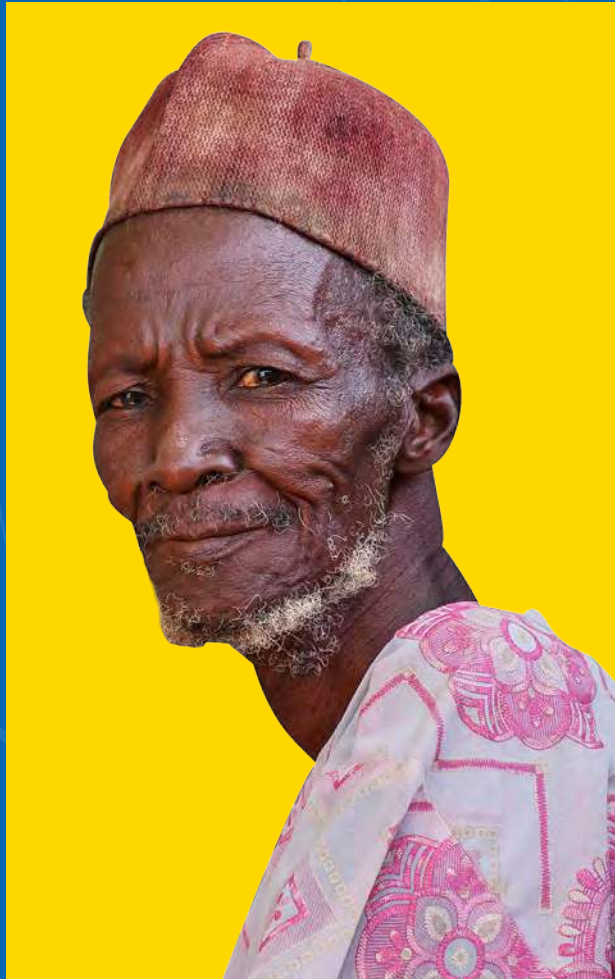


# CAN THEY



FEATURE ARTICLE

# DO IT?

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John directed the production of the *Engage! Africa* video series and co-created the *Engage!* course with Terry Neu. He also serves on the board of Directors of Final Command Ministries.

## EPHESIANS 4:11-13 HAUNTED ME!

While Ephesians was probably my favorite epistle from which to preach and teach, this section convicted me that my training had been inadequate and even misguided. How do you do something differently when it is all you have seen?

Paul writes:

*He [Jesus] gave some as apostles,  
and some as prophets,  
and some as evangelists,  
and some as pastors and teachers,  
for the equipping of the saints for the work of service,  
to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain  
to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of  
God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which  
belongs to the fullness of Christ.*

*(NASB, formatting mine, JKK.)*

### Are You Equipping the Ordinary?

Apostles are the “sent ones” who are commissioned to impart Kingdom culture on earth as in heaven, especially in the places where the gospel has never been heard. These are the Kingdom workers who are the tip of the spear, the ones going to the nations which will not issue missionary visas.

Prophets communicate heaven's vision here on earth. They help people imagine “What will our community look like when God's will is done here?” Business, education and entertainment will all be transformed as God's vision becomes our goal!

Evangelists share the good news with the passion of Jesus wherever they live, work and play. Gifted with an overflowing desire to see everyone know and love Jesus, those infused with this grace gift cannot refrain from talking about God's love for everyone. Pastor/teachers build divine community by training people in relational skills. Here “family” becomes the healing motif for many of the broken places in our lives and our neighborhoods. Evidence of their work will show in reconciliation and shifted priorities.

But Paul is not primarily focused on these “grace gifts” (whether they are fourfold or fivefold)! His major concern is that all these gifts are used “for the equipping of the saints” enabling them to do the work of ministry.

The purpose for these equipping gifts is to build up the body so that all reflect the character of Jesus and we look, act and sound like our heavenly Father!

We become men and women of honesty and integrity. We use our speech to build people up rather than tear them down. We work rather than cut corners and steal from others. We forgive as freely as we have tasted God's forgiveness. We all become servants who minister with compassion and proclaim the Kingdom, like Jesus did (Ephesians 4:14-32).

### Movement Paradigms

While people who function with apostolic authority are absolutely essential to pioneer missionary breakthroughs, the prophetic, evangelistic and pastoral must follow quickly if the Kingdom culture of heaven is to transform a village, town or region of a city. To see a movement among a people group, all of these grace gifts must be utilized to produce the character of Christ within every disciple, family of disciples and friendship group of disciples.

The Preacher/Master Teacher model which has been so deeply ingrained in the North American church does not easily replicate, though. It requires a long time, expensive education and slowly gained experience which becomes a governor slowing the growth rate to a crawl. But that was my existence!

Disciple Making Movements (DMM) especially focus on the apostolic. Core DNA centers around bringing the reign of Christ into reality—especially where his name has not yet been heard. More of what the Western church has been doing will not bring us into the obedience called for in the Great Commission. Making disciples of all the nations was honestly not on my radar. I had accepted too small a role in the Kingdom—maturing some of those who had come to follow Jesus, but how can we follow him if we are not making disciples?

### The Replication Paradigm

The first paradigm shift for me was accepting the DNA principle that: “Whatever you do has to be reproducible by the people you train.” “Can they replicate this?” is an earth-shattering question to force yourself to answer. My four-year Bible degree and two Master's degrees argued that you have to have a Bible Dictionary and a Concordance at a minimum, if you are going to really study the Bible.

How can you equip people for ministry if you cannot

train them to feed themselves spiritually? While I could argue they could all purchase a Concordance and Bible Dictionary, here in the U.S., what about people in churches where there was only one copy of the Bible for the whole church? God blew open my box by taking me to West Africa a few months before the first DMM training took place.

### **The Discovery Paradigm**

Discovery became the answer. How do we get people to slow down and really listen to what the Word says? How do we get them to answer basic questions which go a bit farther than general reading comprehension, but not too much further? Many of my earliest attempts were far too complicated and demanded too much technology, but that nagging question kept popping back in my brain: “Can they replicate this?” Of the sixty I attempted to train in a simple inductive Bible study process, five could not read and write. How do you make the Word and Discovery accessible to oral learners, too?

Disciple Making Movements actually demand catalysts who learn to hear from God and apply what they discover to their life in concrete actions—appropriate obedience. Legalism is applying a list of rules someone else gives us. Obedience is being responsive to God’s directions. Equipping the body requires us to become coaches more than great players. Good coaching models incredible trust in the Holy Spirit. It acknowledges that God produces better outcomes than the coach can. It believes the resources are in the harvest. The Kingdom advancing force will arise from God’s harvest field, if we will disciple the body to do disciple making in the Jesus style.

### **The Coaching Paradigm**

Training entails learning skills. How do you coach a Person of Peace to facilitate a Discovery Group consisting of her friends among the travelling soccer team parents? What questions will you consistently use with her till she has confidence facilitating? When is she ready to facilitate a group with ongoing coaching? When does she need less of your presence? Coaching and good training work well together, but in the DMM world much of our training is intentionally done to find the few who are willing to be coached. Most in the Western Church are not willing to be coached. Even those who become willing often require many exposures to critical principles and experiences of experimenting with Discovery processes.

Finding a Person of Peace becomes the greatest hook to “reel in” those of us who have been “captured” by Movement thinking. “Taste and see...” may be the opening invitation. Seeing the joyful transformation in the life of a Person of Peace following a Discovery path is intoxicating.

Helping ordinary people experience breakthrough in making disciples gives me great joy! It far surpasses the fulfillment of having a Christian say week after week: “Great sermon! I never heard it put that way before!”

### **Multiplication Goes Where We Cannot**

My first efforts to disciple disciple-makers came in the Rutherford County Jail which is just a few miles from my home in Murfreesboro. While I could only visit with any single inmate for two 45 minute sessions a week, he was spending 24-7 with more than 50 guys in his pod and twice a day, Seven days a week he could meet with guys from an adjoining pod in the exercise room. Training him to facilitate a discovery study offered far more capacity to bring the gospel to the jail. Three years after he was released I was working with the 17th different facilitator of a group study which had been continuously taking place. As friends in Africa heard about this group, they were able to gain even more access to prisons and jails. Many more were discipled to faith and on to maturity.

You know you are using better strategies when you find out that a Chinese girl at a university in the U.S. is facilitating a Discovery process with her mom in Inner Mongolia via Skype. While the daughter was not a believer at that time, she valued what was happening in her heart enough to replicate it with someone she loved. Recently the girl came to faith—we are praying her mom does, too. I cannot help but wonder if there may be others back in China who are close to the kingdom, also.

Floyd McClung has said, “Apostolic people take the church to the world; they don’t wait for the world to come to the church.” We need apostolic people to reach the large percentage of Americans who will not come to our churches. We also need prophetic, evangelistic and pastoral workers joining hands with the apostolic to equip the body to grow up into the fullness of Christ!

Are the people you are discipling able to disciple others to become disciple makers. Disciple making movements are multi-generational or they are not truly movements!

