me. Open your heart to me. Be a trainee. You could qualify simply by opening your heart to Me.*

When we open our hearts to Him, He will fully train us. The result is a cooperative effort between the divine and the human. This union is dynamite. There is no limit to the usefulness of one who puts self aside and unites himself with the power of God. We will be like the teacher. The greatest spiritual product we can have, the greatest spiritual accomplishment is to help people by the grace of God to become like Jesus. Can you think of a greater goal? Can you think of a greater purpose to exist in this world but to become like Jesus and to help others become like Jesus? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will become like his teacher.

Center of life

A tired father was stretched out in front of the television. His son, who was bored, kept bothering him. Not wanting to be bothered, the father cut up a map of the world into a jigsaw puzzle for the boy to put together. Aware that his son did not know what the map was supposed to look like, he was certain this project would keep the boy busy for a long time. What he did not know, however, was that on the back of the map was a beautiful picture of Jesus that his son was very familiar with. So the boy took these pieces, and instead of being preoccupied with the broken pieces of the world, beheld the face of Jesus.

The father exclaimed *How could you have done this in such a short time? How could you have put the pieces of the broken map together so soon?*

Daddy, I didn't look at the broken world. I looked at the face of Jesus. When I put the face of Jesus together the world came together.

When we focus on Jesus, the broken pieces of our lives are put together.



When once the gaze is fixed upon Jesus, life finds its center—Education, p 297. Does your life have a center at this moment? The late Frank Sinatra was known for his song, *I Did it My Way*. That seems to describe our culture as a people. Independence and self-sufficiency. We want to do things our own way. And that also is a reason why this nation is so great—Because we take the initiative, we work hard, we’re creative. This is wonderful; however, when it comes to the spiritual realm we need to do it Christ’s way. *Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching people*—Ministry of Healing, p 143.

There’s another song that goes *Oh what a wonderful morning. Oh what a beautiful day. I’ve got this wonderful feeling. Everything’s going my way*. Sometimes we think we can find happiness by things going our way. But real joy comes from things going Christ’s way. So I invite you to follow Christ who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Let’s do it and go it Christ’s way—Because real fulfillment, real joy, comes from submitting ourselves to the training of Jesus and then becoming like Jesus. He knows the way. He is the way. He knows what he is doing.

In Luke 6:40 Jesus said to his disciples *If you submit yourselves to me, if you allow Me to fully train you, you will become like Me*. Did the disciples actually become like Jesus? Acts 4:13 gives us the answer. Observing John and Peter reaching out to and making an impact on others, people recognized them for something—They took notice of them. They recognized them as having been with Jesus. What are we recognized for?

As human beings, we often crave recognition. We have this innate need to be recognized. Sitting at His feet will take care of this craving for recognition. When we experience Jesus, we need no other recognition. There is peace, there is contentment in the heart when we are recognized for having been with Him. What more recognition do we need?

Besides recognition, we sometimes crave positions. The highest position we can reach is sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning from Jesus. In biblical culture, sitting at the feet of a teacher, meant *you were submissive*, that you wanted to be teachable. Standing up on our feet to speak is quite the opposite from sitting at His feet to listen. When Jesus speaks, when Jesus teaches, we listen. When Jesus comes to share with us His expertise, we allow His wisdom and knowledge to infiltrate our life.

Conclusion

A little girl wanted to give her mother a gift. Deciding on a flower, she walked the fields and found a beautiful, little wild rose. Holding it tightly in her little hand, she ran to her mother. With excitement she opened her hand to give her mother this beautiful rose. But the rose was crushed. *Mommy, I’m sorry! The rose is broken.*

Her mother responded, *Sweetheart, it’s beautiful. It’s wonderful. Roses smell much better when they’re broken.*

My friends, let your hearts be broken in reaching out to others. Let your hearts be broken like the rose. Humbly sit at the feet of Jesus and say *Lord, forgive me. Finally I realize that sitting at your feet is the highest position I can ever reach. And Lord Jesus, help me to be broken and to know that I don’t need to crave recognition in this world—that being recognized by you, being recognized by others as having been with you is the greatest recognition of all.*

Another rose, the Rose of Sharon, was broken on Calvary to fill the whole world with the sweet fragrance of the good news. God invites us to take up our little wild roses and allow them to be broken so that our lives can be made fragrant by His fragrance. Let us diffuse that fragrance in our world. May the aroma of the broken Rose of Sharon diffuse your life, and may His fragrance fill our life so that when others see us, talk to us, rub shoulders with us, they will recognize us as indeed having been with Jesus.

After Jesus had called His disciples, He did an unusual thing. He took them with Him into the world. Not the nice world of spiritual retreats and controlled learning environments, but the world of prostitutes, hypocrites, and the demon-possessed.
—Ian John



Traits of a true follower

*Today,
as always,
the greatest danger
to those who
would follow
Jesus is not
overt persecution
by society,
but subtle seduction
by its values.
—Tony Campolo*

Introduction

There is a store called *Big Dogs*. Its icon is a very big dog with big floppy ears and black circles around its eyes. Its slogans are many: *If you can't ski with the Big Dogs, stay in the boat. If you can't golf with the Big Dogs, stay off the green.* There's even one especially for ladies—*If you can't shop with the Big Dogs, stay out of the mall.* The emphasis is always on being the biggest and the best. *If you ain't the lead dog, the scenery never changes.*

In our society, being in first place is the only place that matters. Climbing the corporate ladder, getting to the top, being re-elected are objectives of a motivated mindset. Jesus challenges that kind of thinking. He says *To win, you have to lose; to go up, you have to go down; to live, you have to die; to gain everything, you have to give it all up.* Jesus says, *If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me (Matt 16:24).* When Jesus shared this with His disciples, they were dreaming of worldly positions. The desire for ascendance is a desire of our human nature. It is prideful, arrogant and damaging to the things of God.

True followers are pro-active

The Israelites were growing restless waiting for Moses to return from Mount Sinai. So they approached Aaron (*Ex 32:1-4*). When followers evade responsibility, there is always trouble. Good followers are not likely to say, *That's not my problem.* They don't bury their head in the sand. They are pro-active and when they see a situation brewing, they head it off before a crisis occurs. Aaron was a gutless follower. He didn't stand up for Moses and he certainly didn't stand up for God. When Moses returned to the camp and saw what was going on, he did more than shatter the tablets of stone and destroy the golden calf—He confronted Aaron (*Ex 32:22-24*). As a follower, Aaron shirked his responsibility and failed to exert the influence that could have averted a tragedy.

Followers sometimes fail to recognize the weight of responsibility that rests on them for their influence. It isn't uncommon for followers to second-guess, gossip, undermine the cause of God, and cripple the effectiveness of spiritual leadership. Every member of this church is a follower. As a follower, we must understand the weight of our words and the importance of our influence. A good follower is pro-active and in the case of Aaron, his inability to diffuse the situation led to shame and destruction for God's people.

True followers seek to solve

For 400 years the Israelites were slaves. They dreamed only of liberty. Then it happened. God intervened miraculously. Their bondage was over; their enemy was destroyed; they were given identity, security, and the promise of their homeland. However, instead of gratitude, complain and murmur become the dominant words of the story (*Ex 15:22-24*). The Greek word for murmur is *goguzzo*, which, like the words *grumble* or *murmur*, is what linguists call an onomatopoeia—a word that sounds like what it means. Imagine a large crowd chanting *grumble, grumble, grumble!!* God intervened again, this time to give them sweet, clean water to drink. But a few days later, we find them whining again. *If only we had died in Egypt. We're not asking for much— if we just could have had a quick death when our bellies were full . . . if we just had bread, we'd be grateful forever (Ex 16:2, 3).* They had raised grumbling to a new art form. This scene repeated itself over and over again. Israel complained. God intervened.

Ingratitude can be contagious. Moses couldn't stand it anymore, so he took his turn to complain. He spoke to God in words that any self-appointed martyr can identify with (*Num 11:11-15*). When followers give in to the complaining syndrome, it can destroy a leader. When leaders are filled with this darkness, the whole group can lose life. Joy, energy, and motivation plummet; everybody wants to quit. But good followers seek to solve problems rather than grumble about them. Exodus 18 provides a positive example—Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, who is visiting Moses. When he saw the line of complainers outside Moses' tent, he braved out onto thin ice with his son-in-law. He gave him sound advice and a solution (*Ex 18:19-23*). Good followers seek to help leaders by seeking solutions to problems rather than grumbling about them.

True followers are truth tellers

Wise leaders listen to the perspective of followers. However, when a follower seeks to share truth with a leader, he should do it, not with a haughty spirit of *I've got the dirt on you*, but with an attitude of humility (*Prov 25:6*). We find this attitude in Nathan (*2 Sam 11 and 12*). Things were going quite well for David. However, in this time of confidence, he had everything under control except himself. That's when the view from his balcony of a beautiful woman lead to a saga of deceit, immorality, adultery, conspiracy, and murder. Into this scene entered Nathan, the voice of God (*2 Sam 12:1-7*), who told it like it was.

When John Robinson, the great leader of the Puritan movement, was unable to come to the New World, he said to the others departing for the new world, *Follow me no further than I have followed Christ*. Good followers follow Christ first. Good followers owe their leaders the truth.

True followers are team-focused

Good followers see themselves as an integral part of the success of their group, but are not arrogant about it (*Phil 2:1-4*). Do we recognize others and build them up? Do we thank other team members for their contribution to the group? Teamwork also means that we see strength in diversity. Your ideas and your perspective are important, but they're not the only ones with value or merit. Those with terrific team spirit embrace people who are different from them. Do we value the ideas of young people? Are we open to people of a different race or culture? These members are part of the team and we need to recognize and support them.

True followers have a coachable spirit.

How can you learn and grow unless you're willing to be taught? Good followers realize that each person they meet is their superior in something. Peter had a coachable spirit. Peter wanted to grow. He wanted to be a good follower. He shuddered to think of Jesus going to the cross and so he said, *This will never happen to you, Jesus*.

Jesus responded saying *Get behind me, Satan*.

On hearing such a response most would stop talking and make a quick retreat. But not Peter. When Jesus washed the disciples' feet, Peter reacted by saying *Wash me all over*.

Jesus smiled and said, *I don't need to wash you all over, I just need to wash your feet*.

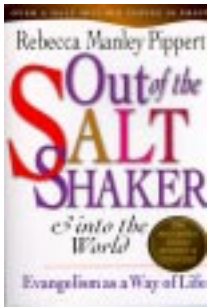
In the garden of Gethsemane, Peter, in defense of Jesus, cut off the high priest's servant's ear. Jesus simply says *Peter, put your sword away. My kingdom is not defended by force and might*

Time and again Peter put his life on the line and then, when it mattered the most, he denied His Lord. Yet the Lord didn't give up on him.

True followers are *pro-active, problem solvers, truth tellers, team-focused, and teachable*. To follow well is one of life's greatest challenges. It is a significant test in our Christian experience. It demonstrates our faith and trust in God's ultimate plan. Are you a good follower?

Watch a small boy follow his dad through the snow. He stretches to step where his dad stepped. Not an easy task. His small legs extend as far as they can so his feet can fall in his father's prints. The father, seeing what the son is doing, smiles and begins taking shorter steps, so the son can follow. It's a picture of discipleship. In our faith we follow in someone's steps. A parent, a teacher, a hero—none of us are the first to walk the trail. All of us have someone we follow. In our faith we leave footprints to guide others. A child, a friend, a recent friend, a recent convert. None should be left walk the trail alone. It's the principle of discipleship.
—Max Lucado

Book Reviews



Out of the Saltshaker and Into the World

by **Rebecca Pippert**
InterVarsity Press
Downers Grove, Illinois, 1999
US\$ 16.99

From start to finish Rebecca Pippert's soul-gripping work, *Out of the Saltshaker and into the World*, is electrifying! It urged me to search my soul in all humility for the little I've accomplished through personal testimony and witness, to acknowledge tremendous potential God has blessed each of us with. Through stories and biblical insights, Pippert creates enthusiasm for sharing one's faith by encouraging a style of witnessing that is true to one's own being.

Recognizing that fear and a lack of communicative skills are real enemies to evangelism, Pippert devotes several chapters to discuss questions such as *What is the role of truth and how can we speak in the power of God's truth? How can we practice the presence of Jesus and mediate His love as we share the gospel?*

As a student of missions and church planting, I was fascinated by her natural steps of evangelism (*cultivating the soil; planting the seed; reaping the harvest in God's truth and love; and reaping the harvest in God's power.*)

She moves through the content with the strength of application which makes her steps not just fascinating, but easy to follow. Being a firm believer that truth can be revealed through reason, stories, and the power of the Holy Spirit, Pippert scatters stories of God's work in the changing of lives, the competitors of the Christian faith, and the challenges of witnessing.

If you need a book that wraps everything you want to know about the hands-on practicality of evangelism, then this one's for you.

Mohanraj Israel, Pastor, Spicer Memorial Church, Pune, India

In our world, time is structured by artificial, human-imposed schedules. We measure our days in hours and minutes. We rush through life meeting deadlines and making appointments. We begin and end activities by the clock.

Through *Still Waters* Rubietta teaches ways to stop the mechanical clock and be transported back to God's original plan where activities are synchronized with His time. If you want inner, lasting peace but don't know where to begin, you will find refreshing and rewarding her practical suggestions for communion with God. She reminds us that God promises to lead us beside still waters. But we have to choose—to allow the world to dictate how we live or, through personal initiative and mutual encouragement, allow God to guide our lives.

The book is divided into 12 chapters, each an exploration and examination of issues that often hinder personal growth. Understanding that resolving these issues is a key element in achieving personal wholeness, Rubietta offers the following life-application methods of resolution:

Reading for Reflection introduces the subject and starts you on a journey of exploration.

Quotes for Contemplation uses the wisdom and experiences of other Christians to reassure you that you are not alone in your struggles.

Scriptures for Meditation help you validate your growth and continue to allow God to instruct and guide you through the reading of His Word.

Journaling encourages you to reflect on your life honestly and openly.

Prayers of Confession, Praise, and Petition invites you to relearn to confess your sins, giving God the power to answer your petitions.

Moments for Creation teaches you to let time go by unnoticed as you allow the power in God's wondrous nature to heal your soul.

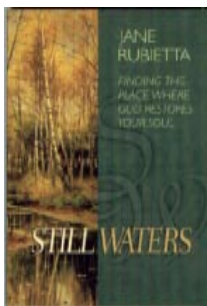
Silence demonstrates your willingness to let God take control.

Questions for Reflection prods you to reexamine the deep things of your soul.

Hymns of Praise steers music to uplift your hearts and make your spirits soar.

Used alone or in small groups, the book is excellent for personal growth. Through it you will find that a personal relationship with God results in peace that satisfies the hunger and yearning of your soul.

Lorna Samraj, Director of Admissions, Canadian University College, Alberta, Canada



Still Waters

by **Jane Rubietta**
Bethany Press International
Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1999
US\$ 9.99

A mere book review cannot do justice to Morgenthaler's book, *Worship Evangelism*. At the cutting edge in her analysis and presentation of data, Morgenthaler is driven by a refreshing appreciation of the need that most people have for a *real* experience within the realm of spirituality.

Many attend worship services in a non-committed capacity. What message are they getting? Morgenthaler suggests that *our worship of God either affirms or contradicts our message about God*. She also suggests that those who attend our worships will draw much from what they see and experience if we ask ourselves, *Can they see God's presence at work among us? Do they detect something supernatural and life saving going on?*

Unfortunately, worship attendance is becoming very erratic in the United States (and by implication, the whole of the Western World). She attributes this partly to the fact that efforts to regain worship attendees often centers on production-type models that generate spectators, and not worshipers. Her arguments for this proposition alone are worth the price of the book. She quotes Barna, Gallup and other data collectors to show just how serious the whole worship landscape has become: Of the Baby Boomers, who were once seen as leading a revival in church attendance and worship, 24% skip worship completely and another 30% attend irregularly. She quotes Hendricks who suggests that the dropouts are occurring not just because worship was seen as boring, but that the worship programs were *not worshipful*. Money hasn't been the problem—Recent Barna research reveals that over an eight-year period in the United States, \$250 billion dollars spent in domestic ministry resulted in a zero percent increase in born-again Christians.

Morgenthaler believes that changing times require changing worship styles but that many worship leaders have not understood the nature of the problem, or more correctly, the nature of true worship. She notes that some of the old worship models have been thrown on the scrap heap but the problem is that much of the substance of worship was thereby discarded as well. She comments wryly that *as long as we have a worship band and an oversized screen in our service, we won't question the worship*.

Real worship is *where we allow the supernatural God of Scripture to show up and to interact with people in the pews*, Morgenthaler says, adding that *our failure to impact contemporary culture is not because we have not been relevant enough, but because we have not been real enough. . . . While we are consumed with sound systems, synthesizers, and skits to the exclusion of real encounters with God, time is running out for reaching the few seekers who will still give us a chance*.

About reaching out to the boomers and busters, she says *the how-to-its is in the whys. Until we know why we are to worship in the first place and why much of our present worship is negatively impacting our outreach, none of the practical information we accumulate will be of any lasting value*

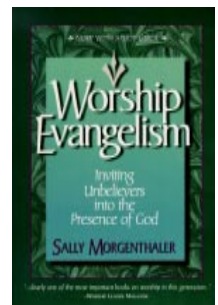
The book is presented in three parts:

- (1) Worship: In Search of the Real Thing
- (2) Unpacking the Worship Evangelism Paradigm
- (3) Worship Evangelism Applied

The third part is the hands-on, put-it-to-practice section that includes a detailed music checklist, an appendix, and many case studies.

Of course, not everyone will agree with everything Sally Morgenthaler has to say, but that does not detract from the value of this book. It is good and it is worth having. Do yourself a favor and get one.

*Real worship
is where
we allow the
supernatural God
of Scripture
to show up and
to interact
with people
in the pews*



Worship Evangelism

by Sally Morgenthaler
Zondervan Publishing House
Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999
US\$ 16.99

Resources

***Discipleship Journal*, a magazine by NavPress**

A subscription to this magazine will be a powerful tool for improving your Bible study and quiet time. Each issue focuses on one aspect of your relationship with Jesus Christ and explores practical ways to enrich it day by day. *Discipleship Journal* includes study guides and discussion questions for either personal or group study; quotes and statistics for your sermon preparations; articles to enrich your spiritual journal; access to varied resources; and so much more.

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***Christ's Way of Reaching People*, a book by Philip G Samaan**

This is a handbook for all disciples! Samaan focuses on six progressive steps Jesus used in witnessing here on earth. Following the footsteps of Jesus through this book, you will learn how to develop an intimate relationship with Jesus and bring God's love, power, and compassion to those around you.

Published by Review and Herald, the retail price is US\$ 9.99. To order your book contact your Seventh-day Adventist book store or call 301-791-7000.

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The entire discipleship Library is US\$ 299.95. However, you may purchase smaller packages to suit your budget. For more information and a free catalog, call 800-888-9898 (outside the US fax 512-834-1888); email at sales@WORDsearchBible.com

Editorial

At first impulse, the word *disciple* paints a not-so-pretty picture on the canvas of my mind: In hues of murky earth tones, I see dusty, calloused feet forever treading unpaved, rocky, robber-infested roads. Through whiffs of hot, humid days, I see a scraggly, unshaven, smelly few, ending every day alone, far from children, spouse, and home. Should the paintbrush arduously continue, my canvas will give painful birth to a heart-wrenching, excruciatingly sorrowful show of life—thick and full with depressing shades of hardship, pain, loneliness.

Praise God that my heart knows better! My heart, being connected to the Cross, dips into soft pastels and rich golds—into the companionship of those walking alongside the disciple, into the grace of the One who walks ahead—to glaze, with passion and joy, the stark picture of walking alone.

Indeed, the road is not an easy one (see Caselman's sermon)! As Ponniah points out in the lead article, it is about giving up everything to God and everybody—it's a commitment to bear the cross every moment. Then, where's the glaze of grace? The passion? The joy? Maxson (see *Concept*) tells us where it is—in the arms of Jesus, in the intimate relationship of our Lord and Savior. Discipleship is not about traveling alone. It is about being in the company of others in the faith. It is about trekking the trail that Jesus marked for us with His blood.

Yes, the canvas is scored with the life of a heavy cross. But it is also gilded with the promise of an eternal crown. That's *discipleship* painted in my mind!

Fylvia Fowler Kline, Assistant Director, General Conference Stewardship Department



**Stewardship Department
General Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists**



Editor» Fylvia Fowler Kline

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Sepang

**12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904
(301) 680-6157 Phone
(301) 680-6155 Fax**

**gcstewardship@compuserve.com
klinef@gc.adventist.org**