

Chapter 2

Discipling OutPost (DOP)

- 1) Defining the DOP
 - a) The term: Discipling OutPost
 - i) A small group disciple making strategy
 - ii) A strategy term not an implementation term
 - iii) The seed for a new congregation
 - iv) The home base for relationship development and fellowship formation
 - v) The model/pattern for multiplication into the next generation
 - vi) The language of church starts which lends viability to rapid and multiple indigenous church starts as opposed to “church planting.” Planting in the NT is seed of gospel not churches.
What we need is to clarify our objective to plant gospel seed in DOPs that might result in new churches
 - b) The task: “Discipling”
 - i) Provides a context for an emerging disciple to see the reality of Christ in the living testimony of the DOP leadership
 - ii) Shares the gospel and draws the net as God gives opportunity
 - iii) Establishes a believer with tools and skills to develop his own spiritual maturity and ministry
 - iv) Models a multiplying ministry and anticipates a future generation DOP
 - v) Transfers leadership to maturing disciples
 - vi) Congregates disciples into a new indigenous church
 - vii) Sets the Christian disciple in everyday, normal, experience for applying the truths of scripture
 - c) The setting: “OutPost”
 - i) “Out” indicates that this discipling process will be removed either geographically and/or culturally from existing conditions. It is “out there.” For a small group sitting in the living room of a home, it could mean “out of these four walls.” For a visionary group ready to boldly go where “no man has gone before,” it could represent a destination into a new geographic region. For a group with a segue into a different ethnic context, it could mean “moving in” or “moving over” so as to initiate the discipling of a group of Hispanics or Chinese, etc. Simply put, outpost represents being out of one setting but it also means getting into another.
 - ii) “Post” could be home, business, restaurant; public meeting room or private; it is probably not a church building. A church building will connote more than is intended to be communicated to a potential disciple. While there may be no “word association” problems for the average church goer, there may well be such problems for the average non-church goer who might respond to an informal setting such as a home.
 - (1) Post locates the Discipling group in a specific location known and accessible to the participants. The Post can move around as it is necessary or beneficial to the participants.
 - (2) It needs to be something, however, that the participants themselves provide. That means that the participants must demonstrate “ownership” with the characteristics of the Post. It is their Post, i.e., they make the arrangements. To the degree that the Post is provided for them, the reproducibility of the model is diminished.
 - (3) The Post identified in the first generation will become the de facto model for the next generation of DOP.
 - d) The components
 - i) Testing Environment --- a “neutral zone” in which the disciple can safely evaluate the authenticity of the gospel in the changed lives of the leaders to see whether or not it is something that he desires to have a part of his life; in which the disciple can observe the climate of kingdom conditions through a caring environment fostered by the disciple maker and practiced as well by the others in the group; the disciples should not feel intimidated or pressured in any way by the setting, the circumstances, or the people involved. He should understand that participation does not suggest or require commitment that he is unable to offer.

- ii) Personal Touch --- a caring, relational experience. Therefore, attention is given to the needs and challenges of specific individuals within the group. It is not about the presentation of materials or the checking off of boxes. Rather, the disciple maker is responsible to understand and know the participants within the DOP and address the process specifically to them. A disciple in this environment should be able to expect to be known, understood, appreciated, and cared for while learning how to be a disciple.
- iii) Incubator conditions: the disciple can try out the experience of following Jesus without fear of reprisal and with the encouragement and approval of the DOP community; the disciple will find accountability systems to help in his development as a disciple --- an environment made to nourish health and bring to success; away from crushing blows of the negative impact founding the day to day world. An opportunity to succeed and flourish.
- e) The name: Friendlier terms than Discipling OutPosts may be important when it comes to implementation with non-believers. Not many of your neighbors would be inclined to join in a Discipling OutPost; to do so will quite possibly result in a name a blank look. (Discipling OutPost is really a strategy term for practitioners). "Group" is a good word that be modified with a variety of words, like the ones below, or add your own. Caution: words like "Bible study group" connote many things to people and say more and less than you intend.
 - i) One option is to gradually introduce the concept by talking first and primarily about a "discipling group." That reduces the formality and impersonal language suggested by Discipling OutPost. In time, the appropriateness of OutPost becomes relevant for the reproducing disciple giving attention to how he can repeat the model. Share it at that time.
 - ii) A second option is to call the DOP by another name when enlisting participants (unsaved and unchurched), e.g., Discovery Group. And then begin shifting the language by describing the Discovery group (especially after conversion) to Discipling OutPost with the participants to begin to understand the strategy.

DOP serves the purpose of defining the role of the group in the strategy for the disciple maker whereas Discovery Group defines the role of the group for the non-believing participant. Be wary that the Discipling OutPost does not lose its strategic importance to make disciples and become simply another Bible study. That is the danger of changing the names. It is possible to have a Discovery Group for which the purpose is to serve as a Discipling OutPost. Just don't let the objective become lost either for the disciple maker or for the disciples.

2) Starting the DOP

a) Authority

- i) Some common questions: "Can I do this thing which might result in the start of a new congregation?" "Do I need permission?" "Should I be sent out"
- ii) Jesus said, "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..." Matt 28:18-19 NIV
- iii) You have all the authorization you need from the one in whom all authority resides: He mandated his followers to "make disciples."

b) Activity

The Great Commission describes disciple making occurring "as you go." Going moves the Disciple Maker in and out among people. Intentionality and sensitivity position the disciple maker to recognize potential disciples and Open DOORS. Open DOORS. In order to maximize the disciple's resources and to better position the Discipling OutPost to emerge as a new church, it is important to cluster disciples, i.e., to form groups of disciples meeting in one location at one time.

i) Oikos relationships:

- (1) The disciple maker lives and moves in a rather predictable circle of family, co-workers, neighbors, acquaintances, relatives, etc. This group represents his oikos and, perhaps, the most immediately receptive people to his influence.
- (2) The concentric circles of disciples within an existing DOP will connect the DOP participants with networks of potential disciples for the formation of a next generation DOP.
- (3) The more removed from the 1st catalytic event, the less likely it will be that contrived activities will be necessary. More names and faces will provide increased contacts with names and faces yet to be reached in the succeeding generations

ii) Catalytic events:

- (1) A second option fishing pool for disciples is a catalytic event. Because there may not be existing relationships to launch a 1st generation group, the disciple maker may initiate special events to that will gather a crowd and provide an opportunity for some probing for an Open DOOR. Open DOORs
 - (a) The large group enables the DOP leader to have face to face contact with people new to him; in a fun and non-threatening environment, the disciple maker can identify the few in the crowd that might be open to a Discipling OutPost. Filtering a large group will yield the one or two that are ready to participate in the DOP and perhaps function as the DOOR to gather additional participants for the formation of the DOP. Getting to know the people --- hang out, help with events, greet parents and visit with them --- talk about what you have in common: kids, hobbies, parts of the country, jobs, etc., share testimony of your fellowship of Christ ask if they would be interested in finding out what that means.
- (2) Examples
 - (a) Mission groups doing Backyard Bible Clubs, servant evangelism, sports evangelism, and ministry events to create face to face contacts and exposure. The activities must provide an opportunity to have some meaningful conversation with adults; it must provide for inquiry for Open DOORs.
 - (b) 4 week Jesus Video review using passages from the Gospel of Luke and the Inductive questions: Watch the video, Luke 7:36-50, 15:11-24: 18:35-19:10; also incorporate reading 1 chapter a day from Luke with key verses noted.
- c) Receptivity --- see Open DOORs
- d) Facility
 - i) The team should identify the date and the location in conjunction with the ministry events. Identify several homes if possible; determine the location for the original meeting in a home of a person of peace/influence, i.e., a person with whom there is a positive reputation and influence with locals and peers. This person could be the key to several attendees simply because the initial meeting is at his house;
 - ii) Not preacher's house --- too religious and definitely not a church building ---too impersonal
 - iii) Some relationship will be necessary to bridge the mote around the castle. Not many strangers will walk into another strangers house even with an invitation
 - iv) Home selection will influence who will and who won't come. Be aware that some will exclude themselves from participation at a particular home for reasons that may not always be obvious. So be careful where you locate the OutPost.
 - v) The DOP site should be able to comfortably accommodate the 8-15 people that might be involved.
- 3) Forming the DOP
 - a) Invitation
 - i) Describe the small group in terms of relationship, discovery, and relevance (RDR) and give personal examples.
 - ii) Describe how long it will last 1 1/2 to 2 hours.
 - iii) Describe the meeting agenda as including Bible Discovery, neighboring, and possible snack (or even meal, time will need to be extended).
 - b) Personal --- no mass anything; relational from top to bottom, beginning to end.
 - c) Encourage the DOOR to gather as many as 10 people (friends, neighbors, family). If the DOOR can't gather 10, try again the next week.
 - d) Target group:
 - i) Unchurched and unsaved: group evangelism
 - (1) More effective use of time
 - (2) Sets the conversion in the context of others making it easier for the convert to share faith with others
 - ii) To fill the DOP up with inactive Christians will bring tragic failure. The Christians will take over the group; they will attempt to conform the group to prior experiences and the result will be that the DOP will not be allowed to clearly shape the minds of the participants; non-christians and unchurched people will be adversely influenced by tradition rather than the

Word. DO NOT invite the disgruntled Baptists, etc. to the meeting so you can have a large group. They will not be happy and neither will the group

- 4) Conducting the DOP
 - a) 90 minute plan
 - i) 15 sharing and visiting (45 minutes on 2 hour clock can include food)
 - ii) 60 minutes discipling
 - (1) 15 minutes review and follow up from previous week (accounting/fellowshipping/encouraging)
 - (2) 45 new Bible Study
 - iii) 15 prayer and singing
 - b) 120 minute plan
 - i) 45 sharing and visiting and eating
 - ii) 60 minutes discipling
 - (1) 15 minutes review and follow up from previous week (accounting/fellowshipping/encouraging)
 - (2) 45 new Bible Study
 - iii) 15 prayer and singing
- 5) Transferring the DOP:
 - a) Avoid creating dependency on the leader at all cost either at the point of facility, teaching, music, praying, decisions, expenses. To the degree that the disciple maker does it all or some part of it all the time, the group will become dependent upon the disciple maker for that item or those items. Every effort must be made to avoid the disciple maker getting in that spot. i.e., the disciple maker must intentionally and systematically raise up his replacement in all areas. The group must sense that the group does not belong to an outside disciple maker but belongs to the group itself.
 - b) Transferring leadership is essential to the indigenous church model. We can't say that we have finished the task until this transfer is complete. The role of the Disciple Maker is to fashion his own replacement(s).
 - c) Leadership development of the farmer, the student, the everyday-on-the-job person with a 40 hour work week is vital. Do not underestimate the potential of the laos. This is a people process. We could call it laotic. The goal is to engage and release the "assembled crowd of people" upon which God has comprehensively and purposefully placed his calling.
 - d) Each person in the group must know how to continue the disciple making process utilizing the tools provided; in addition, a careful eye must be given to the identification and selection of a few individuals to be developed with additional training to serve as the shepherd of the emerging group and even the starter of the next Discipling OutPost..
 - e) Method of transfer
 - i) **Model** the desired behavior with a good example (reproducible patterns: how to swing a baseball bat)
 - ii) **Assist** the desired behavior with affirmation and biblical guidance (directed participation: you are dropping your shoulder during hitting drills)
 - iii) **Watch** the desired behavior with a distance set between you and the disciple (real time feedback: game conditions and follow up after an at-bat)
 - iv) **Leave** the disciple to continue the work with your example continuing in another location (kid moves to next level of play with your information imbedded)
- 6) Transitioning the DOP
 - a) Watch for signs of congregationalizing
 - i) Conversion and baptism are set in motion by the first two stages; purpose becomes clear in the third stage; fellowship, partnership, and congregationalizing in the networking stage.
 - ii) In the study of the church, the group will likely begin to assert for themselves that "we must be a church." What walks like a duck, and talks like a duck, must be a duck."
 - b) Spot emerging leaders
 - i) Emerging leaders will participate in a Lay Indigenous Leadership Equipping LILE module that provides a second tier of training for the discipling skills they have attained by way of the Triggers. It falls to the disciple maker to be especially attentive to discover who those emerging leaders are. Indicators include:
 - (1) relates well to the group

- (2) does the assignments enthusiastically and completely
- (3) passionate about the process.
- ii) Be careful to not scare the emerging leader away with talk about “Pastor.” That will likely go over like a lead balloon. The “Pastor” word connotes more than some are willing to accept for themselves. Rather talk about continuing the model that they have already observed and practiced themselves. Focus on function (task) not position, i.e., describe this person in terms of a verb: action orientation.
- c) Release (leave) and blessing
 - i) The model of church that continues will be one in which simplicity is a key. In its earliest form it will likely be a simple continuation of the DOP. E.g., no preaching as such but Bible Discovery through the DOP models, perhaps using previously unused Triggers for subject matter.
 - ii) The new congregation should hear that this does not make them second class in any way; they should not feel the need to “catch up” to the other churches around them
 - iii) The DOP leader must be careful to avoid pushing off on them his own expectations for church. Rather, Bible discovery will lead the group to pursue realistic expectations in their own time, in their own way, according to their own people, and with their own resources.
 - iv) The DOP leader must be willing to trust God and His Word to shape the new congregation as he hands off the leadership to the next generation.
- d) Shadowing
 - i) Disciple Making creates a permanent bond between the disciple and the discipler. Paul called Timothy his “genuine son” in the faith. The relationship initiated and done well will provide a lifetime opportunity for input by the disciple maker with the disciple and another lifetime of openness by the disciple to the disciple maker.
 - ii) Though the disciple maker leaves, he will never be completely off the screen unless he removes himself from the screen.
 - iii) By hanging around in the shadows, the disciple maker will preserve occasion for continuing teaching, correcting, and assisting. When things arise that the emerging leader hasn’t or can’t handle, the disciple maker is ready to assist.
 - iv) Paul assisted from the shadows by continuing contact and writing letters like the pastoral epistles.