

# DEVELOPING MISSIONAL LEADERS



A DEVOTIONAL BY BILL JONES

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Scripture provides clear direction for Christ's followers to help others move up the stair steps of spiritual maturity. The first step, evangelizing (Col 4:2-6), moves a person from an outsider to a genuine follower of Christ. The next step, establishing (2:7), focuses primarily on helping the new believer grow in his walk with Christ. The third step, equipping (Eph 4:11-13), trains maturing believers for ministry to others. The final step, extending (Ps 67:1-2; Rm 10:14-15), mobilizes Christians as goers or senders to reach the hundreds of millions of people without access to the Gospel. Mark 3:14 touches on these last two steps by highlighting three critical actions necessary to make the name of Christ famous among the nations.

The first critical action, "He also appointed 12," emphasizes the importance of wise

selection. Luke 6:12-13 notes that before Jesus selected His team, He spent the entire previous night in prayer. Further, when He chose His team, Jesus did not choose strangers. He had met five of them through John the Baptist about a year earlier (Jn 1:35-51). He even went on a ministry trip with four of them (Mk 1:13-14) before selecting them. Note, too, that from His many disciples (2:15), He only selected twelve. Having a small number allowed for personalized training. Similarly, as the Church equips future missional leaders, we must follow Christ's example by covering the selection in prayer, choosing only those whom we know well, and limiting the training to a small number in order to maximize the impact.

The second necessary action, "to be with Him," focuses on Jesus'


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preferred method of preparation. They experienced on-the-job training. They watched the Lord as He ministered in public and listened as He debriefed them in private (4:10). Later, as His team developed, Jesus sent them out to practice ministry two by two (6:7,12). Likewise, we must realize that no better training method exists than involving future world-changers in ministry with us: no contact, no impact.

The final action, “to send them out to preach,” stresses Jesus’ ultimate goal, the mobilization of effective workers who could reach the nations with the message of the Gospel. Throughout His ministry, Christ demonstrated God’s love not only for the Jews, but also for the Samaritans (Jn 4) as well as the Gentiles (Mk 7:24-30). Later, as this vision of God’s heart for all peoples grew into a

sense of urgency, the Twelve traveled to the ends of the earth proclaiming God’s love and forgiveness. For the missional leaders we train, we also must continually emphasize God’s love for every tongue, tribe, and nation by involving them in cross-cultural ministry.

Declaring God’s glory among all peoples will require the mobilization of large numbers of believers firmly established in their walk with Christ and effectively equipped for their work as His co-laborers. By wisely selecting, properly training, and strategically launching missional laborers, the Church can fulfill the task of taking the gospel to all the nations of the world.

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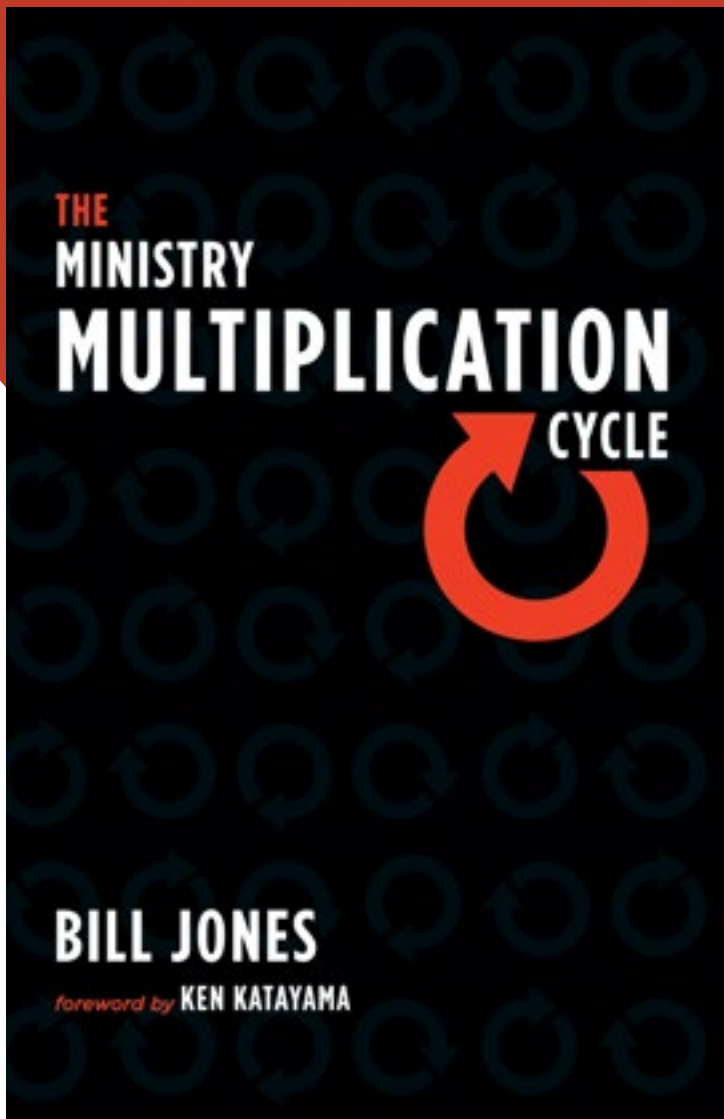
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