**Tennent, Carson, Keller+ –** Powerful Quotes for use in Discovery CPM Training

**Timothy Tenent**, PhD, Edinburgh. President, Asbury Seminar on ***discipleship before conversion****:*

“In my experience of working in India, I have found that discipleship often *precedes* conversion by many years. This seems counterintuitive in the West, because Christendom always assumed a larger Christian context, making it easy to live as a Christian, since Christian ethics and values were presumably infused throughout the whole of society. However, in India, if often takes many years for someone to comprehend the gospel message and what it means to follow Jesus Christ. Lengthy periods of instruction and modeling often take place long before someone receives Christian baptism. This is closer to Jesus’ model exemplified in the Gospels, whereby intensive instruction took place with His disciples for several years before they fully understood and accepted His lordship” (Invitation to World Missions, page 81 © 2010, Kregel. Italics his.)

Dr. David J. Hesselgrave in *Communicating Christ Cross Culturally* warns those who would hope for quick "decisions" for Christ:

Generally speaking, Western missionaries have assumed too much in asking for decisions in non-Western cultures. This observation is in no way intended to place limits on the power of the Holy Spirit. But the number of people in these cultures who have responded in one way or another to a gospel invitation only to return to their former way of life is ample testimony that something is amiss....Strictly speaking, respondents can accept only that message which they understand....Many accept something other than salvation. (Hesselgrave 1991, 182)

He continues:

Premature "decisions for Christ" may not be, in fact, the decision of the respondents to accept Christ at all, but rather a decision to please the evangelist. While it is true that the knowledge sufficient for an intelligent decision to accept Christ will always be something less than complete knowledge, it is also true that Christ himself urged those who would follow him to count the cost of discipleship. A postponed decision may sometimes be the only genuine "decision", and in some contexts may greatly enhance the discipling of entire families or even larger homogenous cultural groupings. (Hesselgrave 1991, 186)

**Gordon T. Smith,** PhD Loyola. Lecturer, Regent College, Vancover on ***conversion as process***

When we proclaim the gospel to those whose background and upbringing are secular humanist or post-Christian, who know little if anyting about the Bible and its message or anything of the grand narrative of Israel of the person of Jesus, then this grasping of the truth of the gospel will not, and cannot, come easily or quickly. We need to accept that it will often be a *multistep process* before the a whole new way of thinking is approached and ultimately engaged. This new vision of life’s meaning will take time to establish.” (Transforming Conversion, p. 8 © Baker Academic. Italics mine.)

**J.I. Packer,** “The Means of Conversion,” *Crux* 25, no. 4 (1989): 14-22 on ***conversion as process***

“Conversion itself is a process. It can be spoken of as a single act of turning in the same way that consuming several dishes can be spoken of as a single act of dining,…and revivalism encourages us to think of a simiple, all-embracing, momentary crisis as its standard form. But conversion…is bst understood if viewed as a complex process that for adults ordinarily involves the following: thinking and re-thinking; doubting and overcoming doubts; soul-searching and self-admonition; struggle against feelings of guilt and shame; and concern as to what realistic following of Christ might mean.”

**Scot McKnight,** PhD Nottingham, on ***disciple making—not “decisions”—as the goal***

“Most evangelism today is obsessed with getting someone to make a decision; the apostles, however, were obsessed with making disciples. These two words—decision and disciples—are behind this entire book. Evangelism that focused on decisions short circuits and—yes, the word is appropriate—aborts the design of the gospel, while evangelism that aims at disciples slows down to offer the full gospel of Jesus and the apostles.” (The King Jesus Gospel, p.18. © 2011)

**D.A. Carson**, PhD, Cambridge. Research Professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School on ***Matthew 10 as paradigmatic:***

Commenting on Matthew 10:5a which states, "These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions", Carson has a long section of five pages before addressing verse 5b. The following statement comes in the middle of the third page of this commentary:

"Certainly vv. 17-23 go beyond the immediate mission of the 12, and in at least two ways the latter verses envisage a mission to the Gentiles, unlike vv. 5b-6, and far severer opposition than anything the 12 faced during Jesus' ministry. Yet these are not new themes; we have already found Jesus predicting severe persecution, seeing a time of prolonged witness to the world, and after his departure and many Gentiles participating in the messianic banquet. Therefore it is surely not unnatural for Jesus to treat this commission of the 12 *as both explicit short-term itinerary and a paradigm of the longer mission stretching into the years ahead.* For the latter, the 12 need further instruction beyond those needed for the immediate tour, which they must see as in part an exercise anticipating something more. In this sense the 12 *become a paradigm for other disciples in their post-Pentecost witness*, a point Matthew understands (cf. 28:18-20); and in this sense he intends that Matthew 10 should also speak to his readers. (The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, page 242 © 1984. Italics mine.)

D. A. Carson (again) via Keller on ***20 strands of the Gospel***

“The Gospel is not a Simple Thing” is chapter 4 of Keller’s book, Center Church. In it he seeks to remind readers of the “irreducible complexity to the gospel”. He urges, “I want to resist the impulse, mainly among conservative evangelicals, toward creating a single, one-size-fits-all gospel presentation that should be used everywhere…” (Keller 2012, 39). Keller goes on to quote famed NT scholar D.A. Carson who points out that there may be “twenty or so inter-canonical themes that hold the Bible together. The gospel unifies and gives meaning to these many threads that run throughout the Old and New Testaments. A person can explain the gospel from beginning to end through any of these themes, but no single theme gives the whole picture” (ibid, 41). Center Church, © 2012, Zondervan.

Timothy Keller, DMin, Westminster. Senior Pastor Redeemer Presbyterian Church, NYC on ***variety of approaches AND not feeling the need to present the whole gospel in one setting:***

Referring to Acts 13:13-43; 14:6-16; 17:16-34; 20:16-38 Tim Keller writes the following:

“These speeches of Paul give us a strong biblical case for engaging in careful contextualization. They remind us that there is no universal, culture-free formulation of the gospel for everyone. The Scriptures show numerous instances when gospel truths are brought out in different orders, argued for using different premises, and applied to hearts in distinctive ways. It is clear that *Paul does not feel an obligation to give the whole gospel picture to his audience in one sitting*. He puts the pagan Gentiles on a very gradual ramp and works to establish foundational principles without necessarily getting to the work of Christ right away.” (Center Church, page 114 © 2012. Italics mine.)

Tim Keller on **Process in conversion – “**We hold to the classic teaching about the nature of the gospel: to be a Christian is to be united with Christ by faith so that the merits of his saving work become ours and his Spirit enters us and begins to change us into Christ’s likeness. You either are a Christian or you are not—you either are united to him by faith or you are not—because being a Christian is, first of all, a “standing” with God. However, we also acknowledge that coming to this point of uniting to Christ by faith often works as a process, not only as an event. It can occur though a series of small decisions or thoughts that bring a person closer and closer to the point of saving faith. In a post-Christendom setting more often than not, this is the case. People simply do not have the necessary background knowledge to hear a gospel address and immediately understand who God is, what sin is, who Jesus is, and what repentance and faith are in a way that enables them to make an intelligent commitment.” (Center Church, page 281).

Timothy Keller on **Church Planting**, p. 359 – “The way to grow the number of Christians in a city is not mainly through church renewal but through church planting”. P. 360 – The way to renew the existing churches of a city is by planting new ones. [Why?]

1. New ideas. A R&D department for the whole Body.
2. Rapid new leader development.
3. New churches challenge others to self-examination
4. An evangelistic feeder system for whole Body
5. The way to reach the sheer diversity of the city is via new churches

Dr. Grant Osborne, PhD Aberdeen, on **Evangelism & Discipleship** as one, “To Jesus, evangelism and discipleship were not separate entities.” (Class notes, TEDS DMin seminar, July 2014).

Dr. Echkard Schnabel, “the new Adolf von Harnack” per Osborne, PhD, University of Aberdeen, “Jesus instructs the Twelve in terms of a short-term missionary tour through Galilean villages. At the same time he described their imminent mission as a paradigm of a permanent mission in the future. The short-term training is training for their later missionary activity.” (*Early Christian Mission* 2004, 292).

Dr. Philip H. Towner, Dean of Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship at the American Bible Soceity on ***on the possibility that new believers could be leaders.***

The IVP commentary shows the contrast between the leadership lists in Timothy and Titus.

*But the situation in Crete, where the churches were younger, was not the same as that which we find in Ephesus, where a body of elders already existed...*

*Titus's task of appointing elders from among recent converts (notice that in this case Paul cannot rule out recent converts; compare 1 Tim 3:6) must not have been easy.*

He was formerly Director of Translation Services for the United Bible Societies. The UBS is a fellowship of 145 Bible Societies around the world. He has a Ph.D in New Testament Exegesis from the University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen Scotland. He is a member of the Institute for Biblical Research, the Society of Biblical Literature,*Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* and the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical and Theological Research.

Dr. Eugene Peterson in *Eat This* Book, page 52 talks about **the plain sense of the Word**: “The Reformers insisted on what they called the “perspicuity” of Scripture, that the Bible is substantially intelligible to the common person and requires neither pope nor professor to interpret it. … As the Westminster Confession says, “those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due course of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them” (52, cf. Westminster Confession, I.vii.)”

Dr. Craig Ott & Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting*  on “**discovery”.**

Use discipleship methods that foster personal discovery of God’s truth. Without diminishing the importance of the teaching ministry, the priority should be to help new believers understand God’s word and feed themselves. God will reveal himself to his children as they seek him through his Word. The mentor’s goal is then to help new disciples make their own discoveries. When learning is based on personal study and discovery rather than another person’s ability to teach and motivate, disciple are able to nurture their own walk with God and help others do the same. (237)

On **Group Decision Making** David Hesselgrave notes,

"Missionaries should not make initial gospel presentations to those who are 'not qualified' to respond, and they should not unduly obstruct the decision-making process by refusing to allow ample time for deliberation by individuals and responsible groups" (*Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally,* 617).

“A well-known Thai pastor was introduced to Jesus while studying abroad. He embraced salvation and was discipled apart from his family. When he finally wrote telling his parents he was Christian they were horrified. ‘Son, how could you make such an important decision without the family?’ his mother lamented. ….As one Western author comments, ‘Individual conversion separates Christians from their social networks and stops church growth.’ According to the Thai pastor mentioned above the end result is tragic. He has stated publicly, ‘We win one weak convert and gain 200 strong enemies from the new convert’s social networks.’ Hard words, but spoken by someone who has the right to instruct us.”

- “30 Days of Prayer for Isaan” © 2017 by Isaan Joint Venture, Day 26: “Family Evangelism”