

A photograph of three people from behind, standing on a rooftop and looking out over a city skyline at sunset. The person on the left is wearing a white t-shirt and a yellow cap. The person in the middle is wearing a dark t-shirt with 'GUN' printed on the back. The person on the right is wearing a dark t-shirt. The city skyline is visible in the background, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow.

TWO FOUR EIGHT

MOVEMENT INSIGHTS

DECEMBER 2022

OBSERVATIONS IN URBAN DISCIPLINE MAKING MOVEMENTS
PROJECT UPDATE





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OUR PROJECT MANDATE



The world is rapidly becoming urban, but most mission strategies remain overwhelmingly rural. Globally, over 3 million people move to cities every week. In 1800 the world was 6.6% urban and by 1900 the world was 12% urban. Today, 4.4 billion people (56% of the global population) live in cities. By 2050, 70% of the world will live in cities.

At the same time, the church is quickly losing its urban relevancy. Even in Western cities, the vacuum of faith created by secularism is rapidly being filled with worldviews and religions antagonistic to Christianity. People in cities are increasingly unreached because our message does not speak their language.

There is an urgent need for city strategies that address urban complexity and multiply faster than the rate of urbanization. Two Four Eight is focused on stepping into this mission vacuum by designing and implementing movement strategies that multiply disciples and faith communities in cities. Our vision is to see 1000 affinity-based Disciple Making Movements multiplying across 100 cities in 6 global regions by 2050.

Since 2010 we have invested deeply in research and learning to overcome the barriers to movements in cities. We created learning laboratories with urban practitioners around the world. As our understanding grew, we began to develop training. At the same time, we continued to ask, "What are the different elements that teams need to understand in order to build healthy urban movements?"

We started talking about a formalized research project in July 2021 with a desire to broaden the input from other global teams in a way that challenged our own unconscious bias. We wanted to create a feedback loop that made us aware of new developments in our rapidly changing urban world. This report is the first fledgling attempt at creating the awareness we need.

Our first intention with this research is to ask, "Are we still on the right track, and are we emphasizing the things that are the most important?" Secondly, we share it freely in the hope that other teams will prayerfully ask themselves, "Are there statements, suggestions, or conclusions in here that should influence what we do? Are there things that can speak into what we're doing to become more effective?"

This report is not the Gospel truth. It is our best understanding through a limited sample set. It's a tool that can be used by God to help us shape what we do and how we do it. We will continuously work to broaden the base of input from other teams in urban environments. Over time, we believe that this research will become more and more refined. In the meantime, I pray that the information presented here will lead your team to listen to God and respond in obedience. Discard everything else.

May the Lord bless your continued efforts to multiply disciples and Faith Communities in the city or affinity that you call your mission field.

DAVID BROODRYK
Executive Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Two Four Eight at a Glance

We at Two Four Eight have seen Disciple Making Movements ignited in many contexts. The vast majority of these were born in relatively rural, homogeneous people or population groups or segments. We have seen more limited success in urban centers, likely due to their implicit complexity. Two Four Eight has previously identified many common movement principles in rural and semi-rural settings and have made these learnings available to our partners. We have not yet been able to specify city-specific Disciple Making Movement principles underlying their success.

For us to actively pivot toward greater fruitfulness in cities, we must pay great attention to how God is currently using His people to ignite Disciple Making Movements in the city. We have been encouraged to do this in a counterintuitive way. One trusted advisor said it like this:

“
For you to study Disciple Making Movements in cities, you must listen to its stories.
- Dr. Liza van der Merwe

Thus, we took up her worthy challenge: to find the hidden treasure of God's Kingdom in our beautiful, broken cities through its narratives. We have done this by interviewing and listening to the experiences of a wide variety of fruitful city disciple-making practitioners, and identifying repeating practices across various city centers patterns. For more information about our methods and research process, see the addenda.

In this December 2022 report, we have only touched the surface of God's momentum in cities. We have interviewed 25 practitioners in 10 countries representing 20 diverse urban centers. Each of these interviews was followed by a long process of recording, transcribing, analyzing, feedback, organizing, testing, and cross-referencing.

Our goal was first to mine the interviews for observations. In this first round, we identified and cataloged 297 such observations related to disciple-making in our cities. We compared them to each other and identified 55 'common urban observations.' We sorted these common urban observations by the number of times they were repeated across separate interviews and the emphasis. Here, in this report, are the top 15 most repeated, emphasized 'common urban observations.'

MICHAEL SHERWIN
Project Manager

HOW CAN WE BEST USE THIS REPORT?

We cannot and will not draw conclusions from this small sample set of data, but we can make educated guesses based on careful analysis of our observations and identify potential disciple-making patterns. Then, we can test them and refine them as we go.

As an organization, we will utilize our learning to continually refine our training curriculum, advise and coach our partners, and adapt our global city strategy. Furthermore, we will create regular, learning feedback loops that acknowledge that complex system learning happens in retrospect.

We hope that the Body of Christ would dialogue around this report, utilizing it as a tool for self and team reflection: toward igniting Disciple Making Movements in cities and fulfilling God's mission on earth.

To facilitate this, each observation section ends with three unique reflections. The first is a personal reflection, the second a discussion question/topic for teams and the third a practical application question. All three reflections can be shared and discussed together or individually. All we ask is that you take time to reflect and respond as the Spirit leads. Additionally, here are a few big picture pragmatic questions to ask at the end, together, or as you read through these observations:

- How accurate are these observations to your own experience? If your experience is different from our observations, why might this be the case?
- What is confusing to you? How can you get clarity?
- Are there any course corrections that you or your team might want to make in response to reading this report? (Are these course corrections consistent with Scripture?)

You will find no silver bullets in this report. We expect that some of you will find this report confirming, rather than illuminating, encouraging rather than new. We did not seek to invent new methods or models for use in the city. Rather, we want us all to be attuned to God's current, real direction and pinpoint His voice in a progressively noisy world.

Please do not let this report judge or shame yourself or others. And please do not create new to-do lists or steps to success. There are already enough of these out there. After all, God is sovereign, and any hope for fruitfulness must be predicated on by our dependence on His Spirit. We do this through abiding, not by being clever or following man-made rules.

NEXT STEPS:

This project is just our first step. By 2024/2025 we plan to interview 125 practitioners on 6 continents in at least 75 cities representing every major global region. We will have tested our hypotheses, gathered, and analyzed more observations and above all else, heard more stories of God's Kingdom come.

Feel free to contact us at info@twofoureight.org with any feedback, comments, suggestions, questions, etc.

PROJECT REPORT



Total
Interviews



Common Urban
Observations



Observations
Consistent with
General DMM
Practice



Observations
Unique to Urban
DMM Practice

OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

We multiply Disciple Making Movements in the cities of the world.

OUR VISION STATEMENT

To see 1000 Disciple Making **Movements** multiplying in 6 global **regions**, 23 **sub-regions** and 100 **cities** through 50 affinity **networks** by 2050.

KEY PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Two Four Eight will observe how God is currently igniting Disciple Making Movements in global city centers and more effectively join Him in this work.

BY 2050, TWO FOUR EIGHT HAS A VISION TO SEE:

1000 affinity-based Disciple Making Movements, multiplying across 100 cities, in 6 global regions

1000

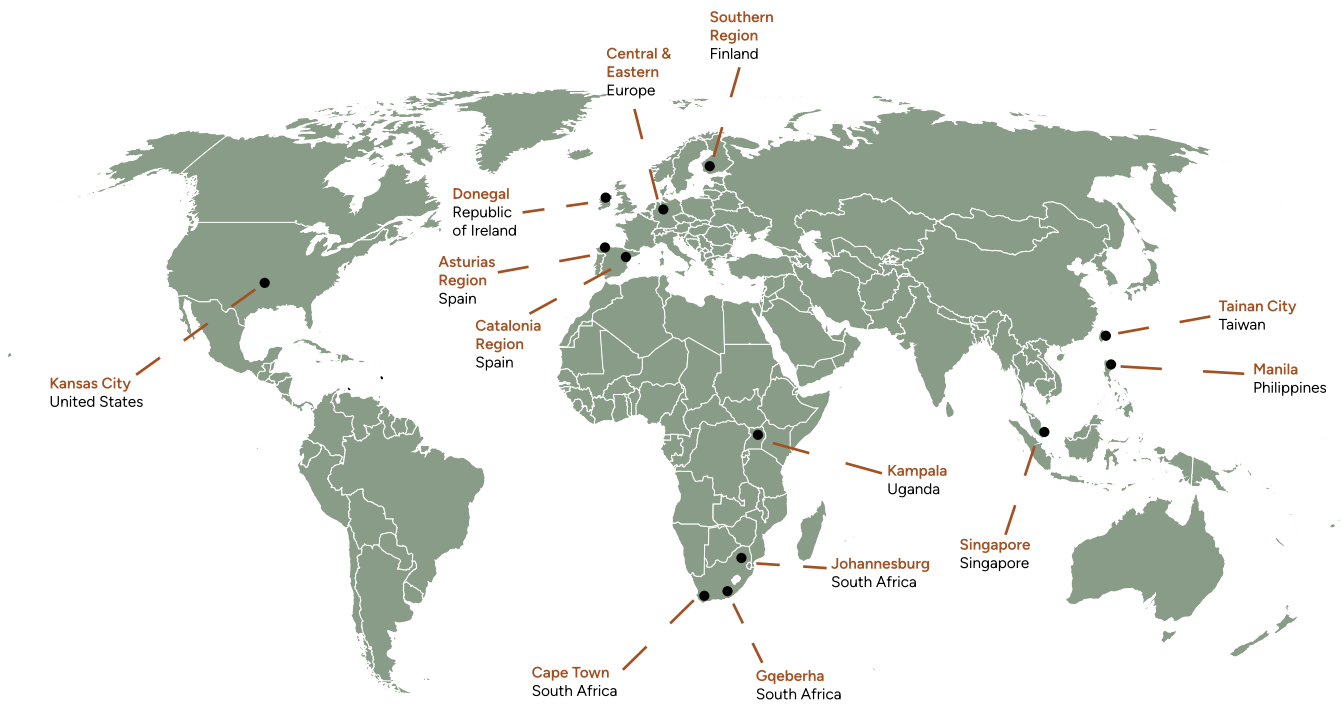
DMM

100

CITIES

6

GLOBAL
REGIONS



Interviewees general urban locations

Having interviewed, transcribed, edited, compiled, and analyzed 25 disciple-making practitioners in 10 countries, we now have enough information to form some hypotheses about 15 disciple-making practices in cities. From here, we will compile additional interviews and data points and test our hypotheses.

The background of the entire page is a blurred, bokeh-style photograph of city lights at night. The lights are warm and yellow-orange, creating soft, out-of-focus circles and streaks against a dark background. Some light sources are more prominent than others, with some appearing as sharp, bright points of light.

15 TOP COMMON URBAN OBSERVATIONS

1. FOSTER OBEDIENT LIFESTYLES THROUGH DISCOVERY LEARNING

Observation Number One

HYPOTHESIS

Urban disciple-makers should seek to model, teach, and replicate lifestyles of loving obedience to God through discovery-based, adaptive learning methods.

“

It made sense that if we want to see people making disciples in the harvest through discovery, then we felt we need to be training people through discovery.

S, Cities in East Asia

Listening to the pastor is fine, but what is God telling you? What does God require you to do? Some people, they really don't know. Actually, most of them.

AB, City in East Africa

By doing discovery week in and week out, we are training each other. We are equipping, we are empowering. The idea is for them to be able to get the confidence to do that outside the walls of the church.

J, Cities in Southern Africa

We have observed that fruitful urban disciple-making ministries seem to prioritize discovery-based Bible-centered learning in various sizes and various formats including, but not limited to the Discovery Bible Study, to ignite 'lifestyles of obedience.'

Discovery-based learning is a term that describes various formats that create learning environments where open-ended questions are asked, following the reading of Scriptures themselves. All who attend are encouraged to reiterate the passage in their own words and answer the questions, thereby learning how to engage with Scripture themselves rather than needing priests, experts, or some other intermediary.

Most interviewees at least alluded to the importance of facilitation as an effective format for disciple-making. Facilitation is seen as a reproducible introduction to, and model of servant leadership.

"The discovery process builds and empowers growth and develops leadership skills."

Interviewees in both individualistic and communal-based cultures successfully utilize discovery-based learning with some contextual shifts. This style of biblical learning appears effective for building the values of discovery, obedience, rhythm, accountability, evangelism and community.

Interviewees mention that this style of biblical learning, especially together in groups, leads to fewer heretical distractions through the mechanism of group self-correction. Many also mentioned that this style of learning encourages application and obedience to God, rather than just knowledge about God.

OTHER IMPORTANT OBSERVATIONS:

- Obedience to God is compelled by love. Obedience must not be confused with legalism, which is compelled by guilt, shame, or fear.
- Obedience is not a substitute, according to interviewees, for intimacy and worship of God.
- To be effective, discovery-based learning requires application, sharing, and reflection. Those that learn must apply, share with others, and reflect on how it is going.

THIS APPEARS TO BE A FRUITFUL CITY PRACTICE FOR THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL REASONS:

a. Discovery-based learning facilitates community discussion, engagement and obedience to the Scriptures. This is a great need in today's highly individualistic and relativistic cities where urban dwellers are typically surrounded by noise, i.e., information, disruption, entertainment, influence, and teaching of every style and quality. Despite this, city dwellers do most of their learning alone, with little application and little to no accountability. Discovery-based learning is a pattern interrupt. It is highly community-based, works across all cultures, is non-consumerist, active, and is typically led and facilitated internally by a trusted group member. The participatory nature of discovery-based learning fosters collaboration and community, which can be particularly effective in urban settings.

b. Obedience to the commands of Jesus is a clear necessity in Scripture and one of life's greatest opportunities and challenges. People in cities often live fast paced and busy lives but are lacking deep significance. Most are looking for and crave a challenge. Living in loving obedience to Jesus and helping others to do the same is highly significant and challenging and therefore attractive to the urban lost.

c. Discovery-based learning empowers learners to take ownership of their learning, leading to personal transformation and replication. Discovery Bible Study (DBS) and other discovery-based learning have greatly impacted the lives of movement leaders. As a result, they are utilizing it and multiplying it further.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND TEAM REFLECTION:

- Reflect on your own experience of being disciplined. Practically, how have others helped you to discover God? Knowing what you know now, what would you have wanted them to do differently?
- In your context, how do you and your team help others to discover God for themselves (foster discovery-based learning) in your disciple-making relationships?
- Are there statements, suggestions, or conclusions here that should influence what we do? What will I/we do in response?

2. EMPHASIZE AFFINITY GROUP ENGAGEMENT IN CITIES

Observation Number Two

HYPOTHESIS

Urban disciple-makers should seek to identify and strategically engage with cities at the affinity group level as the concept of affinity to be more relevant and precise in describing the way that urban populations interact.

“

Disciple-making leaders will need to be raised from every segment of our city; from seats of power to the most unlikely fringes of our broken city.

V, City in Southern Africa

Help people understand that there are spaces where they have reasons to exist.

R, Cities in North America

In these religious systems, there are clusters where there is a real belief in Jesus and the Bible and the word of God. And there is fervent prayer, but it's in this traditional setting. So that's where we have been working because many of us also come from that.

P, Cities in Northern Europe

Where there is a team and a focus it's much easier to maintain momentum.

S, Cities in Southeast Asia

We have observed that fruitful urban disciple-makers seem to identify and concentrate their disciple-making engagement at the affinity group level rather than at the people group level (i.e., UUPG - Unreached, Unengaged People Group, FPG - Frontier People Group), etc. As a result, most utilize the language of 'affinities and population segments' rather than that of 'people and language groups.'

All of those we interviewed have spoken about the significance of working through existing relationships and natural social networks. 'Affinity' is widely used to describe these groups in the modern city, where people seek community and cohesion for alternative reasons than those in more suburban or rural settings. Our interviewees mention several points of cohesion in cities.

Some examples are common needs, common interests, and common causes. One interviewee noted that his disciples, all young adults, were particularly active in common causes.

Many of the movements did not start with a narrowed focus on a single or a few affinity groups. Rather, they found clarity as they found 'real reasons to exist.' Some of the leaders that we interviewed started with a much wider focus, in some cases engaging with and discipling more than a dozen identified affinity groups, and over time, significantly narrowed their focus. Some of those we interviewed, rather, started with a few affinity groups and have since narrowed their scope to 1 or 2. Commonly, our interviewees narrow their focus down to 1-4 affinity groups over time.



Word cloud representation of the affinities that our interviewees and their teams are primarily working within

THIS APPEARS TO BE A FRUITFUL CITY PRACTICE FOR THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL REASONS:

- a. A city team should focus, progressively, on a few affinity groups as this appears to be a more efficient use of a team's resources toward igniting movements in cities.
- b. Focusing at the affinity group level allows disciple-makers to better understand the unique needs and challenges of each community. This enables them to tailor their approach to better meet the needs of each group, rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all approach. By building relationships and understanding the context of each group, disciple-makers can address the specific issues that are most important to that community, making their message more relevant and compelling. This can help build trust and credibility within the community, further accelerating growth.
- c. Affinity groups may be more accessible and visible in cities than people groups. Cities tend to be diverse and dynamic places where affinity groups can form and dissolve rapidly.

This means that disciple-makers can find and connect with affinity groups more easily than people groups, as they are likely to be more visible and active in the city. This can help to accelerate the growth of the Disciple Making Movement as more people are reached through these active and visible affinity groups.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND TEAM REFLECTION:

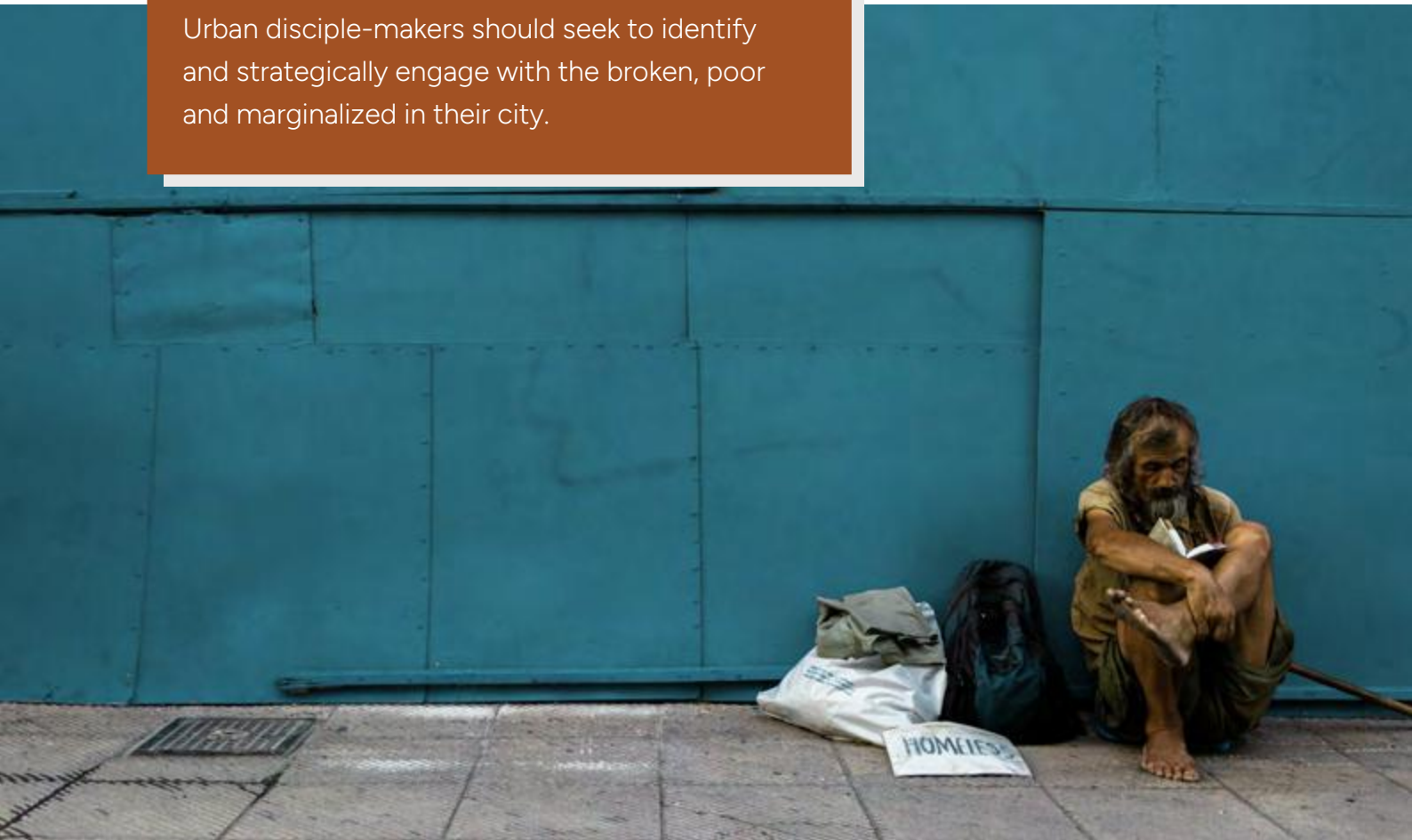
- In cities, we have identified that affinity groups typically form for various reasons including, but not limited to, common needs, common causes, or common interests. Where do you have 'reasons to exist?' What are the current affinity groups that you naturally belong to and what needs do they meet in your own life?
- Discuss the affinity groups that you and your team currently engage with. Why do you engage with these groups, as opposed to others?
- Are there statements, suggestions, or conclusions here that should influence what we do? What will I/we do in response?

3. BEGIN WITH THE BROKEN, MARGINALIZED AND POOR

Observation Number Three

HYPOTHESIS

Urban disciple-makers should seek to identify and strategically engage with the broken, poor and marginalized in their city.



We have observed that the most significant disciple-making momentum in urban spaces appears to be among the broken and marginalized. Those we interviewed specifically emphasized the poor, foreigners, refugees, non-traditionally churched and the unemployed, or under-employed. Many other groups were mentioned, but with less frequency.

Most of these we interviewed expressed a clear focus on the "broken" or "poor" affinities within the urban environment rather than a more general focus on "the lost." Many of those we interviewed also shared that they are seeing greater fruitfulness and efficacy among the poor and marginalized when compared to other populations. We identify "marginalized" as those who are ignored or treated as insignificant and peripheral in society.

“

God is moving amongst the broken.... People are looking for hope.

A, City in Southern Africa

In communities that are as broken as some of the ones that we engage with, change is going to happen from the bottom up. It's not going to happen from the top down.

V, City in Southern Africa

The sum of it all is that God is doing miracles, God is doing great things. The lives of the people are being transformed despite all those challenges that we are talking about. The Gospel is on the move and the King is on the move. People are really being transformed and they are really not playing games.

L, City in Southern Africa

Many, but not all of those we interviewed, have specific ministries that serve the felt needs of the poor and marginalized in their city. Almost all of those we interviewed intentionally engage and share the Gospel with either the broken, poor or marginalized in their urban centers.

THIS APPEARS TO BE A FRUITFUL CITY PRACTICE FOR THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL REASONS:

a. We are commanded to love our neighbors (Mark 12:31) and to serve the poor (Deut. 15:7, Matt. 25:40). As followers of Jesus, it is important to follow his example and prioritize serving those who are marginalized and vulnerable. Jesus spent much of his ministry reaching out to those who were on the fringes of society, including the poor, sick, and outcasts. By identifying and engaging with these groups, disciple-making practitioners can embody Jesus' teachings and demonstrate his love and compassion to those who need it most.

b. Practically, in cities we are often living in closer proximity to our city's poor, broken and marginalized. Therefore, the poor and marginalized are more likely to be our neighbors in cities.

c. Cities are often diverse and complex places, and there may be social and cultural divides between different groups. By reaching out to those who are marginalized, disciple-making practitioners can help to bridge these divides and foster greater understanding and empathy between different communities.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND TEAM REFLECTION:

- How and where do you interact with the city's broken, poor and/or marginalized? Reflect on your history of interaction.
- Discuss your team's history of interaction with the city's broken, poor and/or marginalized. Does your team currently include, focus on and serve them? Why or why not?
- Are there statements, suggestions, or conclusions here that should influence what we do? What will I/we do in response?



“

But my heart was set on the street children because they acted according to the way society looks at them. God opened my eyes to see them in a different way. Reaching out to people who are in my comfort zone... it's not okay with me. Maybe just for fellowship. But going deep in Christ, I just feel okay with broken people.

AB, City in East Africa

4. INVEST IN HIGH-COMMITMENT, DISCIPLE-MAKING RELATIONSHIPS

Observation Number Four

HYPOTHESIS

Urban disciple-makers should seek to invest heavily, intentionally, and long-term into those that they disciple.

We have observed that fruitful urban disciple-makers appear to invest heavily, intentionally, and long-term in those that they disciple. Some we interviewed expressed disbelief that such an observation is necessary and would rather assume that a disciple-making relationship is, by definition, one of high cost, high commitment, high availability and accessibility, and is necessarily long-term.

Many expressed deep feelings of love, loyalty, and commitment for those that they disciple. Some went further, stating that their disciples are 'family' and that they would "give up everything else before giving up on these relationships." Most expressed that these disciple relationships are very 'challenging', with many 'hurdles' and 'failures'. These relationships require many years of building trust through social capital and 'life-on-life' experience. Most expressed that disciple-making is not quick, and that multiplication of disciple-making will only appear or look quick after a few generations, because of multiplication and exponential growth.

THIS APPEARS TO BE A FRUITFUL CITY PRACTICE FOR THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL REASONS:

a. The 'Jesus' definition of disciple-making must include an expectation of high investment, and high intentionality over time. All other forms of disciple-making are inconsistent or incomplete. Strictly scheduled, once-a-week disciple-making, though a good start, appears to be an insufficient form of disciple-making for urban dwellers. Long-term fruitfulness may require a larger level of availability and life exposure.

b. Cities can be fast-paced and impersonal, which can lead to a lack of meaningful relationships and a sense of isolation. High cost, intentional disciple-making can help to create a sense of community and belonging for themselves and those they disciple. We all want to be meaningfully known and to know others. City dwellers experience cognitive dissonance in this regard: they are surrounded by people, noise, and information overload, but very often experience loneliness, isolation and confusion.

Though strictly scheduled disciple-making meets the needs of the busy disciple-maker, this model is insufficient to meet the needs of urban disciples. High-cost, intentional disciple-making is consistent with the felt needs of those living in cities.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND TEAM REFLECTION:

- Reflect on some of the primary ways that mentors, leaders or disciples have invested in your disciple-making journey. What would you like to imitate? What would you choose to do differently?
- How might high-cost, high-commitment disciple-making relationships look in your context? What practical ways can you and your team more intentionally invest in your disciple-making relationships?
- Are there statements, suggestions, or conclusions here that should influence what we do? What will I/we do in response?

“

There are always extra plates. On the table, there is always extra food. It's a joke really. So, they really become part of the family and part of our home. I think this is the level of commitment that they really thrive on.

V, City in Southern Africa

For me, the number one first sign of fruit is that they are influencing other people's lives towards Jesus... and if they are, then I will give them all my time.

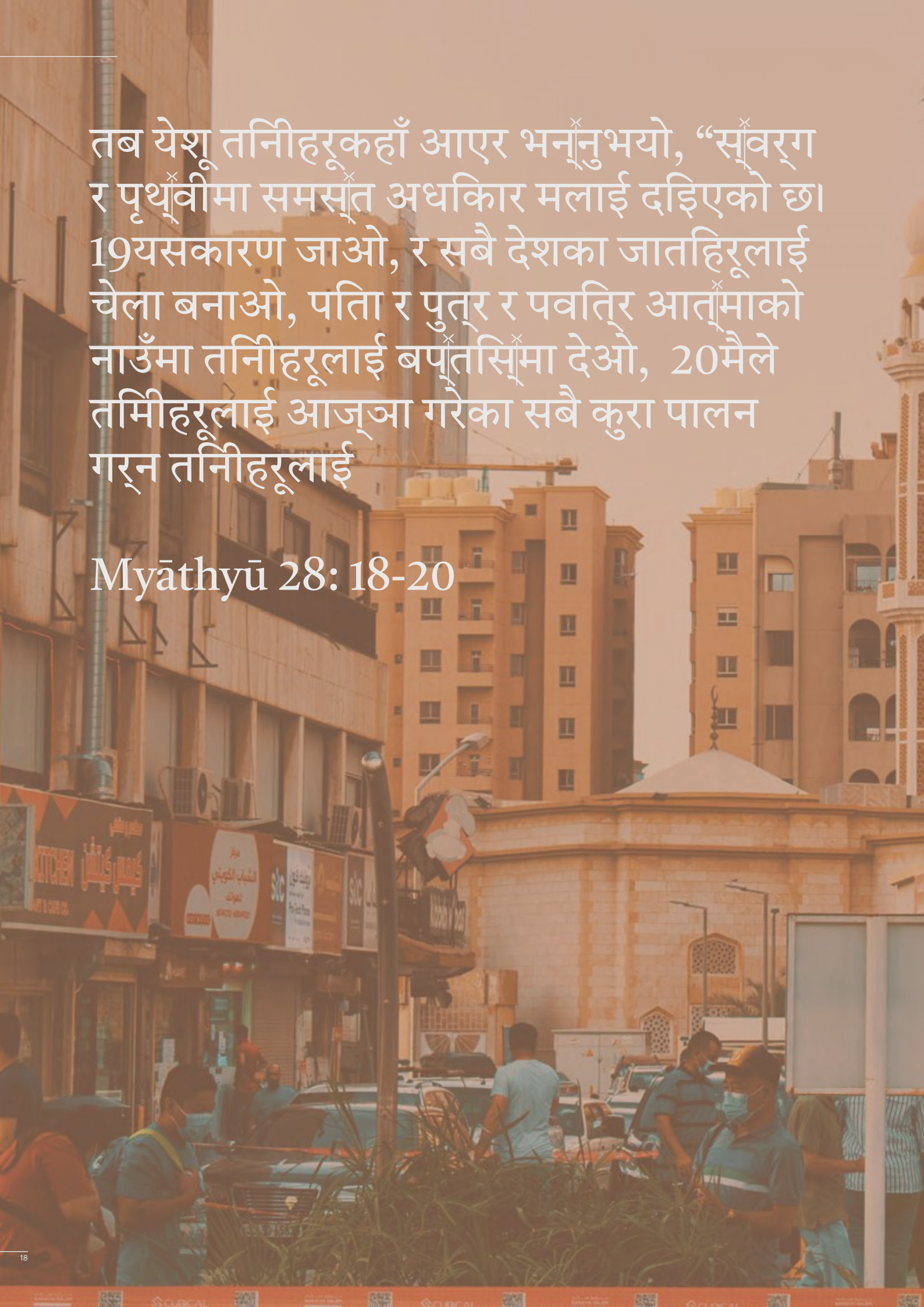
JS, City in Southern Africa

I want to build Christianity through relationships. I'm prepared to put in the long haul for relationships. I believe in going slow to go faster.

B, City in Southern Africa

तब येशू तनीहरूकहाँ आएर भनूँनुभयो, “सूँवर्ग
र पृथूँवीमा समसूँत अधिकार मलाई दइएको छ।
19यसकारण जाओ, र सबै देशका जातहिरूलाई
चेला बनाओ, पति र पुत्र र पवतिर आतूँमाको
नाउँमा तनीहरूलाई बपूँतसूँमा देओ, 20मैले
तमीहरूलाई आज्ञा गरेका सबै कुरा पालन
गर्न तनीहरूलाई

Myāthyū 28: 18-20



5. INVEST, ONE-ON-ONE, IN DISCIPLE-MAKING RELATIONSHIPS THAT MULTIPLY

Observation Number Five

HYPOTHESIS

Urban disciple-makers should establish and maintain clear one-on-one disciple-making relationships that are encouraged to reproduce and multiply.

“

We do encourage one-on-one disciple-making on every level in any culture.
M, Cities in Central and Eastern Europe

Once I discover that this guy might multiply... I will develop this guy. After I develop this guy, he can develop his leaders. I'd have time with this leader, then this leader has time with (his) leaders, and they will have time with others up to a third or fourth generation.
LM, City in Southern Africa

So, there's the big contrast that I like for people to overcome, and I feel it is a threat. Focusing on one-on-one disciple-making can feel threatening because it looks slow.
S, Cities in Central and Eastern Europe

We have observed that fruitful urban disciple-makers often establish clear one-on-one disciple-making relationships that reproduce and multiply over time. These disciple-making relationships appear non-territorial or exclusive: they encourage others to interact. Often a disciple in a growing movement is being discipled by more than one person in different ways (i.e., in marriage, family life, vocation, etc.). Distinctively, both the disciple-maker and the disciple can point to these significant and influential relationships.

Most urban practitioners make themselves readily available and accessible to their disciples. They exchange messages regularly, interact in various ways, and plan consistent and regular meeting times.

Our working definition of a disciple:

One who is either on a journey of discovering Christ in a disciple-making relationship or has become a follower of Christ and is making disciples.

Most often, the disciple-maker is also discipling others, and not just 1 person, and the disciple is encouraged to engage with and disciple several others. Most of those we interviewed noted that some of their one-on-one disciple-making relationships started before the disciple would have identified as a follower of Jesus.

Those we interviewed shared that one-on-one disciple-making should not replace group disciple-making, but rather is in addition to regular group/community disciple-making. Though many of those we interviewed come from individualistic-leaning cities, where one-on-one disciple-making may be more culturally relevant, interviewees in community-driven cultures also spoke overwhelmingly about the importance of one-on-one disciple-making.

THIS APPEARS TO BE A FRUITFUL CITY PRACTICE FOR THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL REASONS:

a. Cities can be overwhelming, isolating and impersonal which can make it challenging for individuals to develop meaningful relationships. One-on-one disciple-making relationships provide a more intimate and personalized approach to disciple-making, creating a sense of community and belonging for individuals.

b. Urban dwellers are often both necessarily and unnaturally busy and may lack time for community or relationship building. Many people are looking for connections but have limited time to invest in consistent, meaningful relationships. One-on-one disciple-making, though inefficient and costly for the disciple-maker, appears to be extremely valuable for the disciple.

c. Urban areas often face complex and interconnected challenges that require tailored solutions. One-on-one relationships allow disciple-making practitioners to provide customized guidance and support to their disciples, equipping them with the skills and knowledge they need to address the specific challenges they face in their communities. This can lead to more effective and sustainable solutions to urban problems.

d. One-on-one disciple-making in cities is fruitful but may only be part of the big picture. One-on-one disciple-making could be happening in tandem with other forms of disciple-making (group, DBS, etc.). Also, we have not yet explored if these clear lines of disciple-making are as clear to those that are being disciplined and could represent narrative bias.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND TEAM REFLECTION:

- Reflect on some of the primary ways that mentors, leaders or disciples have invested in your disciple-making journey. What would you like to imitate? What would you choose to do differently?
- How might high-cost, high-commitment disciple-making relationships look in your context? In what practical ways can you and your team invest in your disciple-making relationships more intentionally?
- Are there statements, suggestions, or conclusions here that should influence what we do? What will I/we do in response?



6. DEVELOP SERVANT-HEARTED LEADERS WHO REPLICATE

Observation Number Six

HYPOTHESIS

Urban disciple-makers should prioritize developing leaders like Jesus.

“

God is sick and tired of the big names. Sick and tired. Now God is using ordinary people.
L, Cities in Southern Africa

So, the thing is that I release early, and I pass on the values quite quickly.
N, Cities in Eastern Africa

Jesus is not looking for people who are very strong. He is looking for weak people who are available, and this is what I am going for.
W, City in Africa

We have observed that fruitful urban disciple-makers appear to focus on raising leaders like Jesus. These leaders, they say, are 'ordinary people who hear and God and release, empower and trust others to do the same.' They truly love those they are working with and, when necessary, actively lay down their own agendas and lives for those they work with.

Leaders model and multiply disciple-making like Jesus - the kind that seeks to serve rather than to be served, and the kind that empowers and releases authority.

NT Wright, *How God Became King, The Forgotten Story of the Gospels:*

"There it is. The kings of the earth exercise power one way, by lording it over their subjects, but Jesus' followers are going to do it the other way, the way of the servant... He (Jesus) not only theorizes about the difference between pagan power and the kind of power he is claiming; he enacts it."

Leaders appear to serve their teams and disciples directly, and make themselves highly accessible to them for support. Interviewees do this through modeling servant leadership. This seems to be done primarily through frequent interactions: one-on-one and group time together. Many spoke about proper teaching around Jesus-style leadership (inputting), through direct modeling (demonstration) and a high standard of accountability.

Most seem to release power and responsibility quickly and give their disciples 'challenging assignments and appointments.' They do this gracefully and with an abundance of upfront trust and respect. If the disciple fails, then the leader 'cleans up the mess,' alongside his disciple.

The leaders appear to be moving toward a secure identity, rather than insecurity, and away from control. Most speak about the importance of generational disciple-making in this fashion (2 Timothy 2:2).

THIS APPEARS TO BE A FRUITFUL CITY PRACTICE FOR THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL REASONS:

a. The apostolic mandate for servant leadership, as a foil for worldly leadership, is modeled in the life of Jesus and then clearly stated in the Gospel of John, chapter 13 as Jesus washed the feet of his disciples:

"When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them." John 13:12-15

And then emphasized again in the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 10:

"You know how it is in the pagan nations," he said. "Think how their so-called rulers act. They lord it over their subjects. The high and mighty ones boss the rest around. But that's not how it's going to be with you. Anyone who wants to be great among you must become your servant. Anyone who wants to be first must be everyone's slave. Don't you see? The son of man didn't come to be waited on. He came to be the servant, to give his life 'as a ransom for many.'" Mark 10:35-45

b. Jesus-like leaders are attractive to urban dwellers: those that pursue humility, secure identity, and authenticity, and are willing to serve others. People yearn to be led in this way. And when they experience this kind of leadership and are told that they too can lead like Jesus, many will lovingly and enthusiastically imitate. In the same vein, urban city dwellers are fed up with self-obsessed religious leaders and are looking for a new way.

c. In 2 Timothy 2, Paul states that Timothy should entrust everything he has learned from him (Paul) to faithful people (leaders, who can teach others). We, then, should do the same.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND TEAM REFLECTION:

- Reflect on your own experience with Christian leaders (positive, negative or neutral). How have they served you and those around you? How has this experience shaped your understanding of Godly leadership?
- What might it look like practically, to model servant leadership in your affinity group? What would you want to do differently?
- Are there statements, suggestions, or conclusions here that should influence what we do? What will I/we do in response?



7. PRIORITIZE **INSIDER LEADERS**

Observation Number Seven

HYPOTHESIS

Urban disciple-makers should seek to prioritize (emphasize, engage, focus on and support) local and/or indigenous leaders.



“

But I've just realized that their own people need to reach them because then they can really understand. Because culture has eaten our strategy up for breakfast over and over and over and over.

AW, City in Southern Africa

So, when a new believer comes, the youth disciple the youth. This is very important for them: themselves making disciples, which is pretty unusual.

M, City in Southeast Asia

We have observed that fruitful urban disciple-making ministries seem to prioritize (emphasize, engage, focus on, and support) local and indigenous leaders. In many cases, the main ministry leaders are actively working to increase the authority and power of the local leader and actively diminish their own.

Most of our interviewees spoke about the importance of identifying and working primarily with leaders that 'belong,' are part of the 'tribe,' or 'affinity.' Many of the leaders that we interviewed recognize their own affinity's propensity for cultural biases, blind spots, and/or their inability to completely contextualize the Gospel into another peripheral place of belonging.

The role of the external leader therefore, as an incarnational kingdom translator, becomes even more significant as they help newer, internal believers to hear and obey God for themselves.

THIS APPEARS TO BE A FRUITFUL CITY PRACTICE FOR THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL REASONS:

a. Cities are complex systems full of endlessly diverse neighborhoods, subcultures, opportunities, and threats. They are not made up of one culture, but millions of cultures and subcultures that coexist. For us to succeed in cities, we should not try to acclimatize ourselves to every culture of a city, but rather acknowledge the complexity by collaborating and enabling local cultural authorities, i.e., the existing, local leaders. Local leaders have a deeper understanding of the culture, history, and social dynamics of the community. By working with these leaders, disciple-making practitioners can gain a better understanding of the context in which they are working and develop more effective strategies for making disciples.

b. Indigenous leaders have pre-existing relationships with members of the community. They are often respected and trusted by the community and have established networks and connections that can be leveraged to reach more people. By partnering with these leaders, disciple-making practitioners can tap into these networks and gain access to new communities and individuals. Indigenous leaders will then do the complicated work of contextualization and will create relevant spaces of community/worship/mission within these spaces. Similarly, they will then influence near-affinity groups, identify and disciple other local leaders from the periphery, and co-labor to see kingdom transformation.

c. Prioritizing local and indigenous leaders can help to foster a sense of ownership and investment in the disciple making movement. This can lead to greater participation and engagement from the wider community, and a greater sense of collective purpose and vision for making disciples.



“

God raises up leaders in the most unlikely of places and makes them change agents. They are the ones that have credibility in their communities, not us.

V, City in Southern Africa

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND TEAM REFLECTION:

- Reflect on your own primary culture and how it might have affected your expression of faith, understanding of leadership and church preferences.
- Practically, what does it look like, in your context, to prioritize insider leaders?
- Are there statements, suggestions, or conclusions here that should influence what we do? What will I/we do in response?

“

And when I target those existing leaders, they also target the rest because they have a network that is already existing.

N. Cities in Eastern Africa

8. MOBILIZE THE EXISTING CHURCH TO (RE)FOCUS ON ENGAGING THE LOST THROUGH DISCIPLE-MAKING

Observation Number Eight

HYPOTHESIS

Urban churches must (re)focus on disciple-making and engaging the lost.

We have observed that fruitful urban disciple-making churches appear to adapt existing or traditional church models away from central, Sunday-gravitational, single meeting-place, attendance-based membership structures and toward decentralized, full-week, adaptable gathering-place, disciple-making, outward-focused structures.

Many of those we interviewed are either currently in a church environment that is focused on the values above, or are actively working with the leadership to pivot in this direction.

Many of those we interviewed have spoken about the challenges of existing church structures, e.g., expensive, non-reproducible, confusing, hierarchical, as clear obstacles or hindrances to the call on the church to 'preach the Gospel to all creation' and to 'make disciples of all nations...' Some have had to make difficult decisions to leave their previous church communities to have the time and the freedom to pursue effective city disciple-making.

THIS APPEARS TO BE A FRUITFUL CITY PRACTICE FOR THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL REASONS:

a. These partnerships can lead to a wider and more diverse movement of disciple-making. Cities often already have a Christian presence. The existing church has established networks and relationships within the community, and by leveraging these networks, disciple-making practitioners can reach a greater number of people.

b. This is a good response to an opportune moment in history. Forced disruptions, pandemics and other significant global events have caused much of the global church to rethink its reliance on expensive and non-reproducible components and structures and get back to its primary functions.

c. As a response to the perceived ineffectiveness of our established church within our cities toward its mission, many Christians are frustrated and are seeking new ways to be effective within their existing church paradigms, and sometimes without it.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND TEAM REFLECTION:

- Reflect on your personal experience interacting or partnering with other believers in your city. How have these experiences affected your urban strategy?
- How has your team interacted (or not) with the existing body of Christ in your city? Why has it looked like this?
- Are there statements, suggestions, or conclusions here that should influence what we do? What will I/we do in response?

“

And we have really been praying and trusting God to show us how we create an underground movement, as well as honor the established institution of the church.
AW, City in Southern Africa

They are just frustrated, and they don't know what to do. We call them the 'holy discontented.'
G, Cities in Southwest Europe

I'm not telling anybody else to do this, but we kind of had to dislodge ourselves from our church, to finally start getting some focus and traction.
G, Cities in Southwest Europe

So, the main goal, I'd say, is to mobilize the national church to reach the national people.
S, City in Southwest Europe



9. FOCUS ON A FEW TO REACH THE MANY

Observation Number Nine

HYPOTHESIS

Urban disciple-makers should give a large portion of their available time toward a few key disciples and leaders, between 3 and 12.

“

For me, the number one first sign of fruit is that they are influencing other people's lives towards Jesus... and if they are, then I will give them all my time.

J, City in Southern Africa

If you're going to become Great Commission-hearted, you're going to have to remove some things from your life. There's just no way around that.

R, Cities in North America

And I'm praying for six. And God has brought three across our path so far.

G, City in Southwest Europe

So, I always encourage churches by saying, 'Hey, start where you are. Then just really disciple well, pouring out your life for these (few) kids.'

M, City in Southwest Asia

I don't have all the time, so I must really quantify my time and know these are the number of people I'm supposed to spend time with.

N, Cities in Eastern Africa

We have observed that fruitful urban disciple-making leaders seem to give the 'lion's portion' of their time to a few key disciple-making relationships (rather than giving little time to many). Those we interviewed are investing in between 3 and 12 individual leaders/disciples.

The average number of disciples is approximately 5.

Most of those we interviewed are also actively seeking additional disciple-making relationships. Many have noted that some attrition and even loss of some disciple-making relationships is unfortunately common. There were various reasons given for the loss of disciple-making relationships, including disagreements, lack of interest,



unforgiveness, unrealistic or unclear or unmet expectations, life transitions, needs reassessment, and emigration.

Some of our interviewees are working with their disciples, all together, in a group format. Sometimes, but not in all cases, these disciples know each other. Some of those we interviewed however, are working with each of their disciples individually. Those we interviewed can name their 1st generation disciples, who in turn can name theirs, and so on. As a fictional example, "I, Joe disciple Charles, James and Peter. Charles discipless Timothy, Tyrell and Gunther. James discipless Joshua, and Billy and Peter have not started discipling others yet."

THIS APPEARS TO BE A FRUITFUL CITY PRACTICE FOR THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL REASONS:

a. Quality over quantity: The 'focus on the few to reach the many' model fits the needs and lifestyle of individualistic, busy, urban disciples. Rather than spreading themselves too thin and trying to invest in a large number of individuals, disciple-making leaders can focus on providing high-quality, personalized disciple-making and leadership development to a select few, like Jesus did. This can lead to more effective and impactful disciple-making, as those leaders are equipped to make a greater impact in their complex communities.

b. Investing in a few key leaders can lead to a multiplication effect, as those leaders are equipped and empowered to make disciples themselves.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND TEAM REFLECTION:

- Reflect on your significant disciple-making relationships in the city: How do you utilize your time? Do you have many relationships that you give a little time toward, or a few that you give much toward, or somewhere in the middle? How many people would you currently identify as your disciples? Do you see this number as too many, too few, or just right? Why?
- Discuss how many people each member of your team is discipling. In your context, how does the number of people that you disciple affect the quality?
- Are there statements, suggestions, or conclusions here that should influence what we do? What will I/we do in response?



10. BUILD SIMPLE AND AGILE STRUCTURES AND TOOLS

Observation Number Ten

HYPOTHESIS

Urban disciple-makers should seek to build light, flexible organizational structures and teams that reflect together often, innovate, and apply emergent practices.

“

There is some organization, but amid the organization, there's a lack of being able to draw very clear lines and say, 'this is my guy and that is your guy'. It is actually both.

B, City in Southern Africa

I can literally say it's taken us 25 years. Getting to that simplified (DBS) version that you've seen in front of you has taken 25 years.

J, Cities in Southern Africa

So, every aspect of my life could be summed up in one word, 'uncertainty.'

JL, Cities in Western Europe

If you open your eyes in the city, what does Jesus want to do? So I live with this open mind.

N, Cities in Eastern Africa

We have observed that fruitful urban disciple-making ministries seem to acknowledge and navigate city complexity. They adapt their organizational structures and disciple-making models often to permit innovation, and to respond to new, potentially fruitful practices.

Interviewees mention that team structure develops semi-organically, as it goes, but with clear leadership and clear purpose. No 'most effective' team models have been suggested among our interviewees. Most mention that a team's function requires some clarity of form, though most say that agile, light, flexible forms are best. They go on to imply that agility (the ability of a team to change direction quickly) encourages generational growth by facilitating dependence on the Holy Spirit and allowing for quick adaptation to emergent practices.

All the locations that we have interviewed acknowledge the importance of clear leadership and leadership structures, i.e., generational leadership, elder leadership, primary leader, etc. However, the leadership style and structures vary widely and no conclusions about best practices and leadership forms can be made at this time.

THIS APPEARS TO BE A FRUITFUL CITY PRACTICE FOR THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL REASONS:

- a. Such adaptive organizational structures may promote greater participation and ownership among the team members, leading to increased buy-in and commitment to the movement.
- b. By minimizing bureaucracy and unnecessary hierarchies, these structures can also reduce the cost and complexity of sustaining the movement over time.
- c. Complex adaptive systems (like cities) require a light, strategically agile approach. Urban discipline-making teams must be willing to reflect often and respond quickly

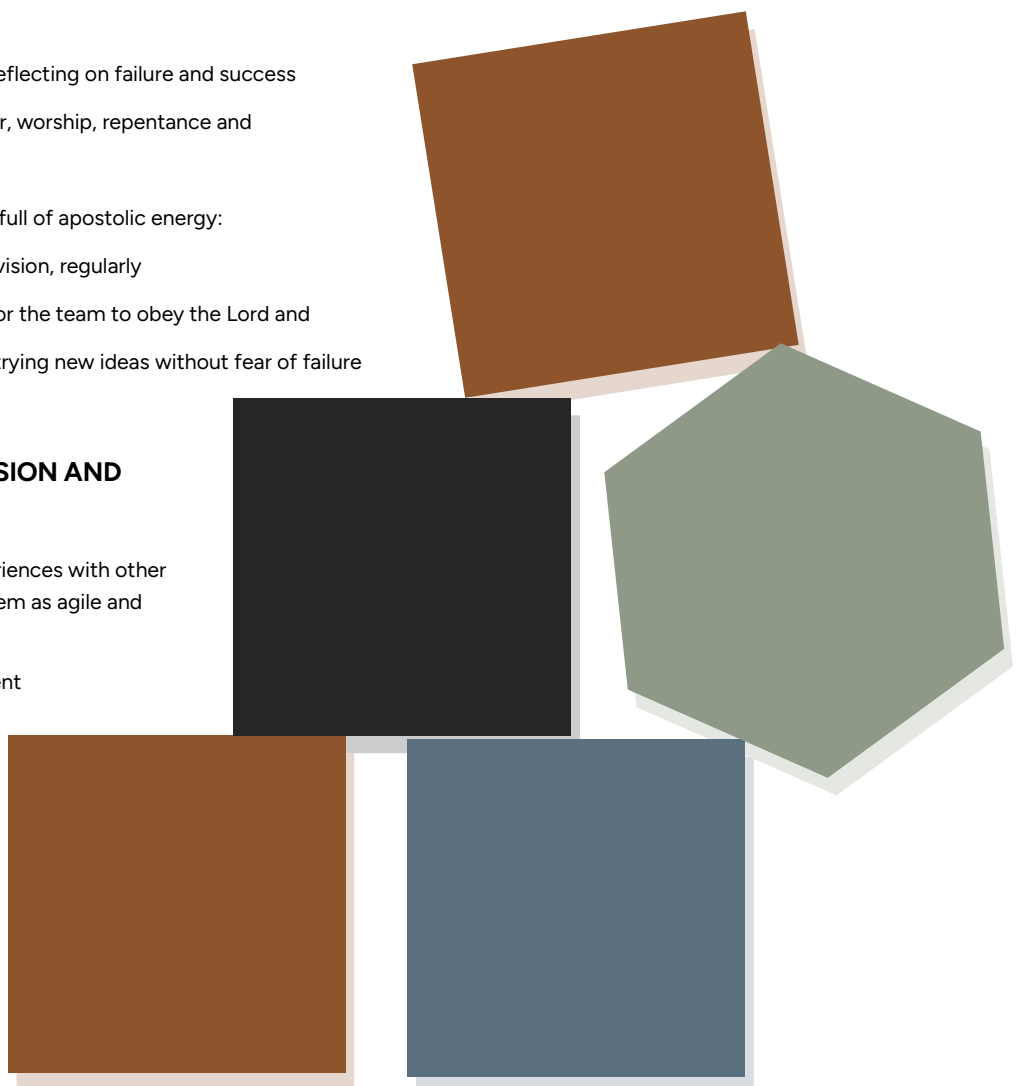
Emergent practices: are the practices that a team identifies that need to be implemented to succeed in their context. These practices do not have to be invented by the team but are rather new to the context.

to the Spirit's guidance. This quick feedback-cycle may lead to the development of fruitful city-specific emergent practices.
This can be done through the following group disciplines:

- a. Praying together, regularly
- b. Reflecting together, regularly
 - i. Acknowledging and reflecting on failure and success
 - ii. Rhythms of surrender, worship, repentance and extending forgiveness
- c. Fostering a team environment full of apostolic energy:
 - i. Keep reinforcing the vision, regularly
 - ii. Abundant freedom for the team to obey the Lord and take mitigated risks in trying new ideas without fear of failure

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND TEAM REFLECTION:

- Reflect on your previous experiences with other teams: Would you describe them as agile and adaptive? Why or why not?
- Would you describe your current team, movement, or organization as agile and adaptive? Why or why not?
- Are there statements, suggestions, or conclusions here that should influence what we do? What will I/we do in response?

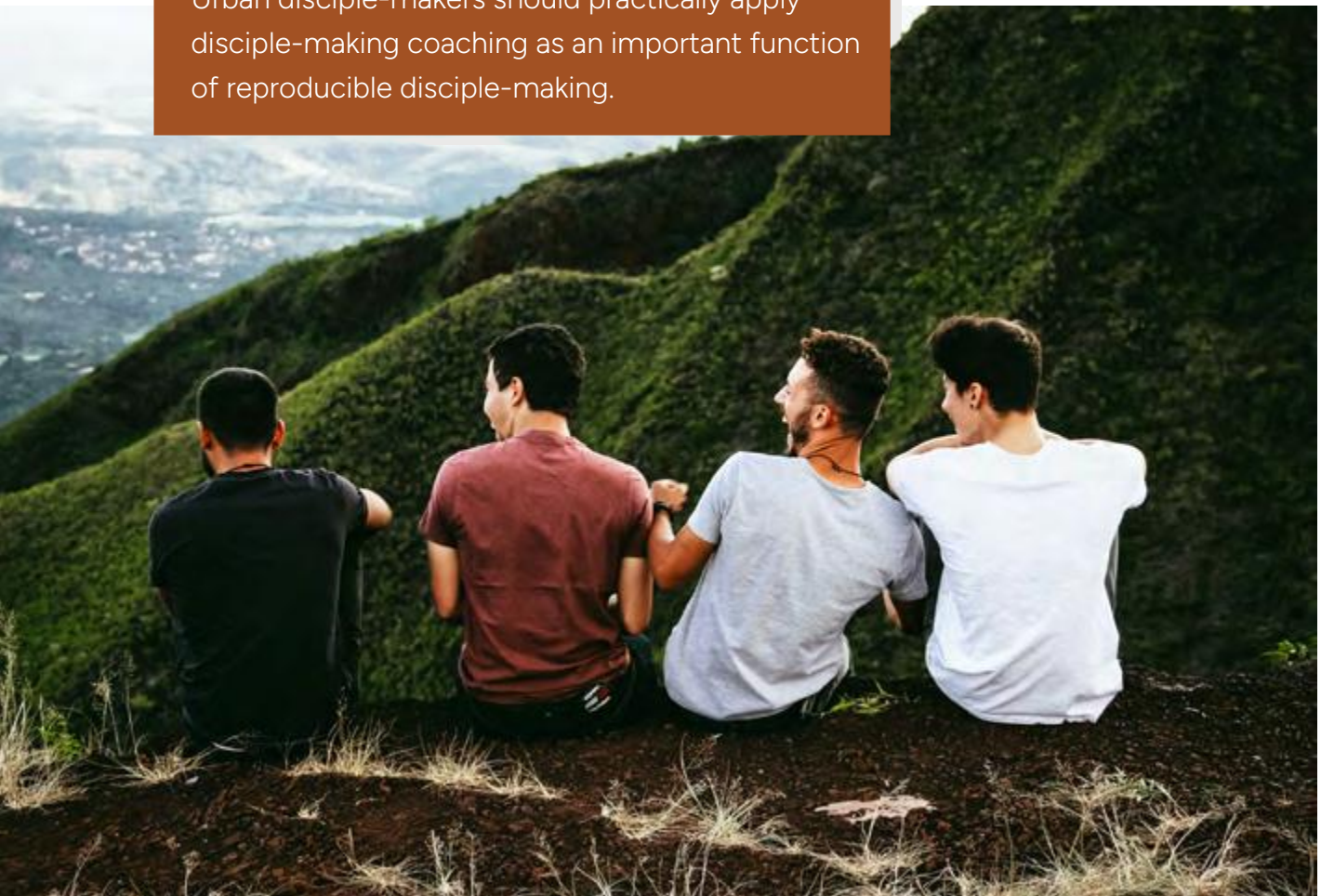


11. COACH DISCIPLE-MAKERS TO SET AND PURSUE THEIR GOD-GIVEN GOALS

Observation Number Eleven

HYPOTHESIS

Urban disciple-makers should practically apply disciple-making coaching as an important function of reproducible disciple-making.



We have observed that fruitful urban disciple-makers appear to wear many disciple-making 'hats.' Many make the distinction between the traditional, directive, input-based mentorship role, an accountability role, and the practical coaching role. Several of our interviewees spoke enthusiastically about the importance of this third role: the role of the disciple-making coach.

Coaching has many forms. When we talk about the role of coaching in Disciple Making Movements in urban environments, our interviewees seem to have the following distinctions in common:

Disciple-making coaching is consistent, high frequency, scheduled time together, as coach and disciple/s, that is focused on:

- Honing practical disciple-making and movement skills and practices, as opposed to having a wider holistic focus
- Asking open-ended questions to bring clarity, rather than focusing on guiding, or giving clear directive advice
- Encouraging and guiding the coached disciple/s toward God-given goals
- Helping to keep the disciple on track through accountability to those God-given goals
- Some back-filling and advice, as necessary

Some have stated that this style of coaching mirrors sports coaching, e.g., motivating, challenging, goal-centered, and highly practical. Interviewees primarily spoke about small group and one-on-one disciple-making coaching.

“

I'm totally convinced DMM, and movements happen because of coaching, not training. Training just sows the seed, but it's the constant, constant training, constant mentoring, and constant coaching that brings fruit.

J, City in Southern Africa

My ears are always listening for potential leaders that I can say, hey, can we spend a little time together? Can I come and serve you through coaching?

K, Cities in Southern, Eastern and Northern Africa

THIS APPEARS TO BE A FRUITFUL CITY PRACTICE FOR THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL REASONS:

- a. Coaching can be very effective within complex spaces, like cities, where communities of people live dispersed lives, utilizing technology that is now readily available in most urban spaces, e.g. widely available internet access, mobile devices and video conferencing.
- b. Disciple-making coaching appears to fill several needs of the urban disciple including regular, efficient rhythms of connection/disciple-making, ongoing challenge, and personal encouragement.
- c. Disciple-making coaching can be an efficient use of time: it provides an adaptive framework for developing and equipping disciples, enabling practitioners to effectively mentor and disciple others.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND TEAM REFLECTION:

- How does this definition of coaching and disciple-making compare to your current understanding of coaching? As a disciple-maker, if this style of coaching was offered to you, would you be excited about it? Why or why not?
- Discuss how your team currently coaches its disciple-makers (according to this definition). How might disciple-making coaching be utilized effectively in your context?
- Are there statements, suggestions, or conclusions here that should influence what we do? What will I/we do in response?

12. LEAD BY EXAMPLE INTO THE HARVEST

Observation Number Twelve

HYPOTHESIS

Urban disciple-making leaders should continue to engage actively and go to the lost and broken themselves. They should not outsource the task of engaging the harvest to others, but rather lead and influence the movement to engage as a regular disciplined life rhythm.

“

But as we have focused on the lost rather than trying to collect Christians, we have found that people are very open.

J, Cities in Western Europe

We need to spend more time out among the lost.

G, City in Southwest Europe

I noticed that God is speaking to all of us. He is not just speaking to the believers but also to the unbelievers. God is speaking and working with them.

L, City in Southern Africa

And then I got a lot of exposure and training in the life of Christ and how he made disciples. And that sparked the question, 'the thing we are building here, is it having any Kingdom impact in our city?'

P, Cities in Northern Europe

We have observed that fruitful urban disciple-making leaders seem to prioritize engaging directly with the lost. Though most movement leaders have already identified fruitful disciple-makers and could easily fill up their time with leadership development, organizational-level management and leading communities, most of our interviewees still actively engage with new people for the sake of sharing the Gospel.

Our working definition of a disciple:

One who is either on a journey of discovering Christ in a disciple-making relationship or has become a follower of Christ and is making disciples.

They also bring others along and encourage their teams to do the same.

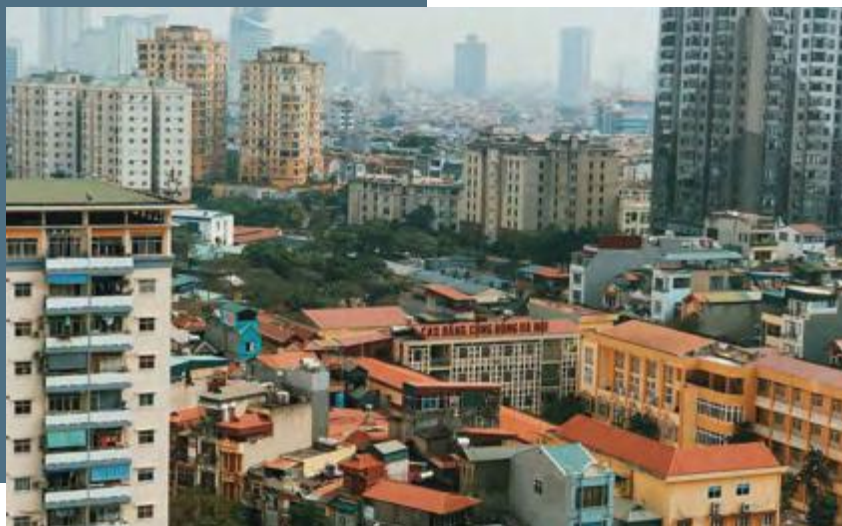
Some say that when any leader gets caught up in the other aspects of disciple-making and loses focus on sharing the Gospel, engaging with the city's lost and broken and praying, 'eventually the whole thing (the movement) slows down.' Many have shared an ongoing struggle: to actively avoid being 'consumed by inward-focused Christian communities' and teach their disciples to do the same. This intentional commitment to engage with the lost appears to become a community-held value. Momentum for movement, one practitioner states, 'is found among the lost.'

THIS APPEARS TO BE A FRUITFUL CITY PRACTICE FOR THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL REASONS:

- a. Leaders must set an example. If leaders no longer engage with the lost, they are falsely implying that evangelism work is less significant or important, and that we somehow graduate from this command when we become leaders. Good leaders will labor to practice what they preach. Practicing personal evangelism and disciple-making gives them credibility and authority with their followers.
- b. Staying in the harvest keeps us 'fresh', 'sharp' and 'radical.' Without seeing God's power, followers of Jesus can grow cold in their faith and lose focus on God and the Gospel.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND TEAM REFLECTION:

- Reflect on your experience engaging with the lost and sharing Jesus with others (evangelism). Is this something you do naturally, or something that you must build into your rhythms? Why?
- Discuss what it looks like, in your context, for your team to develop a culture and rhythms of engaging with lost people?
- Are there statements, suggestions, or conclusions here that should influence what we do? What will I/we do in response?



13. BEGIN WITH UNDERLYING BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES TO BUILD ADAPTIVE PRACTICES

Observation Number Thirteen

HYPOTHESIS

Urban disciple-makers should focus on applying and teaching biblical principle-driven disciple-making rather than continuing to adopt new, ever-changing models and methods.

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It's something we hammer in the training process. DMM is nothing and DBS is nothing except the wineskin. No, the wine of the Kingdom is what matters. We hope that people get that because if they don't, then none of it is going to go anywhere.

SL, Cities in South and SE Asia

It is important that they identify around clear core values, embrace them and run together.

M, SE Asia

We have observed that fruitful urban disciple-makers focus their energy on identifying and applying clear biblical disciple-making principles rather than on trying to implement the newest disciple-making model. Interviewees, and their teams, appear strategically flexible and are quick to change direction and adapt their practices according to their needs. However, they do all of this within the context of unchanging biblical principles and values.

Rather than obsess over models, even excellent ones, such as DBS, the Seven Commands of Christ, and The Three Circles, most of those we interviewed have learned to focus on the principles underlying the models, i.e., discovery-based learning, obedience-based disciple-making, proclaiming the Gospel.

An Example:

Model: Discovery Bible Study

Principles: obedience-based disciple-making, discovery-based disciple-making, obeying and applying the Scripture, community, generosity, accountability, worship, giving, facilitative leadership, the priesthood of all believers, Holy Spirit speaks and draws people to himself, group self-correction, etc.

Many of those we interviewed have seen endless, new, shiny city disciple-making models, methods and strategies come and go. The new models, methods or tools often fail to reproduce the kind of results, in the new context, that they had in the old.

A good response in this situation, say some interviewees, is to now seek out the underlying, unchanging, biblical principles behind the tool. Later, when a tactical shift is needed, the disciple-making team feels creative license to innovate and adapt while keeping the principles in place.

THIS APPEARS TO BE A FRUITFUL CITY PRACTICE FOR THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL REASONS:

- a. Biblical principles are timeless AND adaptable: The principles of biblical disciple-making are grounded in the teachings of Jesus and the examples of the early church. These principles have been proven to be effective over thousands of years and are still relevant today. By focusing on biblical principles, rather than changing tools or methods, disciple-making practitioners can ensure that they are building a solid foundation that will withstand the test of time. They can also be easily adapted and applied in culturally relevant ways: to the specific cultural context of the city they are working in.
- b. Consistency and clarity: By focusing on biblical principles, disciple-making practitioners can provide consistency and clarity in their approach to disciple-making. This can help to avoid confusion and promote unity within the Disciple Making Movement, as everyone is working from the same foundation.
- c. Avoiding fads and trends: Adopting new, ever-changing models and methods can lead to a dependance on fads and trends rather than the timeless principles of biblical disciple-making. This could result in a lack of depth and long-term impact, as the burgeoning movement is constantly, distractedly shifting its focus.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND TEAM REFLECTION:

- Reflect on a tool that you have found useful in disciple-making: Why do you think it was effective? What were the 'underlying principles' of its success?
- Discuss what tools your team successfully utilizes in your city. What are some of their underlying principles, and how might these principles be expressed in fresh ways? Are there statements, suggestions, or conclusions here that should influence what we do?
- What will I/we do in response?

14. CREATE ONGOING TEAM LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS WITH APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

Observation Number Fourteen

HYPOTHESIS

Urban disciple-making ministries and networks should seek to create and integrate consistent rhythms of learning together into their yearly schedule.

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'This week, how did you care for the community to further the cause?'...Together we would share the past, the present and the future: where were we, where are we and where are we going.

B City in Southern Africa

So the training helps us propel the movements.

N, Cities in Eastern Africa

We have observed that fruitful urban disciple-making disciples, groups and teams tend to get trained together often. Many interviewees speak about the great value of peer learning, cohort learning and group equipping processes.

Interviewees mention the following ideals for team or network-based training:

- A. Highly practical and application based (we learn—we try—we reflect—we backfill)
- B. Simple and reproducible (the training can be facilitated by most)
- C. Interactive (question and discussion-based rather than a single expert speaker)
- D. Feedback-oriented (content changes over time, based upon the feedback and fruitfulness)

Interviewees also speak about the following goals for creating these learning environments:

- A. Opportunity for the team to learn, apply and reflect together
- B. Formal team development
 - I. Common vision, mission, and values

li. Common metrics of success – how will we know we have been successful?

As an example: we will engage x affinities in x # of cities, make x disciples with x # of generations within x timeframe with x impact in the city

lii. Common language or jargon - (i.e., Acronyms, definitions of disciple-making, church, champion, catalyst, etc.) For vocational use in cities

C. Informal team development

i. Quality, relationship-building time

ii. Building trust through shared experience

iii. Network building

D. Team recruitment

THIS APPEARS TO BE A FRUITFUL CITY PRACTICE FOR THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL REASONS:

a. Consistent rhythms of learning together can help deepen team members' understanding and commitment to the movement's vision, values and maintain common metrics of success. Such rhythms also promote collaboration and a shared sense of purpose among team members, leading to more effective and coordinated efforts in disciple-making. Rhythms of learning also prevent 'mission drift.' Common metrics will include both quantitative and qualitative measures. Quantitative metrics measure the objective numerical data (# of disciples, baptisms, etc.). Qualitative measures relate to the subjective observations, like the health of church plants or the quality of disciple-making etc.

b. By regularly sharing insights, feedback, and best practices, teams can continually improve their disciple-making strategies and adapt to the changing needs of the city. Group learning may also lead to the invention and iteration of context specific 'emergent practices,' which are crucial for success in cities.

c. Igniting movements in cities seems to require focused teams, not individuals. Regular rhythms of learning may help build healthy teams.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND TEAM REFLECTION:

- Reflect on the shared list of goals for training. In your experience, has disciple-making training been effective? Why or why not?
- Discuss the list of observations on how training should ideally be. How has your team's training experience compared? What would you choose to change about the way that your team utilizes training?
- Are there statements, suggestions, or conclusions here that should influence what we do? What will I/we do in response?

15. CREATE INTENTIONAL AND CONSISTENT RHYTHMS OF CONNECTION

(At Every Level of Engagement)

Objective Number Fifteen

HYPOTHESIS

Urban disciple-makers should meet, pray, and interact very regularly and consistently with their teams, groups and disciples.

We have observed that fruitful urban disciple-makers appear highly consistent and disciplined to meet regularly: with their disciples (one-on-one and group), team or network meetings and gathering structures. The majority of those we interviewed spoke about the importance of consistency in meeting with their teams, groups, disciples, and gatherings for ongoing growth, training, and building trust.

This is despite a common challenge raised by most of those we interviewed: urban dwellers are extremely busy and progressively less able and/or willing to commit to regular gatherings. Consistency and rhythm seem subversive and counter-cultural to those living in cities, but represent a hidden human desire for committed, meaningful relationships with like-minded people toward a common goal.

Scheduled meeting frequency varies widely across those interviewed. Some meet with their teams, groups or disciples in person, several times a week. Some weekly and some on a bi-weekly or monthly basis. Many spoke about the importance of high frequency within both team and disciple-making settings (i.e., one-on-one disciple-making/accountability groups) and less high frequency of meeting with larger gatherings and networks. Some interviewees meet primarily in person, some primarily or only online and some through messaging (Zoom, WhatsApp, Signal, etc.). Most meet using some combination of scheduled one-on-one meetings, online interactions, messaging, and spontaneous unscheduled interactions.

The form of consistency shifted, based on many factors. i.e., some meet at the same time with their disciples, in the same place every week. However, others make it a goal to contact their disciples each week, by messaging or WhatsApp, etc., and meet with them in person, as needed. Many of the interviewees regularly visit those they are mentoring on-site.

Not all consistency is rhythmic, however. For example, many of those we interviewed set aside regular times of interaction, i.e., we meet on Monday mornings every week. Some, by way of comparison, would set a goal to meet twice a month or quarterly.



“

I think, in terms of impact for a city: if you don't establish consistency of connection, you're not going to get anywhere.

R, Cities in North America

“

Whenever we start to see a group that has any kind of rhythm, we begin to call those rhythms of worship, community, and mission. We essentially validate that as the church early on. And it goes far beyond the gathering time. It's like the micro church is a family that lives out rhythms far beyond one DBS moment.

C, City in North America

THIS APPEARS TO BE A FRUITFUL CITY PRACTICE FOR THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL REASONS:

Hebrews 10:25

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

- a. City groups build mutual trust and grow through consistent, rhythmic team, group and gathering interactions. These interactions with teams, disciples, and disciple-making teams enable practitioners to provide ongoing support, guidance, and accountability, leading to greater spiritual growth and maturity among the disciples.
- b. Such interactions also help practitioners identify and address the unique needs and challenges of each disciple and group, leading to more effective and personalized disciple-making strategies and a greater overall impact on the city.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND TEAM REFLECTION:

- Without judgment, reflect on the consistency of your personal and disciple-making relationship rhythms. How could consistency in these rhythms assist you toward greater fruitfulness?
- Discuss your team or community's rhythms. How consistent and frequent are they? How could greater consistency of your rhythms make your team more fruitful in your city?
- Are there statements, suggestions, or conclusions here that should influence what we do? What will I/we do in response?

ADDENDUM ONE

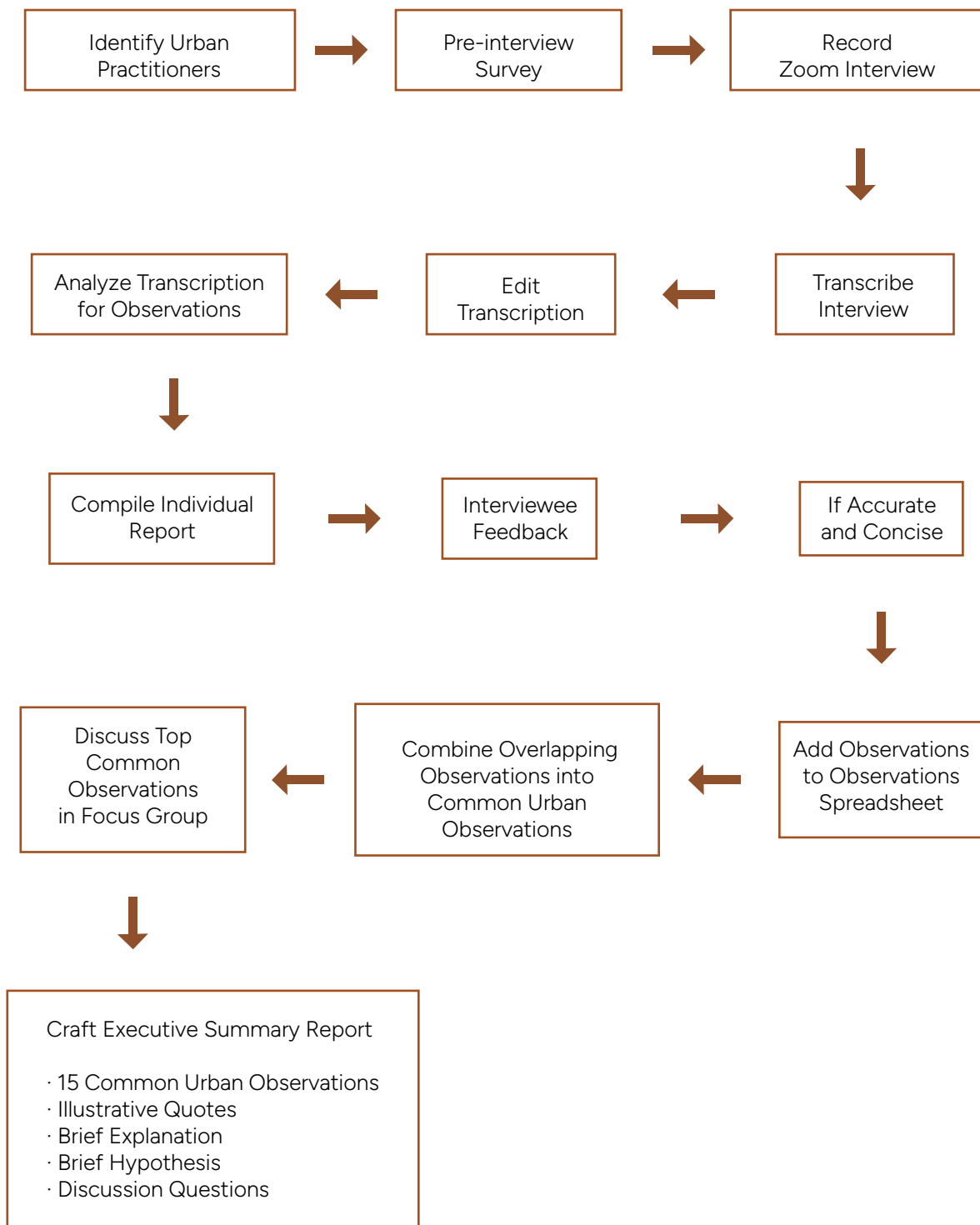
OUR INTERVIEW PROCESS

Each interview has gone through the following process:

1. Between 30 and 45 minutes, in person or remote (Zoom) recorded audio interview
 - A. Preceded by a pre-interview google form to collect qualitative and quantitative Data and collate with narrative
2. Machine transcribed by descript software and then edited by a Two Four Eight insights Team member
3. Edited interview is analyzed for clear observations and emphasis
4. All data is hyperlinked to its source material
5. Observational report: Critical Realism Themes Summary is organized into 4 sections
 - A. Illustrative quotes
 - B. Key observations
 - C. Emergent practices and challenges
 - D. Pre-interview survey information
6. CR themes summary is sent to the interviewee for sign-off and crosscheck:
 - A. Is it accurate to your experience?
 - B. Is the report precise in its language?
 - C. Is there anything you would like edited out?
7. All our observations, totaling 297 this round, from the CR themes summary reports are catalogued into a Central spreadsheet. Emergent practices are also noted in a separate spreadsheet
8. The 297 observations became 55 common urban observations by careful combining and are catalogued
9. Key observations are sorted by the frequency of cross-location repeats (x) and emphasis (0.5x)
10. The 15 top common urban observations are given pattern titles, key quotes, and a short description
11. The top 10 observations were tested in a focus group of practitioners. Three questions were asked in recorded Group dialogue:
 - A. Do these observations surprise you? Why or why not?
 - B. If this observation was true, what could be the possible causes?
 - C. Are there ways that these observations could be better worded or be more precise or accurate?

Hypothesis were then crafted for the top 15 common urban observations, using feedback from our practitioner group dialogue sessions.

PROCESS FLOW CHART



ADDENDUM 2

RESEARCH APPROACH

We draw from the critical realism philosophy of social science and utilize a heavily simplified grounded-research approach utilizing an adaptive conversation/discourse analysis of qualitative data and quantitative forms.

Why Critical Realism?

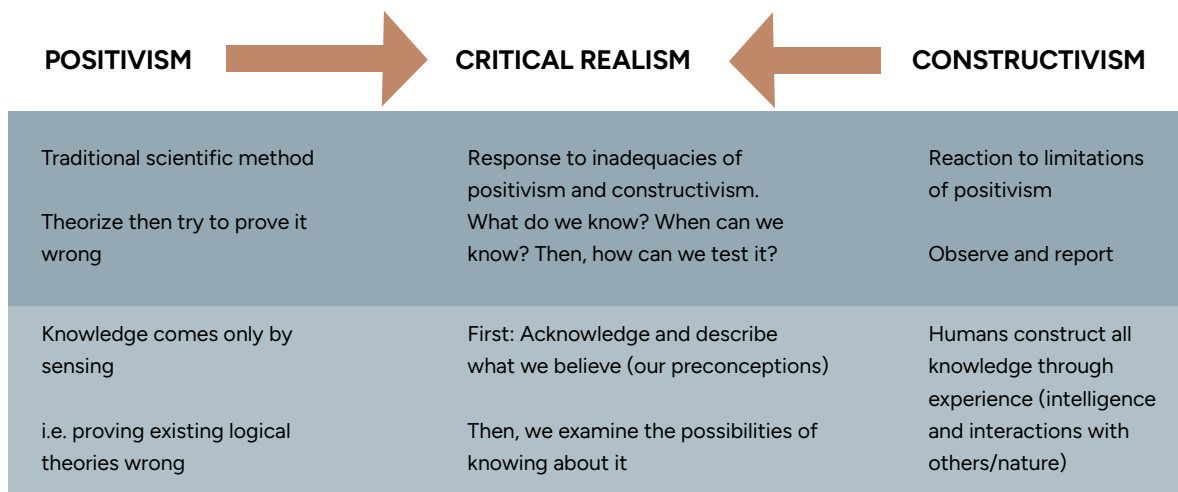
Critical realism seeks to offer a framework for understanding science that is an alternative to both positivism and constructivism. It allows for healthy preconceptions (A God-centered worldview), but also allows for the forming and testing of the scientifically 'knowable.'

- The Positivism Approach: Knowledge comes only by sensing or humans proving existing logical theories wrong.
- The Constructivism Approach: Humans construct all knowledge through intelligence, experience, and interactions with others/nature.

These two 'camps' have a gap regarding social sciences and a worldview that includes God as the Creator. Positivism supposes that all real things can be observed. Constructivism assumes that all knowledge is created by man. The first is flawed, and the latter, heretical.

In our suggested Critical Realism approach, first, we come to terms with what we believe and what it is like (our preconceptions), and then we examine the possibilities for knowing (more) about it.

We do this firstly by interviewing, listening, and recording. Then we analyze the data and ask layers of questions to help us filter between the three critical realism domains: the empirical, actual, and real.



ADDENDUM 3

DEFINITIONS AND KEY PRECONCEPTIONS OF PROJECT

Disciples are people either on the journey of discovering Christ (in a disciple-making relationship) or have become followers of Christ (and are making disciples).

Disciple Making Movements are defined by the rapid spread of the Gospel through ordinary people and the multiplication of new disciples, resulting in new faith communities (churches).

FOUR KEY PRECONCEPTIONS:

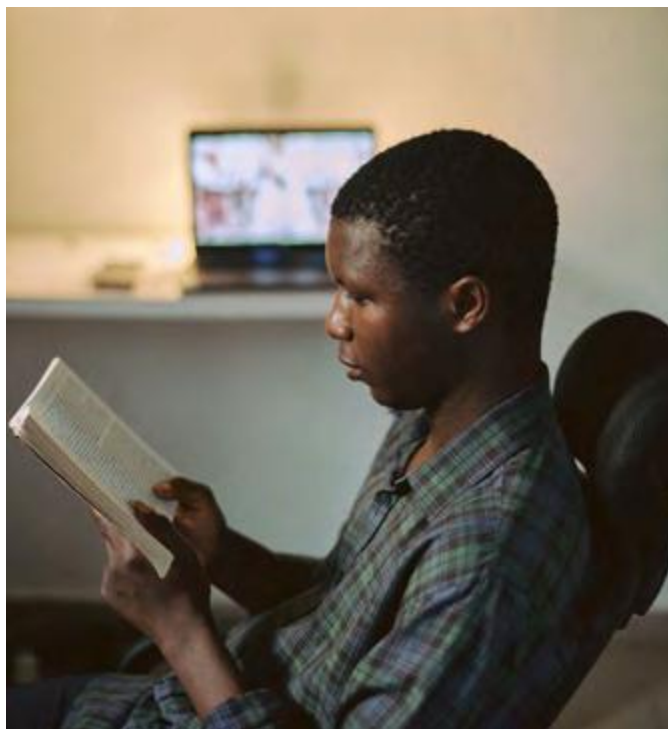
1. Christ-centered worldview
2. Disciple Making Movements methodology
3. Co-mission with God
4. Growing significance of Cities and our understanding of cities as complex adaptive systems (CAS)

Christ-Centered Worldview: Reference: Lausanne Covenant: <https://lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant>

Strategy: Disciple Making Movements (God Movements) Methodology Reference: <https://disciple-making.org/blog/disciple-making-movements-a-history-and-a-definition-part-2/>

A Disciple Making Movement is a rapid and exponential increase in disciples making disciples. These movements share a distinct group of priorities that provide the environment for unhindered multiplication.

- When a Jesus-centered, disciple-making process expands to four generations consisting of 100 groups over a short period
- When a disciple-making process spreads to 4 different streams (affinities or population segments) with each moving to four generations resulting in at least 100 groups



Some characteristics of Disciple Making Movements (DMM) – from Acts 6

- Disciples increased rapidly – the Living Word lived through people who choose to become followers of Christ
- A large number became obedient – indicates numbers and does not simply describe a handful of people
- Spread through the whole region – it spread geographically and saturated a region
- Continued to spread and flourish – it continued (longevity and sustainability) and it flourished (depth, life and meaning)
- Spread widely and grew in power – again, the idea of wide spread accompanied with power.

Co-mission with God

References:

Genesis 12:1-3, 1 Chronicles 16:24, Isaiah 25:1, Psalm 22:27, Mark 13:10, Mark 16:15; Matthew 24:14, Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:44-53; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:6-8, Acts 13:47, Isaiah 52:7, Romans 10:13-14, 2 Peter 3:9, Revelation 7:9-10

ADDENDUM 4

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CITY

Cities (Urban, Urbanism and Urbanization) definitions: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City>

City - a population of at least 50,000 inhabitants in contiguous dense grid cells (>1,500 inhabitants per square kilometer). Typical working definitions for small-city populations start at around 100,000 people. Common population definitions for an urban area (city or town) range between 1,500 and 50,000 people

Urbanization: <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/urbanization/>

Urbanization is the process through which cities grow, and higher and higher percentages of the population come to live in the city.

Furthermore, urbanization is the process of migration from rural into urban areas, driven by various political, economic, and cultural factors. Until the 18th century, an equilibrium existed between the rural agricultural population and towns featuring markets and small-scale manufacturing. With the agricultural and industrial revolutions, the urban population began its unprecedented growth, both through migration and through demographic expansion.

In England, the proportion of the population living in cities jumped from 17% in 1801 to 72% in 1891. In 1900, 15% of the world's population lived in cities. The cultural appeal of cities also plays a role in attracting residents.

Urbanization rapidly spread across Europe and the Americas, and since the 1950s, has taken hold in Asia and Africa as well. The Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs reported in 2014 that, for the first time, more than half of the world population lives in cities.

The degree of urbanization is a modern metric to help define what comprises a city: "a population of at least 50,000 inhabitants in contiguous dense grid cells (>1,500 inhabitants per square kilometer)". This metric was "devised over years by the European Commission, OECD, World Bank and others, and endorsed in March 2021 by the United Nations... largely for international statistical comparison."

The Emergence of Megacities:

Megacities, cities with a population in the multi-millions, have proliferated into the dozens, arising especially in Asia, Africa,

and Latin America. Economic globalization fuels the growth of these cities, as new torrents of foreign capital arrange for rapid industrialization, as well as the relocation of major businesses from Europe and North America, attracting immigrants from near and far. A deep gulf divides the rich and poor in these cities, which usually contain a super wealthy elite living in gated communities.

Social Structure of Urban Society:

Urban society is typically stratified. Spatially, cities are formally or informally segregated along ethnic, economic and racial lines. People living relatively close together may live, work, and play in separate areas, and associate with different people, forming ethnic or lifestyle enclaves or, in areas of concentrated poverty, ghettos. While in the US and elsewhere poverty became associated with the inner city, in France it has become associated with the *banlieues*, areas of urban development which surround the city proper. Meanwhile, across Europe and North America, the racially white majority is empirically the most segregated group. Suburbs in the west, and, increasingly, gated communities and other forms of "privatopia" around the world, allow local elites to self-segregate into secure and exclusive neighborhoods.

Cities are complex adaptive systems (CAS)s:

Complex Adaptive System definition:

"A complex adaptive system is a system that is complex in that it is a dynamic network of interactions, but the behavior of the ensemble may not be predictable according to the behavior of the components. It is adaptive in that the individual and collective behavior mutate and self-organize corresponding to the change-initiating micro-event or collection of events."

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Complex_adaptive_system

"A complex adaptive system has three characteristics. The first is that the system consists of a number of heterogeneous agents, and each of those agents makes decisions about how to behave. The most important dimension here is that those decisions will evolve over time. The second characteristic is that the agents interact with one another. That interaction leads to the third—something that scientists call emergence: In a very real way, the whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts. The key issue is that you can't really understand the whole system by simply looking at its individual parts."

<https://hbr.org/2011/09/embracing-complexity>

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Rebekah Bothma

For being an excellent co-leader and helping us launch the project: interviewing, organizing, and streamlining the interview process.

Ryan Bothma

For organizing the research processes, helping us to organize the data, and brainstorming the outline of this report.

All Nations International and New Generations

For their faithfulness toward disciple-making among the neglected.

Dr. Liza van der Merwe and Jonathan Morgan

For their expertise and guidance toward a coherent research project philosophy and methodology.

David Broodryk

For his guidance and writing contributions.

Michelle Broodryk, Ghibeau Gerber, and Allison Sherwin

For editing.

Moriah Quarles

For lending us her design expertise and for building this incredible layout.

To our interviewees

We see your faithfulness and its impact on our cities. God be glorified.



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