



Transforming Discipleship: New Opportunities in Following the Master in a Post-Christian World

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By Kleber D. Gonçalves, PhD
Director, Center for Secular and Post-Christian Mission
Office of Adventist Mission – GC



Matthew 28:19-20

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A group of business professionals in a meeting, with a green overlay and a hashtag symbol.

#

a choice

discipleship: the original purpose

- “Come follow me . . . and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt 4:19 NIV).



discipleship: the original purpose

- “Come follow me . . . and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt 4:19 NIV).
- Life transforming journey
- Very intentional and purposeful process
- Pattern for “discipleship”
- “Follow me . . .”

today's reality

- Brief orientation/training
 - Doctrinal teachings
 - Denomination beliefs
- Baptism
- Automatic assimilation in the body?
- Devoted disciples?

results...

- Names on church books
- Regular “customers” looking for a “religious product”
- Very few committed, passionate followers of Christ
- Focus remains on personal choices
- Religious routine




#

the historical discipleship journey


the historical discipleship path

- Throughout history experiences and lessons learned have been transmitted to the next generations
- Bible examples:
 - Moses – Joshua
 - Elijah – Elisha
 - Paul – Timothy




2 Tim 1:13-14; 2:2

“What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. [...] And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”




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discipleship in the Greco-Roman culture

- The Greek word *μαθητής* was used by Socrates, Plato, Aristotle centuries before Jesus
 - Learner/trainee
 - Pupil/apprentice
 - Disciple/adherent
- Direct contact with the teacher, however, was not a prerequisite to following his teachings.

discipleship in the 1st century Jewish culture

- Commitment to well-known teachers or movements
- Training was done in community, having the Torah as the center of the learning process



discipleship in the 1st century Jewish culture

- Commitment to well-known teachers or movements
- Training was done in community, having the Torah as the center of the learning process
- Paul – Gamaliel (Acts 5:34; 22:3)
- Devotion to follow a prominent teacher, carrying on his teachings, and imitating his life.

discipleship in the 1st century Jewish culture

- In the Hebrew context, discipleship meant much more than just the sharing of cognitive information, but also one's life experience—within the context of community, starting in the family and then to others.
- It indicated not only the acceptance of the master's values and embracing his principles, but ultimately reproducing his ideas and beliefs in practical ways.



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transforming
discipleship

following the Master

- Christ taught us that having faith means to follow.
- This is the first test of faith.
- This is the basic presupposition of discipleship.



Luke 9:23

“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”

Why is there so much resistance?

- Submission
- Vulnerability
- Effort
- Commitment
- Discipline
- Obedience



Steps to Christ, p. 60

“Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship.”

Why is there so much resistance?

- Submission
- Vulnerability
- Effort
- Commitment
- Discipline
- Obedience
- Transformation

What people can see...

Behavior

Values

Beliefs

What people cannot see...

Worldview

