

WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

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The word *discipleship* as commonly used in the Evangelical church of our time, is used to describe various ways to help one who has become believer in Jesus grow in faith and obedience. However, among Evangelicals there is a great deal of reexamination of how effective our discipleship is. What follows are my own thoughts which I trust are faithful to scriptural teaching¹ and pastoral in intention.

As one example of this reexamination, I call attention to a large gathering of key Christian leaders that was convened in 1999 in Eastbourne, England, called the International Consultation on Discipleship. The purpose of the consultation was to address the widespread problem of those professing to be converted to Christ but not actually following Christ as disciples—what might be termed, evangelism without discipleship. They defined a discipleship as “a process that takes place within accountable relationships over a period of time,” and they offered three insights about evangelism that results in effective discipleship:

- evangelism is a process;
- evangelism takes place over a period of time;
- evangelism brings new believers into spiritual maturity.

“To accomplish these goals, the conferees called Christians to recover the integral relationship between evangelism and discipleship, to assess rigorously existing structures, to recognize the local church as the primary community in which discipleship takes place, to affirm the vital role of mentoring, to rediscover the role of the Holy Spirit as teacher, and to call all Christians to live as ‘subjects in the kingdom of God’.”²

Those familiar with my teaching and writing about the nature of true conversion³ will recognize that I share the concern expressed by the consultation and affirm the call for new thinking about discipleship. Or is it new thinking? Robert Webber responded to the consultation by writing *Ancient-Future Evangelism*—a call to take a fresh look at how the ancient church understood evangelism. The starting point, Webber notes, is that

*the ancient church did not have any distinction in their practice between evangelism, discipleship and Christian formation, a pattern they took from the New Testament.*⁴

I believe this is a good way to begin to consider the matter of discipleship in our churches. In many instances, the people we come to know have already come to faith in Christ or at least make that confession even if they have a poor understanding of what it means. Most of my ministry has been serving as a pastor, and this is frequently the stage of people's spiritual journey when I become involved with them. The fact that they start attending the church and take an interest in what I have to say from the Bible usually indicates that something is going on in their spiritual lives. At that point, the question becomes whether such a person needs to be *evangelized* or *discipled*, to use terminology familiar to many of us. Some of our churches or ministries will have different groups or classes for these different categories, and the content of what is taught will be quite different. After all, we say, the unconverted person needs to hear the gospel, but the believer needs to be taught about the Christian life. However, I don't think that is a helpful distinction if we define a disciple as a follower of Jesus. It is certainly appropriate to recognize that people are at different stages in their following of Christ, and therefore what they receive in terms of discipleship will be at different levels of understanding and commitment. *But the point I want to make is that there should not be a disconnect between what we call evangelism and discipleship.*

THE GREAT COMMISSION—MAKE DISCIPLES

Take a thoughtful look at the teaching of Jesus known as the *Great Commission*:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

The key to the Great Commission is the promise of Jesus that we go into the world by the authority that has been given to him and the fact that he will go with us until the end of the age—a promise fulfilled by his gift of the Holy Spirit to the church (Acts 1, 2). So this is Jesus' work done with the power and presence of Jesus.⁵ The word *go* makes it clear that we have a part to play, but it is not actually a command. It is better

translated, “as you go” or, “when you go.” The actual command is to *make disciples of all nations* (“all nations” is not a reference to what we think of as a nation today; it refers to all *ethnos*, all the different kinds of people in the world, and in particular, anticipates going to the gentiles). The next two ideas are subordinate to that command. We make disciples by “baptizing them...” and by “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” In other words, in this key passage what we now call evangelism and discipleship are really two stages of *making disciples*.

Many have made the point that the Great Commission is not to go and make *converts*, particularly if getting converts is understood to be getting decisions to “accept Jesus,” or whatever language expresses this idea. It is important to keep in mind that there is no category in Scripture of a believer or a Christian who is not a disciple (“The disciples were first called Christians first at Antioch.” Acts 11:26). Discipleship should never be thought of as an important, but optional, level of being a Christian.

The command is to *make disciples*. The first stage is to bring people to the place where they are ready to publicly profess Christ and identify themselves with his people, and the second stage is to teach what it means to continue obediently following Christ. Notice the wording is that we are to “teach them *to obey* all things I have commanded.” This second stage of discipleship, therefore, is not simply teaching information or doctrine, but it calls for a kind of teaching that will encourage the new disciple in a way that they actually walk this new path.

Making disciples, then, is a process of calling people to follow Jesus and then walking with them through that process, both before and after they confess faith. This is precisely what Jesus did with those he called to be his disciples. Most of those early disciples seem to have been followers first, and in the process of following they came to believe (John 2:11, 6:66-69, 16:31, 20:28-31). In fact, one would be hard pressed to actually identify a specific moment when the first disciples were converted. In his book, *Conversions in the New Testament—Paul and the Twelve*, Richard Peace presents the case for reading the Gospel of Mark as a series of invitations to follow Jesus for those who are not yet sure what it meant to believe.⁶ We need to encourage the reading of Mark as people begin to be interested in Jesus, as well as after they have been converted.⁷ *This is the gospel* as the first sentence of Mark states: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus

Christ, the Son of God”. That does not fit our contemporary reductions of the gospel to a few key points, but it does fit the idea of authentic conversion as a process that leads us to be followers of Jesus. So what comes first--the following or the believing? *Or is there really a difference for a true disciple?* Perhaps these are different ways to emphasize what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. In nations such as the United States where there is a veneer of Christianity and believing can be a very superficial affirmation, I’m convinced the issue of *following Jesus* needs to be heard a great deal more. This needs to be part of what we typically think of as “evangelism,” which in reality is the beginning of discipleship.

GOSPEL DISCIPLING

Jim Petersen is a vice-president of the most widely respected ministry devoted to discipleship, the Navigators. In 1993, Mr. Petersen wrote a book published by the Navigator’s press (NavPress) called *Lifestyle Discipleship*. I highly recommend the book and use it as the starting point for some of my classes. The book begins with this startling statement, “THIRTY YEARS OF DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAMS, AND WE ARE NOT DISCIPLED.”⁸ Mr. Petersen was saying that something is flawed about the way discipleship is practiced by the Evangelical church, including his own organization. To their credit, it was the Navigators themselves who published the book and welcomed the ideas of one of their key leaders rethinking what discipleship means.

It is my conviction that the core problem with discipleship, as it is now understood in the Evangelical church, is not with *methodology* but with *content*. In one form or another, discipleship programs are the teaching of what a Christian is to believe and how they are to live. The emphasis is usually on what are called the “Christian disciplines” such as Bible reading and prayer as well as church participation and service to others. I would contend that rather than trying to repackage that basic approach, we should go back and recognize that the essential element of discipleship needs to be *the gospel*. The term I have been using for this is *gospel discipling*. When I use the phrase “go back,” I mean that I believe that this was how Paul followed up his converts. He kept teaching the gospel both before and after men and women came to believe it.

In many discussions of discipleship, the one held up as the model discipler is Jesus himself. Of course that is true. But what usually gets overlooked in that model is the fact that the most essential element of Jesus' discipleship was the *actual presence of Jesus*.⁹ The centrality of Jesus himself to any ministry of discipleship was a constant focus of Paul. Consider his prayers in each of the prison epistles (Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-19; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-14; Philemon 4-6).¹⁰ *Any approach to discipleship that does not major on the matter of knowing Christ and his Presence will only go as far as a person's self-discipline can take him.*

ROMANS AS A TOOL FOR GOSPEL DISCIPLESHIP

An excellent example of gospel discipling is the book of Romans. We treat it too often as a theological masterpiece (which it is), but it was written by a missionary who led people to faith in Christ and then was constantly working to see that faith grow. Paul wrote Romans in advance of a stop in Rome on his way to a new mission in Spain (15:22-29). Review the introductory verses to his letter (Romans 1:1-17). Paul wrote that he was coming to "preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome" (1:15). Who was he writing to? "To all in Rome who are loved by God and *called* to be saints" (1:7). He had already been inspired by reports of their faith (1:8, 12). In other words, he was coming to preach the gospel to the *church*, those who already believed it because they had experienced God's call to belong to Jesus Christ. Therefore, Romans defines preaching the gospel in a context of *discipleship* rather than *evangelism*, to use our modern distinction. And this gospel "is the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes" (1:16). It is important to note that the word "believe" is in the present tense, which is best translated in a progressive sense, "is believing." So the power of God for salvation is much more than that aspect of salvation that occurs at conversion. As people continue to believe the gospel, and gain even more insight into its depth, they will also continue to be empowered by the gospel. This is the essence of gospel discipling.

The book of Romans suggests four basic elements for gospel discipling. I am not insisting that this is Paul's "program" of discipleship, but as we try to help people practically this points the way to an approach that I believe is consistent with Paul.

1. Teach the gospel itself. Paul begins Romans with a statement defining the gospel (1:1-4). It is the good news about Jesus Christ, promised in the Old Testament, who is both human and divine and now the resurrected and ascended Lord. Implicit in these words, referring back to the Old Testament's promise is the anticipation of the Kingdom of God, a theme that is quite explicit in the ministry and teaching of Jesus. So the "gospel of God" is also the "gospel of the kingdom" (Luke 4:43), the glorious news that in Jesus God has fulfilled his promise to bring *Shalom* to a broken world. Every reference to Jesus *Christ*, means Jesus the Messiah, the anointed king. In the closing paragraph of Romans, Paul returns to celebrate the gospel as that by which God will establish, or strengthen us (ESV). The gospel is the "proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery ... now revealed ... so that all nations might believe and obey him" (16:25-27).

It is generally thought that Luke wrote his gospel account to help in the discipleship of those who came to Christ through Paul. We informally speak of those writings as "Gospels," but the original titles were *the "Gospel according to Mark"*, *the "Gospel according to Luke"*, etc. I think I have long made a mental distinction between "the gospel" as a message of salvation, and the Gospels as accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus. But in the minds of the writers, they were telling their readers the gospel by telling about Jesus. They were not written just for information but to call us to repentance and faith and following (Mark 1:14-18, to cite just once example). So in the infant church one the first things the new believers needed to gain was an understanding of the story of Jesus.

This is still true, as we try to wrestle with the essentials of discipleship. People need to know who this Jesus is they have come to believe in. This also suggests that many people can have authentic faith in Jesus, by the work of the Spirit, even when they have very inadequate understanding of who he is. If people *deny* aspects of the gospel, and particularly Christ's incarnation, atoning death and bodily resurrection, that is evidence that true faith is probably not present. But there can be genuine faith even when there is confusion or ignorance. The gospel story is important both for those who have professed faith and those who have not yet professed.

2. Remind people of how they came to believe the gospel. Paul briefly reminds the believers in Rome of their calling (1:6-7). This is a common pattern in his writing. He frequently takes people back to the time before they came alive in Christ in order to describe what God has done for them (I Corinthians 1:2, 9; 6:9-11; Eph. 2:1-10; Titus 3:3-7, etc.). God in his grace not only sent his Son to redeem us, he sent the Spirit of his Son to regenerate our dead spirits so that we could embrace the redemption he offers (Galatians 4:4-7).¹¹ Disciples of Jesus need to have a firm foundation in the ministry of the Holy Spirit that brought them to faith if they are going to learn to live by that same Spirit. “Since we live [have been brought to life] by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:25)

In my book, *Spiritual Birthline*, I discuss at length what the work of the Spirit before conversion looks like in personal experience and ministry. Response to my teaching and book have deepened my conviction about the importance of this aspect of gospel discipling. *I believe teaching about the ministry of the Spirit leading us to Christ is an element that is missing from most discipleship ministries and programs that I am aware of.* When our starting point is a conversion experience then the Christian life begins with a human action, and that will tend to be the essential understanding of discipleship. The result is that the focus for many is on whether or not they are measuring up to what they think they should be doing for Christ. Their eyes are on themselves rather than on Jesus as they “run the race” that is set before them (Hebrews 12:1-3). Our effort to be faithful disciples is our human response to the sanctifying work of the Spirit within; just as our faith and repentance (conversion) is a human response to the regenerating work of the Spirit within.

3. Teach the blessings that come through the gospel. This is the major part of Romans. In 1:17 Paul says that in the gospel there is a revelation of the righteousness *of, or from,* God that comes by faith and grows by faith (“from faith for faith,” ESV). That leads to the detailed explanation of our need for that righteousness because of our sinfulness (1:18-3:20); the crediting of that righteousness to us through the work of Christ on the cross, resulting in our *justification*¹²(3:21-5:21); the changed life to become “instruments of righteousness,” that comes because we are united to the risen Christ,

which is *sanctification*¹³ (6:1-7:25); the highest of our blessings, our *adoption unto sonship* through the work of the Spirit (8:1-17); and climaxing in a celebration of the unshakable purposes of God revealed our salvation (8:18-39). It is also clear in Rom. 9-11 that the gospel includes the unveiling of the great mystery of God forming a new people (the church) that is composed of Gentiles as well as Jews. They are a people whose righteousness comes through faith and not through law (10:1-4).

To introduce these grand themes I begin by saying that the gospel points us to Jesus who is the Gift—the complete package of our salvation. But then we open the gift and discover all these wonderful blessings of justification, sanctification and adoption (and more) and begin to put them on by faith. I call these “gospel doctrines.” Keep in mind that if people have “embraced Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel”¹⁴ they already possess all of these blessings. People may be “in Christ,” but they have a very poor understanding of what that means. In many instances they may have received false teaching about these great truths. So this aspect of discipleship is a key part growing in the knowledge of Christ, which, as we have noted, was a constant prayer of Paul for the churches he wrote to.

When teaching these great gospel doctrines I frequently begin by asking people what their understanding of the gospel and Christ’s work was when they first came to believe. Usually I get smiles and many anecdotes of how little people actually understood, but nevertheless had sincere and childlike trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior. So the heart of our teaching and discipleship is not to move on from the gospel, but to go more deeply into the gospel. Dr. Richard Lovelace has made a compelling case that the key to ongoing renewal in our churches is what he calls a “depth presentation of the gospel.”¹⁵

It is hard to overstate the impact that coming to understand these gospel doctrines has had on key leaders of the Church as well as on ordinary believers. When Martin Luther came to understand the implications of justification, as taught in Romans, he was personally transformed and the course of history was altered. The same can be said for John and Charles Wesley. Those moments of enlightenment have often been interpreted as their point of conversion. I question whether it can be said that these men were unconverted, but there can be little doubt that until they understood the truth of the

sufficiency of the work of Christ they felt powerless and in bondage because of their sense of inadequacy before God. The gospel as the “power of God for salvation” became evident in their lives and subsequent ministries. Dr. Francis Schaeffer wrote about his spiritual life and ministry being deeply impacted by what he called “the present value of the blood of Christ.” In his book, *True Spirituality* he writes that when people come to a fresh encounter with the doctrines of the gospel “this new door then seems to be so wonderful that it often gives the Christian, as he begins to act upon the knowledge of faith, the sense of something that is as new as was his conversion.”¹⁶ In this generation the renewal ministry called *Sonship*, originating in the ministry of Dr. C. John Miller has had that same effect for many believers who were living more like orphans than sons and daughters.¹⁷

4. Teach the living that is to flow out of the gospel. Paul concludes Romans with very specific teaching about what a life looks like that has been changed through the gospel. If 1:18-11:36 can be summed up as *gospel doctrine*, then the final chapters can be called *gospel living*. In Galatians 2:14 Paul described this as “acting in line with the truth of the gospel.” In Romans 12:1 Paul begins this section by appealing to all that he has explained to that point, calling it “God’s mercy.” And based on what God had done, they were to present their bodies in service to Christ. That begins with a description of life within the body of Christ (12:3-21) and expands to other matters. Paul consistently teaches the gospel as the death and resurrection of Jesus and the gospel *in us* as our being united to Christ in his death and united to him in his resurrection (Romans 5, 6; Colossians 2:9-15). We are to receive this as reality and live accordingly. “Since therefore you died with Christ ..., Since then you have been raised with Christ ...” (Colossians 2:20-23; 3:1-4:6). Gospel living is a living *out* by faith what God, by the work of the Spirit planted *within* us. It is defined in terms of union with Christ, but it is always understood as living that life together in the body of Christ—the community of believers.

This can all be summed up by saying that gospel living looks like Jesus. In the words of the text that led to the conversion of Augustine, *Rather, clothe yourselves with*

the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature [flesh] (13:14).

IS DISCIPLESHIP A PROGRAM?

When we step back and consider the challenge of discipleship and the mandate to make disciples of the nations, it is hard to conceive of packaging all of this into a program. In fact, *isn't discipleship another way of describing the ongoing life of a follower of Jesus?* Therefore the making of those disciples should be almost synonymous with life in the community of believers. Of course there can and should be classes or programs that are designed to focus more intensely on aspects of the Christian's life with Christ, and these may incorporate the valuable tool of mentoring typically associated with discipling ministries.¹⁸ My question is whether we should define that as "discipleship," as though the rest of the worship and work of the church is something else. For example, isn't the opportunity to thoughtfully and prayerfully plan a worship service with a worship team a remarkable opportunity for a disciple to grow in understanding of who God is? Or shouldn't we think of the effort involved in being part of a local ministry of mercy or a short-term missions team as great occasions for making disciples. In fact, I have heard of several instances when those kinds of opportunities were the time of conversion of the participants.

There is a vitally important discussion going on of what it means for our churches to be *missional* in outlook (as opposed to including outreach and missions as one part of our ministry)¹⁹, and the matter of incorporating discipleship in all we do it is a key component of that discussion. To be missional in outlook doesn't necessarily mean everything we do is specifically designed to reach out, but it does mean we are "doing church" with a constant awareness of our mission (actually Jesus' mission) to be advancing the cause of his Kingdom, whether qualitatively or quantitatively.

CONCLUSION

I have tried to raise some basic questions about the essential meaning of discipleship, biblically and practically. I believe, with the International Consultation on Discipleship, that the local church is the primary community where effective discipleship

takes place—including that initial phase of discipleship when people first confess Christ. My prayer is that readers will be challenged to consider how our churches can become communities of welcome and refuge where seekers and new disciples can come and grow in their knowledge of Christ.

My specific suggestion for an approach to discipleship is “gospel discipling.” I believe it is biblical and I have seen it be transformational in local churches. How to actually proceed with gospel discipling will depend on your situation. Keep in mind the flow of the four elements I just described briefly. I believe that is the order they are found in Scripture, and in actual programs I have developed and taught this is the order I follow. But in the less formal discipleship that many of us are involved in daily, you may find a need to apply them differently. For example, sometimes the behavior of a new convert will be so out of keeping with life in Christ that you will need to seek to correct it immediately. But when there is time go back and lay a better foundation.

In situations where there has never been any gospel influence on a culture or individual it is very tempting to quickly impose a moral code on new converts (the behavior described in the last section of Romans or other epistles of Paul). The things required may be good in themselves, but it is usually only a matter of time before the Christians are defining themselves in terms of the approved behavior, and the essence of the gospel is lost as discipleship becomes legalism. This was the situation Paul was addressing in his letter to the Galatian churches (also a good textbook for gospel discipling). They had begun by faith in Christ as fully sufficient but they were trying to progress by self-effort. *Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort [literally, the flesh]? (Galatians 3:1-3).* Paul called this *deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel (1:6).*

I remember being with a mission team in Africa as they encouraged discussion in their new church of multiple wives, the treatment of women, sexual fidelity before and after marriage, and the value of a formal marriage. I admired the fact that even though they had strong convictions about the standards the people needed to adopt, they were working to be patient and let the gospel go more deeply into the people’s lives. The people themselves were beginning to see the need for changes, but it was a whole new

path for them and would not come easily. What is true for another culture is increasingly true in our western societies where the moral standard introduced by generations of those who believed in God has essentially been forgotten. We want to see change, but to be deeply rooted and healthy the changes in behavior must grow out the “renewing of the mind” (Rom. 12:2) that comes from a growing faith in Christ.

The biblical phrase that may be most helpful comes from the early verses and the last verses in Romans. Paul wrote that the goal of his preaching the gospel was “to bring about **the obedience that comes from faith**” (1:5; 16:26). This is consistent with the words of Jesus that making disciples includes “teaching them to obey all things” he commanded. As I noted earlier, the command is not to teach them all things, but to teach them *to obey* all things. But that obedience must grow out of faith in Jesus. This is the challenge of gospel discipling. Romans ends on the same note with which it began:

*Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him [lit. “to bring about the **obedience that comes from faith**”]--to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.*

(Romans 16:25-27)

ENDNOTES

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- ¹ Biblical quotations are from the New International Version, unless otherwise noted.
- ² Cited by Robert Webber in *Ancient-Future Evangelism*, p. 13.
- ³ *Spiritual Birthline* (Crossway, 2006); “What Is True Conversion?” (P&R, 2005).
- ⁴ *Ancient-Future Evangelism*, p. 20-25
- ⁵ Cf. Ch. 4 of *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church*, C. John Miller (Zondervan, 1986) for the importance of the Great Commission as the missionary authority for the local church.
- ⁶ p. 112, 116-117, *Conversion in the New Testament* (Eerdmans, 1999).
- ⁷ The ministry of Christianity Explored is an excellent example of how this can be done in our churches (www.christianityexplored.com). I also recommend seeJesus.net as an effective ministry of introducing Jesus to those with no background (www.seeJesus.net).
- ⁸ p. 15, *Lifestyle Discipleship* (NavPress, 1993). (Emphasis his)
- ⁹ Mark 3:14, “He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him ...”
- ¹⁰ It is striking that in each of these prayers Paul prays for their knowledge of Christ and who they are in Christ, but he uses the intensive form of the word for know: *epignosis*. He was praying for a knowledge that was personal and experiential—the same knowledge for which he was happily willing to give up everything (Philippians 3:7-14).
- ¹¹ This is typically called Redemption *accomplished*, (the work of the Son) and Redemption *applied* (the work of the Spirit). When I teach these concepts, I add Redemption *ordained* to speak of the role of the Father in our salvation (Ephesians 1:1-14).
- ¹² It is important to note that justification is not the gospel—it is a benefit of believing the gospel. By faith in Jesus, who is proclaimed in the gospel, we are declared righteous because of the sufficiency of Christ’s atonement. But making this vital doctrine the same as the gospel has helped to encourage the idea that the new life described in ch. 6 ff comes to us *after* the gospel. As some state it, “justification by faith, but sanctification by works.”
- ¹³ The word *sanctification* is not used in Romans 6. But the chapter describes the new life given to us because we are united to Christ in his resurrection—which is how sanctification is typically described. We are to “count ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus,” and based on our embracing this truth by faith we have power to begin to overcome the sin that remains in our “mortal bodies” (6:11, 12). This is “sanctification by faith,” another aspect of the gospel as the power of God for the salvation of those who believe (1:16).
- ¹⁴ Language taken from the Westminster Shorter Catechism, #31. It is the end result of the work of the Spirit effectually calling us to Christ and uniting us to him by faith.
- ¹⁵ *Dynamics of Spiritual Life* (InterVarsity Press, 1979). In a later book, *Renewal as a Way of Life*, Dr. Lovelace added the element of kingdom-centered living, teaching that Christian spirituality needed to be built on a theology “which blends Reformation themes with the biblical teaching on the kingdom of Christ.” *Renewal*, p. 9 (this book is more difficult to locate than *Dynamics* which has been reprinted several times).
- ¹⁶ p. 49, *True Spirituality* (Tyndale House Publishers, 1971).
- ¹⁷ Now a ministry of World Harvest Mission (www.whm.org).
- ¹⁸ For new believers I encourage teaching them to pray the Lord’s Prayer, and using the elements of the prayer to teach the elements of life in Christ. On my website (www.birthlineministries.com) I have a brief curriculum for download that can be used even with people who are illiterate.
- ¹⁹ Cf. *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* by Darrell L Guder (Eerdmans, 2000) as one excellent (but academic) contribution to this discussion.