

# THE MULTIPLYING KINGDOM



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## God loves multiplication.

The very first command in Scripture given to the first man and woman was 'be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth' (Genesis 1:28). God desired that the pinnacle of his creation, his image-bearing superintendents, would replicate and cover the earth by procreation. In fact, all God's creatures were equipped with innate abilities to multiply and spread themselves, each after its own kind.

Even when human sin introduced division into God's world and severed the life-bond between God and man, God did not, thankfully, abandon his plan for a manifold people under Him. He worked amidst the fractured sullied chaos that ensued, to bring about His own alternate redeeming and restoring purpose.

And in Genesis 12, He turned to one man and his barren wife, well past child-bearing age, promising that his seed would become a great nation too innumerable to count, and the whole earth would be blessed in the process.

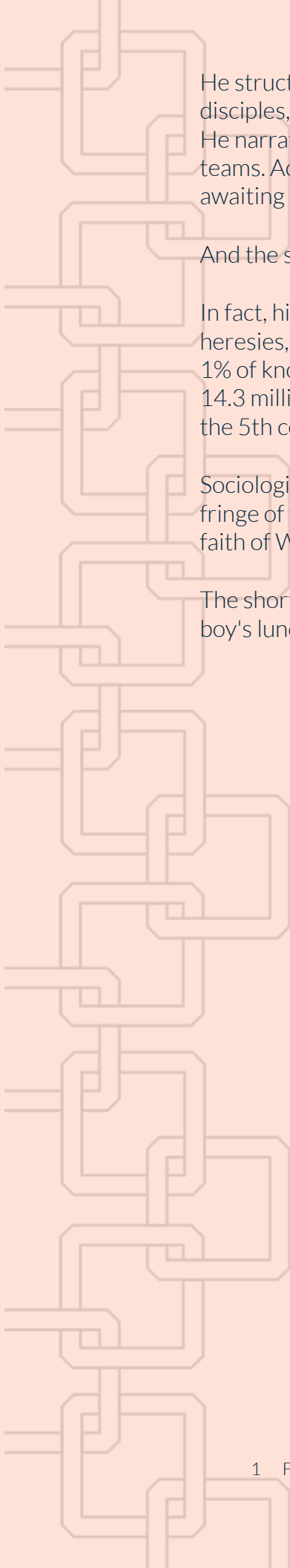
For God's divine mind-boggling arithmetic will always triumph the devil's subversive sums.

In time, true to his Abrahamic promise, God entered into human history as the incarnate Son, taking on sin and all that the kingdom of darkness could throw at Him. And so he went about doing good, forgiving wrongs, redeeming from bondage, raising the dead to life and restoring people to their ultimate purpose - reflecting and spreading God's light and glory to the ends of the earth.

And in Mathew 28:18-20, the resurrected Jesus renewed the command and call to propagate and fill the earth, this time with God's new creation. This was a challenge to the rather bewildered group of 12 original disciples from the backwaters of Galilee that he had called, trained and commissioned to carry out and pass on His mission. They did not yet understand that the kingdom was to be larger than Israel (Acts 1:6).

For this new breed of people was destined to become multiplied disciples of every nation, redeemed by His blood, remade in His image and revived by the Spirit, representing Him before a dark, disbelieving world.

And so in Acts, we have an attempt by Luke to chart the trail of growth of the first disciples. There is an inevitable spread of God's kingdom as it propagated into the far reaches of the Roman world. Luke clearly understood this as the work of God but always in tandem with the obedient acts of men and women who, sent or forced out, proclaimed the Gospel, made disciples, established new church communities and networks and generally turned the world upside down wherever they went (Acts 17:6).



He structured the book of Acts around the progressive growth of God's Word in disciples, households and cities (see Acts 6:7, 9:31, 12:24, 16:5, 19:20 for example). He narrates the Spirit-led journeys of apostolic men like Paul and Peter and their teams. Acts rather abruptly ends in chapter 28, verse 31, with Paul under arrest and awaiting trial, but continuing to proclaim the Kingdom of God and the gospel.

And the story is still being written.

In fact, history would show that, despite horrendous persecution and internal heresies, the number of faithful Christians grew from a meager 1.4 million (less than 1% of known world's population at the end of the 1st century A.D.) to more than 14.3 million or 7.5% of the world's population a mere 200 years later. By the end of the 5th century, almost 20% of the world population was Christian! <sup>1</sup>

Sociologist Rodney Stark asks: 'How did an obscure messianic movement on the fringe of the Roman Empire dislodge classical paganism and become the dominant faith of Western civilization?' <sup>2</sup>

The short answer is this: God multiplied it. He who once made out feast out of a little boy's lunch pack was at it again!

<sup>1</sup> Figures taken from Patrick Johnstone, 'The Future of the Global Church', Milton Keynes:Authentic Media. (2011).

<sup>2</sup> Rodney Stark, 'The Rise of Christianity', San Francisco: Princeton University Press & Harper. (1997).

# Exponentiality

There is a story from India that revolves around the inventor of the game of chess. His new game so impressed the ruling emperor that he was offered any reward he could name.

The young man asked if a grain of rice could be added to the first square of his chessboard, doubled into two on the next square to it, then to four on the one after, and so on, till all the 64 squares were filled. He asked for the total grains of rice, doubled from each previous square, to be calculated and collected together as his reward.

'Easily done', thought the emperor and granted his request.

When the Emperor's servants went to calculate and count out the amount of rice grains in total, they returned a couple of days later to say that the final amount of grains of rice exceeded all the available grains of rice in the world at that time, namely 18,446,744,073,709,551,615 grains of rice. To put that in perspective, that is more than 1,000 times the rice that will be produced in the world this year.

Mathematicians will be quick to recognize what are called 'exponential functions' at work here, when repeated 'doubling' up of numbers quickly add up to astronomical amounts.

In fact, exponential functions happen around us everyday, whether in economics with compound interests on loans or with inflation, or in real life in the explosive population growth of rabbits or the spread of mold on bread, for example.

But exponential functions are also the way the kingdom of God grows and spreads (or is meant to) throughout the world. The church of Jesus Christ grows exponentially when God's people are faithful to obey and live out their witness before the lost.

Let us apply this to the business of making disciples that Jesus enjoined us to. If you simply made one other disciple in a year, you would be two disciples at the end of it. But if you continued to make one other new disciple each year, and every disciple you made did the same, no one in the chain breaking the norm of making one other new disciple each year, you would have an exponentially growing church that will look like this:

At the end of year 1, you would have two disciples.

At the end of year 2, you would have 4.

Year 3 - 8

Year 4 - 16

Year 5 - 32

So by the 6th year, you would have 64 disciples, a good sized church community in many places of the world.

However, if disciple-making continues at this rate of one made a year by every disciple in the chain, by year 10, you would have made 1024 disciples. 20 years on, this would become 1,048,576 - more than a million disciples made! By year 30, you would have reached and disciplined more than a billion people (i.e. the population of all India). A mere 4 years later, i.e. 34 years later, you would have made disciples of the entire population of the earth - reaching the world in one generation.

If every Christian simply made one other new disciple each year, taught and held them accountable to do the same for the rest of their lives, the world would be won for Christ.

Of course, the realist among us would argue that the above statement naively assumes 1) every one continues to faithfully make one other disciple a year each year, 2) that all disciples stay faithful and do not fall away and 3) that there isn't attrition from other factors like heresy, spiritual warfare, worldliness, wars, natural disasters, disease and from failure and false teaching within the church.

Even Jesus experienced the falling away of many disciples (see John 6:66, for example). Nevertheless, Jesus concentrated his ministry on raising up a small group of disciples and then took gave them the earth-sized job of being witnesses and disciple-makers of all the peoples of the earth.

Today in our evangelistic methods, we try to reach many in order to win a few converts for Christ. Jesus on the other hand chose, modeled, trained and sent out a handful in order to win the world.

And they did it by themselves discipling a few here and there, who understood that it was now their responsibility to do the same thing among their oikos or relational networks.

And as they did, the number of disciples of Jesus multiplied and spread quickly all over the known world.

This is not to say disciple-making is all simply a numbers game. We at NAMS do not believe so, as I will discuss in the coming blogs. Nevertheless, as God's desire is to fill the whole earth with His glory and Jesus said He would not return till the Gospel is heard everywhere, we can pray with faith and have great expectation in the exponential growth of the kingdom.

Jesus told many parables that illustrated the exponential nature of kingdom growth (see the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:3-9, particularly vs 9, parable of the mustard seed in Matthew 13:31-32 and the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30, e.g.).

And God is still looking to use faithful and fruitful disciples to be his agents of growth and multiplication.

Are you one of them?



# The Power of One

You are a product of God's multiplication system.

Once upon a time, and once every time - for it is the common story of all people everywhere - we started out life as a single cell. But we did not stay that way. The cell multiplied according to some incredible design, so that today, you are a compendium of processes, energy and intelligence, a playground of life united within a coordinated body, a flourishing ecology of cells numbering trillions.

But you were one cell to begin with. It's hard to imagine we were once so small and insignificant. Truly, we are fearfully and wonderfully made - His works are wonderful! (Psalm 139:13-16).

As well as being living examples of cells that multiply, we are also the result of a sacred act, two microscopic entities that collided in our mother's womb.

I was surprised to learn a few months ago that the male fertilizing sperm is the smallest living cell in the human body - nothing more than nuclei that is propelled by mitochondria (providing energy) and a tail. On the other hand, the largest cell in the human body is the egg cell or ovum produced in the female body.

The two cannot be more different. "Egg cell and sperm are each others opposite. Large versus small, round versus straight, cytoplasm versus nucleus. The differences are great, at the same time they belong together."<sup>3</sup> No life can reproduce except they come together.

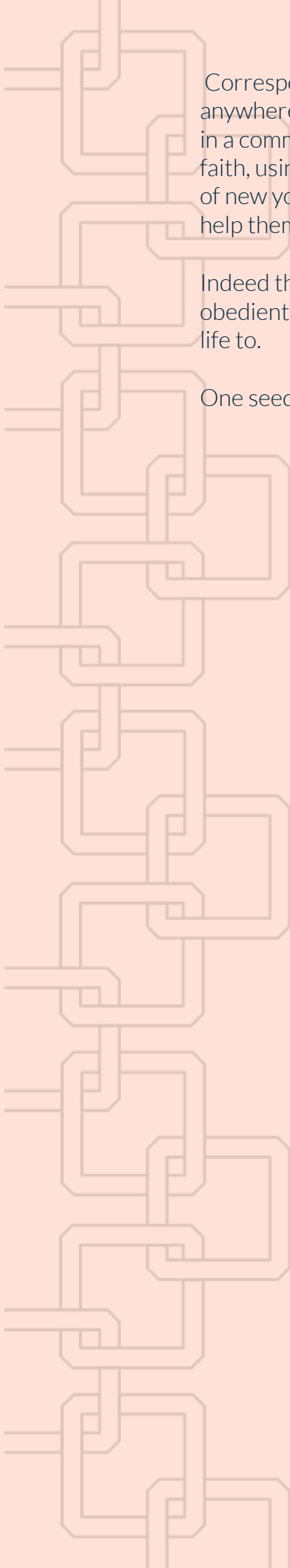
At the risk of sounding sacrilegious and trite, I believe the conception of life can be a pregnant metaphor (pardon the pun) for the work of making disciples that we are all called to.

Because by comparison, a disciple-making cell of at least two or three disciples where Christ is present, is a small thing compared to that which we are thrust into - the earth with her billions of people. But new life in Jesus can only happen as we go into that world to bring the good news of Jesus.

The number 'two or three' has always been significant in Scripture for establishing the legality of witness under Jewish Law in both Testaments (Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15, John 8:17, 2 Corinthians 13:1, 1 Timothy 5:19).

In NAMS, we have taken this as conferring divine legitimacy on small gatherings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. This implies that a basic unit of a church could be reduced down to as little as two or three followers meeting anywhere in Christ for godly purposes.

We know from the Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18:19 & 2 that He promises to grace with His presence even two or three of his disciples meeting in His name and to hear their united agreement.



Correspondingly, one cell of obedient disciples, as small as two or three, can go anywhere to begin a new work because Jesus goes with them. Even a single disciple in a community of unbelievers where there are no other, can work to bring others to faith, using the person of peace principle (Luke 10:1-11) and then with one small cell of new young believers, begin to be disciplined so that in time, the cell multiplies as we help them reach and make other disciples.

Indeed this has been our experience time and time again. But it starts with one obedient disciple or couple - one disciple-making cell that God can multiply and give life to.

One seed that gives birth to many.

## How to multiply disciples who make disciples

NAMS is called to the task of finding pioneering church-planters who can start disciple-making movements around the world.

We also call and aid the global church in being faithful to do the same. In fact, we believe that every believer is called to be part of healthy, growing and multiplying churches. It is not just the task of the 'professionals.'

However, God has called NAMS companions (which is what we called those who have accepted the call to be full members of the NAMS society) to intentionally and faithfully serve Jesus by seeking to plant (or be directly involved in the planting of) multiplying communities of disciples-making Christians.

We do this first by sending a Great Commission cell, a couple or team of disciples to a new location, to pray, seed and grow new communities of disciple-making cells.

As we learned at school in biology class, the cell is the basic unit of life for all terrestrial forms of life. In fact, the cell contains all things necessary for life, e.g. cytoplasm, protein, nuclei, etc. All living things are made up of either one or a multiplicity of cells. Healthy cells breed new ones.

The same is also true in the body of Christ.

The basic unit for new life anywhere on the planet is a faithful disciple-making cell, as few as 2 or 3 people, who choose to obey Jesus, help and hold each other accountable to do the same, by prayer, study of the Scriptures and going on mission together.

What are the conditions that allow for healthy disciple-making cells to grow and multiply? In the next 3 chapters, I will look at three factors that I believe are critical for the growth and multiplication of disciple-making movements on earth, as clearly evidenced in God's word.

These are 1) passionate prayer, 2) authentic community, and 3) reproducing disciples.



## Factor 1) PRAYER - Teach us to pray

The first factor that fuels the growth of disciple-making movements around the world is passionate prayer.

Prayer and disciple-making are intimately link, in the same way that prayer connects with all other aspects of the Christian life of faith. Prayer is one of God's greatest gifts to us. He gave it so that we would keep and be in indispensable spiritual communion with Him for all our lives. It is the vital artery of the Christian life. It is also a primary way we can love, support and care for one another.

And those who desire to be greatly used of God in the public arena better be greatly known by God in the private hidden closet of prayer. Consequently, 'prayer is not learned in a classroom but in the closet.' (E. M. Bounds)

We have in the Scriptures the great examples left to us of God's apostles and prophets, who were men of prayer. The apostolic letters bear witness to the prayers that Paul prayed in abundance for the disciples he made and mentored - just as much he pleaded and entreated them to do the same for him (see Romans 1:9; 1 Corinthians 1:4; Ephesians 1:16; Philippians 1:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; cf Colossians 4:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; Romans 15:30; Philippians 1:19).

He took his cue from the master disciple-maker Jesus who so modeled a life of prayer, that the disciples were compelled to want to pray like him (Luke 11:1 cf Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16). Jesus spent a night in prayer for those he would turn into his apostles (Luke 6:12-13). More than that, he often wrestled in prayer for them, for example over for Peter in Luke 22:32 and John 17:9.

In fact, John 17 in its entirety is a beautiful record of a prayer that Jesus prays on their behalf. He seeks the Father for a number of things for them and the disciples that would come from them (see John 17:20). These include that they may be united (vs 11), filled with great joy (vs 13), be protected from the evil one (vs 11 and 15), be sanctified by God's word (vs 17) and be sent out into the world (vs 18). We do well to pray the same things for those of whom we are making disciples.

Great pray-ers make for great disciple-makers. Joel Comiskey, a well-known consultant in cell group multiplication, reports on a survey he did and his findings from a survey of 700 disciple-making groups that disciple-makers who regularly and intentionally pray for their disciples are more likely to see those cells multiply. <sup>4</sup>

As I NAMS companion, I am aware how much I need to improve and grow in this area. But I want to because I have a personal investment in the lives of those I am called to disciple, lead and help to multiply. Thank God that He has not left us to struggle on our own, but has given us His Spirit to help us do just that. (Romans 8:26-27).

Brothers and sisters, let us pray.

## Factor 2) AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY - 'See how they love one another'.

The second factor that is common among rapidly multiplying disciple-making movements around the world is authentic community that is founded and centered on Jesus.

A disciple that is made in the image of Jesus will also be enjoined to the community that follows Him. Jesus never called anyone to follow Him that he didn't also call to into His Church, the body of His disciples that together constitute the living, walking tangible expression of His kingdom coming on earth, whether in its local or universal expression.

Authentic Christian community, be it in the smallest possible unit of the church anywhere in the world - the two or three disciples gathered, or in her larger settings, are focused only on one thing - being truly aligned with the revealed will and heart of Jesus, her King and Lord.

Paul makes the point in 1 Corinthians 3:11 - there can be only one foundation for authentic Christian community: Jesus!

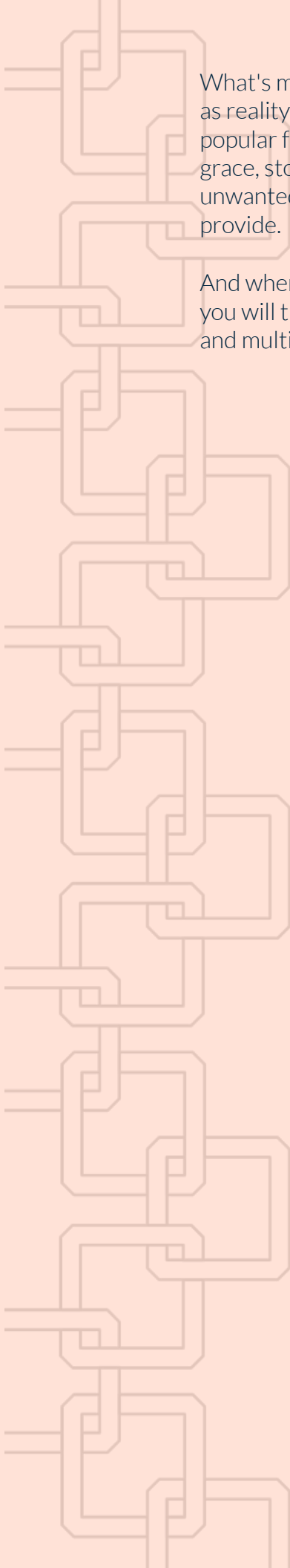
If the foundation of a building is weak, it is structurally unsound. It would then matter little if the building was a towering sky-scraper or a humble single-story wooden hut. Both are in danger of spectacular falls in moments of great disaster. Discipleship, individually and corporately, must be pleasing to and rest on Jesus alone, if it is to stand the test of time and tide. And the sign of such authentic Jesus-centered community is that we love one another.

In John 13:35, as NAMS Servant General Jon Shuler often points out, we have one of the few records in the Gospels where Jesus actually defines what his disciples will be or do. <sup>5</sup> Here, Jesus states clearly that his disciples will love the community of faith they are planted in.

Indeed, Jesus goes on to say that all people will know we are Jesus' disciples by our love for one another. I knew a Japanese Christian who came to faith in his home country when he happen to visit an Anglican church there and was struck by how much the Christians both welcomed him in and loved each other. It was a matter of time before he became one of them.

The disciples' love and loyalty to Jesus must be matched by an equally strident love for one another. At the recent NAMS Asia Regional Retreat this August past, I was meditating in a time of quiet reflection on 1 John 5. The first verse really convicted me: 'Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of Him.' We cannot be born of God and not love God's people. There are no exceptions to the 'whoever' of verse 1.

5 The other Scriptures are in John 8:31 and John 15:8, as well as in Luke 14:25-33.



What's more, authentic community will hold firm the plumbline of God's truth as reality defining, refusing to bend and shift along to changing cultural mores, popular fads and the spirit of the age. At the same time, it will be a community of grace, stooping down to lift up the oppressed, the poor and the cast-away and the unwanted, a friend of sinners like her Lord. A community like nothing earth can provide.

And wherever disciple-making disciples seek to spread the Gospel and the Kingdom, you will therefore also find such authentic Christian communities planted, watered and multiplied.

## Factor 3) REPRODUCIBLE - Had Any Babies Lately?

'It is easier to have babies than to raise the dead!' (Old church-planters' adage).

In this series, we are looking at the 3 factors that are critical and necessary ingredients in the rapid spread of disciple-making communities anywhere on the earth.

Today, we look at the third and final factor, reproducing disciples, which, along with passionate prayer and authentic community, can lead to lasting kingdom transformation among people and people-groups wherever we encounter them.

Intentional, passionate and persistent disciple-making is at the heart of kingdom multiplication. Like love and healthy marriage, you can't have one without the other.

In NAMS, we teach that disciples who know how to make disciples are the seed of a new community of faith anywhere in the world. If two or three disciples decide to relocate to somewhere new, and commit to pray together, to love one another and to hold each other accountable to the Scriptures, you could rightfully say a new 'Bible Study, care or fellowship group' has been started.

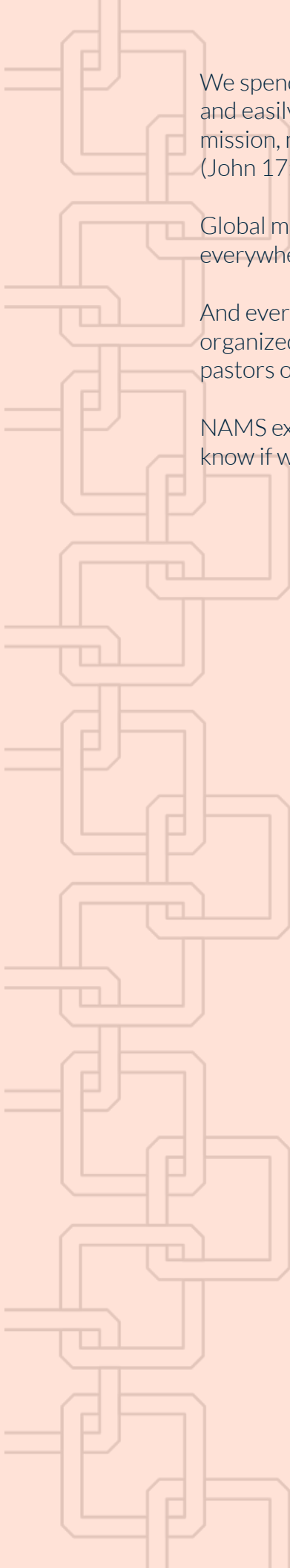
But if they also commit to working together to pray and reach lost people to bring them to faith in Jesus Christ so that they become disciples who want to make other disciples, you begin to participate with God in his mission to spread the knowledge of His glory everywhere (Habakkuk 2:14). Doing so will bring a smile to Jesus' face.

In the army, I was taught a maxim for becoming a good soldier - 'All you have to do is make sure you've obeyed the last order.' But it seems the Church has trouble obeying her Lord.

Jesus' last or final order, what is commonly known as the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20, calls us to the holy task of going in His name to all nations in order to make disciples who were to be baptized into the life and power of three-in-one God and taught to be obedient to everything Jesus told us.

This had been the practice of the early church. It has been said that there are two common factors present in all the narratives of mission and multiplication in the book of Acts. One is the ubiquitous empowering and guiding presence of the Holy Spirit. The second is the ability of the Apostles to reach people and make disciples wherever they went. Apparently, they were able to quickly equip new believers with a desire to reach out to their families and networks, such that Paul and his team could plant, for example, a growing and thriving church in Thessalonica in the short space of 3 Sabbaths (after which they were driven out - see Acts 17:1-10).

Disciples who make disciples. This is patently a missing ingredient in much of the historic settled churches of our day, with our emphasis on pleasing the faithful rather than mobilizing for mission.



We spend so much time maintaining the life within the walls of our church buildings, and easily forget that Jesus called us to do what he did - to go out with him on mission, majoring on reaching and making disciples wherever he places and sends us (John 17:18; John 20:21 cf Luke 19:10, Luke 10:1-11).

Global mission, not personal comfort, is the call and charge to Christians everywhere.

And everywhere disciple-making communities of faith are thriving, disciples - often organized in smaller disciple-making cells, understand that it is their job, not the pastors or missionaries alone, to make disciples.

NAMS exists to call disciples of Jesus to obedience to His final command. Let us know if we can help you do this too.

## A New Day of Growth.

The church of Jesus Christ is called to the task of both following Jesus and becoming fishers of people under His charge (Mark 1:17).

It is instructive to see the way that Peter, Andrew, James and John were so quick to change the direction of their lives in order to follow Jesus (Mark 1:18,20 cf Mark 10:28). For, as Jesus would later clearly teach, this is the pathway of all true disciples.

We are likewise called to leave home comforts, the allure of self-centered dreams and the safety of the familiar for the risk, suffering and inexpressible joy of being with Jesus on mission. A disciple is one who is ready to give up everything and do anything for Jesus. In fact, we cannot be disciple-makers unless we ourselves are first disciples who have abandoned all for Jesus (Luke 14:33).

On the other hand, disciple-making is the holy task of every genuine disciple. A disciple who is not working to make another disciple or bring his or her family, neighbor or friend to Jesus, is either living in ignorance or simply disobedient to Jesus.

Jesus desired his disciples both to be faithful and fruitful, leading to two outcomes - qualitative renewal in Christ, and quantitative growth of new disciples. Oswald Chambers echoes the same point: 'We know from Scripture that 'God's plan for discipleship is two-fold: transformation into the likeness of Jesus, and reproduction (the principle of one teaching another).'

And throughout history, the mark of God's kingdom coming in any place have been these two factors - a maturing and a multiplying church. Jesus promised that He Himself would build His church, and therefore it will prevail against all that hell can throw at it. The body of Christ is alive, growing and thriving thanks to her connection to her head!

In fact, anything that does not grow is therefore dead or dying.

Today, we live in exciting and unprecedented days where the church of Jesus Christ is growing at rates never seen before. While we are used to hearing about the decline of Christianity in the West, it is also true that in many parts of the world, in various places in China, India and continental Africa, for example, massive disciple-making movements under indigenous leadership are a wondrous reality. The list of unreached people groups where there are little or no Christian witness, is declining by the year. As the days grow ever more evil and dark, God's light reflected in the faces of his faithful people everywhere, continues to defy and decry the evil about. The advance of His kingdom cannot be stopped.

This is the work to which God has called NAMS, to be part of the global advance of God's kingdom and His church. Are you called to join us? Are you called to support us and to pray for us? If so, contact us today at the information on the next page.





# NAMS NETWORK

If you have found this booklet helpful, have more questions or would like more help to become a disciple-making disciple of Jesus Christ, write to us at the following address: [info@namsnetwork.com](mailto:info@namsnetwork.com) or directly to the author and GEO of NAMS, Rev Manik Corea: [manikagcorea@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:manikagcorea@yahoo.co.uk).

This booklet is a compilation of a series of blogs that appeared on our website: [www.namsnetwork.com](http://www.namsnetwork.com). You can subscribe to receive weekly helpful blogs from NAMS leaders by clicking the 'contact' tab of the home page of our website.

## What is NAMS?

**NAMS stands for New Anglican Missionary Society. We are a community of pioneering, global church planters engaged in calling the faithful Church of Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to be obedient to the final command of Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20) by making disciple that make disciples, raising leaders that make disciples and planting churches that make disciples.**

We are headquartered in Pawleys Island, South Carolina, USA. NAMS colleagues and associates are making new disciples and planting new communities of faith on 5 continents and are working in or developing work in 42 nations.

You can get more information about us at our website: [www.namsnetwork.com](http://www.namsnetwork.com) or by writing to us at [info@namsnetwork.com](mailto:info@namsnetwork.com)

Check out our Youtube channel 'NAMS Network' for more disciple-making resources that we have produced to help Christians obey Jesus' final command.

Thank you.  
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