

# Run that By Me Again

## God's Global Mission clarified

Making sense out of the verbiage surrounding missions in  
an age of competing information

### Introduction:

Many are confused with the words and terms we so readily throw around in the world of missions. Some verbiage that is common are: unreached, unengaged, undisciplined, transformation, unmobilized, penetration, reached, making disciples, world evangelization, etc. Not only is their confusion as to what is meant, but also by what is important, and what should have priority. The goal of this presentation is to bring an order to the strategy of world evangelization, based on what Jesus told us our task is, based on Matthew 28:19-20. *Familiarity with Matthew 28:18-20 must dictate mission strategy* if we are to clearly understand God's global mission to the nations.

Here are some preliminary observations to get us started:

1. Over-arching **goal** of the global mission: world evangelization (Mark 16:15)

Notice the magnitude of the task expressed two different ways, "all the world" and "to every creature." The mission of the church is indeed a global task.

2. **Essence** of the global mission: "make disciples of all peoples" (Matthew: 28:18-20)

Making disciples entails understanding the 4 spheres of need, the 4 engagement tasks, and the 4 intermediate goals

a. The four spheres of need include peoples who are: 1) unengaged, 2) unreached, 3) undisciplined, 4) unmobilized. Each represents a specific area of concern, represented by a quadrant of the overall matrix of "making disciples."

b. The engagement tasks are represented by the "task continuum bar" that portrays processes critical to making disciples: penetration, consolidation, transformation, and mobilization.

c. The four intermediate goals are sequential and must be achieved one after another. Peoples must be: engaged, then reached, then disciplined, and finally mobilized for outreach to realize the full continuum of making disciples.

3. This clarification does not focus on specific ministries that are inclusive and integral to missions. Some might ask, "Where is Bible translation, radio, use of internet, mission aviation, gospel recordings, Christian camping, children's ministries, orality efforts, etc?" These specific ministries are vital to and interwoven within the larger four engagement tasks. However, these should be seen on the more tactical level, not strategic level. More will be said on that later.

The concern at hand is to have *comprehensive strategic engagement*, that moves beyond emphasizing one or two of someone's favorite aspects of mission concern, to thoroughly "make disciples of all nations." To do that one needs to be aware of the four spheres of need along with the necessary engagement tasks.

## Unengaged

### 1. The unengaged: defined and described

The initial phase of making disciples must focus on engaging the unengaged. "Unengaged" means that no one church, no one mission agency... no one person or group of persons have yet taken responsibility to tell a people group of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. There presently exist about 600 unengaged people groups of over 50,000 in population at the very heart of the unfinished Great Commission task. ([www.finishingthetask.com](http://www.finishingthetask.com)). Some (IMB) put the total number of unengaged groups at 1,951. These represent thousands upon thousands of unengaged communities.

This term was developed to designate people groups that do not have any active church planting occurring within them. According to the IMB Global Research Office (<http://public.imb.org/globalresearch/Pages/default.aspx>):

A people group is engaged when a church planting strategy, consistent with Evangelical faith and practice, is under implementation. In this respect, a people group is not engaged when it has been merely adopted, is the object of focused prayer, or is part of an advocacy strategy.

### 2. The engagement task: Penetration (reaching out)

Penetration means making a priority of going to those who have had little or no exposure to the gospel. According to the Tokyo 2010 Declaration, "messengers go and encounter non-believers by way of personal encounters, broadcasts, podcasts, printed material, recordings, electronic communications, or any other innovative means used as a channel of penetrating witness. Thus, the importance of the ministry of evangelizing." (Tokyo Declaration, page 2)

Therefore, phase one in the engagement task is that of penetration. It is the "going" of Mt. 28:19. It entails the penetration of the gospel into the realm of the unengaged.

### 3. The Penetrating Process

At least four essential elements constitute effective engagement:

1. apostolic effort in residence
2. commitment to work in the local language and culture
3. commitment to long-term ministry
4. sowing in a manner consistent with the goal of seeing a church-planting movement (CPM) emerge. (Source: IMB Global Research Office).

#### 4. Penetration delineated:

<u>Activities:</u>	<u>Desired Outcomes</u>	<u>Undesired Outcomes</u>
Awareness	Successful deployment	Unsuccessful deployment
Burden	Set-up in focus area	Rejection – non receptivity
Intercessory prayer	Engagement with people	Interference causing retreat
Research	Welcomed	Intense opposition
Selection of focus area	Earning a hearing	Not welcomed
“Embracing” a group		Deportation/departure
Adopting		
Strategizing		
Team building		
Partnering (when possible)		
Entering a focus area		
Residence – physically present in focus area		

The remaining unengaged remain unengaged because they are the most difficult to reach. I would conjecture that 70% of penetrating endeavors to the unengaged are unsuccessful. Some are attempted and end in failure. Others are never attempted at all. Besides the “undesired outcomes” mentioned above, another primary reason is simply the inability of hurdling the barrier of “death by delay.” In many cases intentions are noble, but delivery is lacking. Too many ministries focused on the unengaged over dream but under produce.

Once successful engagement has been realized, the effort moves forward to phase two of making disciples: consolidation of new believers among the unreached who have now been successfully entered and engaged.

## **Unreached**

### 1. The unreached: defined and describe

Joshua Project uses the terms "unreached" and "least-reached" to mean the same thing, thus the terms can be used interchangeably and actually are on their website. An unreached or least-reached people is a people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize that people group. It is calculated that there are 6,926 unreached people groups in the world today. Of these about 3,532 are small groups under 10,000 in population and all these groups total less than 8 million individuals. ([www.joshuaproject.net/great-commission-statistics.php](http://www.joshuaproject.net/great-commission-statistics.php)).

The original Joshua Project editorial committee selected the criteria less than 2% Evangelical Christian and less than 5% Christian Adherents. While these percentage figures are somewhat arbitrary, there are some who suggest that the percentage of a population needed to influence and impact the whole group is 2%. The IMB prefers using this percentage.

## 2. The engagement task: Consolidation (bringing in)

Consolidation means gathering new believers into a relationship with Jesus and other believers, which is evidenced by the identifying rite of baptism. This is the “baptizing them” of Matthew 28:19. According to the Tokyo 2010 Declaration this is the task of “conserving the fruit of evangelism and then the ability to systematically disciple believers, which takes a local body of believers living in corporate harmony. Thus, the importance of the ministry of establishing churches.” (Tokyo Declaration, page 2)

Therefore, the phase two major task is that of consolidation. This term represents all that is wrapped up in the “baptizing” of Mt. 28:19. It entails the consolidation of new believers among the unreached into local congregations.

## 3. The Consolidating Process

At least five essential elements constitute effective consolidation:

1. continued apostolic effort in residence
2. effective outreaches that results in bring in new believers
3. rudimentary teaching on basic Christian doctrine
4. baptizing new believers as a show of identification with Christ
5. incorporating believers into local congregations as part of a church-planting movement

## 4. Consolidation delineated:

<u>Activities:</u>	<u>Desired Outcomes</u>	<u>Undesired Outcomes</u>
Intercessory prayer	receptive hearts	resistant hearts
External contextualization	repentance & belief	opposition
Evangelism: “proclamation”	marks of salvation	superficial belief
Outreach	gather with believers	falling away
Persuasion	receive “milk of the word”	no church formed
Compassion ministries	desire to mature	no indigenous community
Baptizing new believers	love other believers	no ch. planting movement
Incorporating in body life	witness to others	
Church birthing	fledgling indigenous	
Teaching/nurturing	community of believers	
Begin leadership development	Reached!	

Once successful consolidation has been realized, the making disciple responsibility moves to phase three: transformation of believers among the reached who remain undisciplined.

## **Undisciplined**

### 1. The undisciplined: defined and described

Undisciplined are those who have initially responded positively to and expressed belief in the gospel of Christ, but subsequently have not seriously committed themselves to the life-long

process of spiritual maturation and sanctification. One segment of this category may not be followers of Christ at all, but simply “traditional Christians” who describe themselves religiously as Christians (i.e. nominal/cultural Christians). Although empirical data is lacking, it can be estimated that there are at least 1.6 billion “Christians” who are undisciplined.

## 2. The engagement task: Transformation (changing over)

This task involves systematically teaching Christ-followers to observe His commands with the outcome of transformed lives. According to the Tokyo 2010 Declaration, “the new believer’s worldview must be adjusted to a biblical worldview; his lifestyle changed to increasingly conform to the image of Christ; and his ethical conduct progressively marked by biblical morals. Ideally, this results in individuals applying the gospel of the kingdom to every sphere and pursuit of life—from government to economics, from education to health, and from science to creation care. As a consequence whole communities, cultures and countries benefit from the transforming power of the gospel. Thus, the importance of the ministry of teaching.” (Tokyo Declaration, page 2)

Therefore, phase three of making disciples involves transformational teaching. It represents all that is intended in the “teaching them to observe all I have commanded” of Mt. 28:20. It entails the transformation of individual lives so they might in turn transform their communities for the better.

## 3. The Transformational Teaching Process:

Greg Ogden states: “Discipling is an intentional relationship in which we walk alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ. This includes equipping the disciple to teach others as well.” (Transforming Disciples: Making Disciples a Few at a Time, Intervarsity Press, 2003, page 129).

The lack of genuine changed lives has become the greatest omission of the Great Commission the world over. All too often “proselytes” are made instead of “disciples.” When this happens churches get filled with bodies that exhibit little evidence of changed beliefs and behaviors. This results in spiritually apathetic adherents who quickly deteriorate into dysfunctional gatherings or nominal Christianity. They easily become victims of aberrant doctrine, heresy and deviant cults. Although they wear the label “Christian” many are not Christ-followers at all. They are superficial followers of “the way” in need of a genuine conversion experience. This sad state has become the bane of the Church the world over. Superficial conversions and inflated statistics only promote non-authentic outcomes.

David Sills warns: If we are not training national believers to believe biblically sound doctrine and to interpret the Word of God correctly, the day will soon come when those who represent Christ in this world will be preaching a gospel that Jesus never gave. When people wonder what Christianity is about, they will look to a “typical” Christian. The person they look to will not be a Christian in a Western evangelical church preaching a gospel that is orthodox, biblical Christianity will recognize. Doctrinally sound New Testament Christianity is shrinking in size and influence. The bare minimum that missionaries should teach must result in trained leadership

in the national church that is able to interpret the Word of God (2 Timothy 2:15), understand basic Christian doctrines (1 Timothy 4:6), and teach them to others(1 Timothy 3:2) (David Sills, Reaching and Teaching, page 64).

3. Transformation teaching delineated:

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Desired Outcomes</u>	<u>Undesired Outcomes</u>
“Teaching” & preaching	spiritual maturation	uncommitted
Training	Christ-likeness	nominalism
Mentoring/coaching	Spirit-filled life	“cultural” Christianity
Nurturing	Christian worldview	falling away
Internal contextualization	Transparent relationships	apostasy
Discipleship	Lordship of Christ	deviant beliefs (cults)
Biblical literacy	Growing sanctification	heresy
Theological Education	Understand “meat of the word”	mere proselytes
(formal, informal, non-formal)	Priority of prayer	dysfunctional gatherings
Prayer	Orthodoxy	biblical illiteracy
Leadership training	orthopraxis	syncretism

“Teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ.” (Col.1:28)

Once successful transformation is more and more evident, efforts should move to phase four: the mobilization of believers to reach others who are still unengaged, unreached and undisciplined. The lack of mobilization is indicative of the lack of discipleship.

## Unmobilized

1. The unmobilized: defined and described

Unmobilized is that state in visionless churches, where people and resources are not readied for nor committed to global outreach so that others may become engaged, reached and disciplined. It is a condition where a spirit of self-absorption rather than sacrifice prevails. The task of mobilization can only be done by disciplined believers who have a burden for world evangelization. Those who have become mature enough in their faith in Christ to want to share that same faith with others will be willing to ready themselves to propagate their faith.

Some are mobilized as “sent ones” to go to the unengaged, the unreached and the undisciplined. But others, the majority of believers, are mobilized as “senders,” the support team that makes the going of sent ones possible. The support team is a vital part of mobilizing for outreach in that it provides the funding, prayer, technical support, moral encouragement, and effective communications necessary to field messengers who are sent.

2. The engagement task: mobilization (thrusting forth)

“Essentially mobilization refers to any process by which God’s people are awakened and kept moving and growing until they find their place for strategic involvement in the task of completing world evangelization.” (Ralph Winter, *The Process of Mobilization in Mission Mobilizers Handbook*, p. C6.)

### 3. The Process of Mobilizing (C7 MMH).

Broadly speaking, there are at minimum three phases to mobilization:

1. Motivation and inspiration: those who become impacted by God’s mandate to extend his blessing of salvation to all peoples. This may come by way of meeting a missionary, short-term mission trip, reading on missions, mission video, mission conference, etc.
2. Preparation and training:
  - a) senders: orientated to the cause of world evangelization either in church or by para-church mission groups.
  - b) sent-ones: prepared for cross-cultural mission service by way of a formal, non-formal or informal mission training program.
3. On mission: ultimately all who move through the first two phrases ideally become either a sender or a sent one.

### 4. Mobilization delineated:

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Desired Outcomes</u>	<u>Undesired Outcomes</u>
A <i>vision</i> for the world	Declaring the praises of God (1 Peter 2:9)	no burden for the lost
World needs awareness	Transmission of gospel	no mobilization of people, resources, prayer
Mission of God understanding	Multiplication	no action taken to transmit the gospel
Great Commission familiarity	Reproduction	apathy toward lost world
Encourage, enlist, empower workers	Expansion of church	self-centeredness
Prayer for new workers (Mt. 9:27)	Witnessing	
Instill a personal mission, vision and passion for others	Passion that God’s glory to be known by all	
Praying, giving, communicating		

#### Specifically for sent-ones:

Sense of call, Surrender of self,  
 Selection of focus area,  
 Specialized training,  
 Partner development,  
 Commissioning, Going!

A fully mission-mobilized church is one that continuously and intentionally harnesses its spiritual capital (prayer, moral support, informed concern), human capital, financial capital, relational capital, and technological capital for making of disciples of all nations.

## Summing up Making Disciples

### **The four essential tasks of disciple making**

The Tokyo Declaration states that the depth of the task of making disciples contains three essentials found in Matthew 28:19. The fourth, though not explicit, is implicit.

#### 1. Reaching out: “Go”

The first essential in making disciples is the going out and encountering those who are not yet Christ-followers. They may not yet be Christ followers because they have not yet had the opportunity to hear about Christ. Placed first in the sentence, “Go” is the first step in the disciple making process. It indicates the duty of believers to take the gospel from where it is known and believed to where it is not known nor believed so as to penetrate every people group on earth.

#### 2. Bringing in: “Baptizing them”

This second essential is the task of gathering new believers into a relationship with Jesus and other believers, which is evidenced by the identifying rite of baptism. Jesus doesn’t intend the practice of baptism as a magical rite that automatically brings people into relationship with God without a change of heart. Sadly, it has deteriorated into that very thing in some church traditions. Rather, baptism is the culmination of the consolidation process of the repent-believe-baptize experience of salvation.

This public show of initiation is very meaningful for the believer. It is a picture of beginning a new life in Christ and of allegiance to him and to his church. The ordinance is a powerful outward expression of a new identity and a changed life within. Indeed because of these implications, there are new believers in some hostile cultures who delay its application for fear of repercussion. Antagonistic nonbelievers certainly understand its powerful significance!

#### 3. Changing over: “Teaching them to obey”

The making of a disciple does not stop with the initial belief experience nor the subsequent initiation experience. There is an educational process that follows to keep the new believer learning and growing in his/her new faith. Some today would equate this with “spiritual formation.” Whatever the label, the important thing is that there be an on-going growth experience. A new believer’s worldview must be changed; his lifestyle adjusted to increasingly conform to the image of Christ; and his ethical conduct increasingly marked by integrity.

Teaching has a final goal – obedience that leads to transformation. New believers are taught with the goal that they become obedient followers of all Christ commanded. Among other things that Jesus taught, they are to live out the great commandment (Mat. 22:37-40) and show great compassion (Mat. 9:36). It takes growth experiences in community with other believers for that to be most effective.

This is why believers are congregated into local churches. This is why missionaries have established Bible schools and seminaries the world over. This is why seminars, webinars, church based training and a host of other teaching ministries are so important. Growth happens best in the presence of other believers. It is the local church that best facilitates the fellowship of

believers. Thus, by implication, the establishment of local congregations is an outcome of making disciples.

#### 4. Thrusting forth: “All I have commanded you”

There is one final essential to the task of making complete disciples. It is the task of leading believers into their responsibility of being a witness for Christ. Implicit in “all I have commanded you” are the commands of Jesus to his disciples that they were to be on mission for Him. This demands total mobilization of a church. He is looking for total engagement by each and every one of us in the Great Commission cause:

He is asking for some to be senders, and others to be sent-ones;  
some to commit their lives, others to commit of their resources;  
some to do the work, others to support the work;  
some to go, others to stay so that the some may go.  
All must be involved, no one gets an exclusion!

J. Hudson Taylor said, “The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed.”

#### **Superficial or Genuine Outcomes?**

Thus, all four activities – going, baptizing, teaching, and mobilizing – are essential components to making disciples of every people and ultimately leading to world evangelization. When done correctly, lives are genuinely changed for the better, which in turn transforms communities.

Therefore, it is incumbent on God’s messengers to engage in these four essential processes in order to make disciples of the nations. Woven together, they make possible reconciliation to God resulting in transformed lives. Only then do people become genuine disciples of Christ. Only then is the intended outcome of “making disciples” achieved. Only then will sinful societies, corrupt cultures and degenerated communities be transformed for the better. Only then will world evangelization be achieved and God most glorified in all he has created.

Resources to help inform according to category:

#### 1. Unengaged

Finishing the task: [www.finishingthetask.com](http://www.finishingthetask.com)

IMB: [IMB Global Research Office](http://IMB Global Research Office)

#### 2. Unreached

Joshua Project: [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net) and [www.unreached.org](http://www.unreached.org)

Peoplegroups.org: [www.Peoplegroups.org](http://www.Peoplegroups.org)

#### 3. Undisciplined

Church Smart Resources: [www.ChurchSmart.com](http://www.ChurchSmart.com)

Desiring God: [www.desiringGod.org](http://www.desiringGod.org)

#### 4. Unmobilized

Missions Catalyst [missionscatalyst@calebresources.org](mailto:missionscatalyst@calebresources.org)  
Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: [www.perspectives.org](http://www.perspectives.org)  
Finisher's project: [www.finishers.org](http://www.finishers.org)  
The Body Builders: [www.bodybuilders.net](http://www.bodybuilders.net)

#### Questions related to the Making Disciples Matrix:

1) Which quadrant of the matrix is most important?

Answer: None. All four are equally important

However, one or more may have priority for your ministry.

2) Where are tactical ministries in this matrix?

Answer: As previously stated "tactical ministries" such as Bible translation, radio, use of internet, mission aviation, gospel recordings, Christian camping, children's ministries, orality efforts, are specific ministries vital to and interwoven within the larger four engagement tasks. However, these should be seen on the more tactical level, embedded within a relevant quadrant. The strategic level contains the tactical ministries within them.

3). What are the implications for these common statements:

- a. "We only support missionaries that work in the 10-40 window."
- b. "Latin America is no longer a valid mission field."
- c. "We cut out the "middle man" (agencies) to save money"
- d. "We don't support anyone who is assigned to the home office"  
(We need to move away from corporate jargon like, "home office" and "the mission headquarters")

4) Each sphere of need demand workers with particular skill sets. Do you know of anyone who is glaringly strategically mis-assigned?

#### Making personal/ministry application

In light of the clarity that this matrix affords, an individual, church or mission agency should implement a four step action plan:

1. Plot

A church mission committee should plot on the matrix the quadrant which represents each one of their missionaries.

2. Pray

Observe the result of what has been plotted. Consider if the results is in line with the missional desire and direction of the church. How balanced do you feel about the

distribution of your Great Commission intentions? Take time to pray over the results, asking God if this is the best use of your resources.

### 3. Plan

After taking time to evaluate and prayer, plan a course of action. You may not adjust anything. If so intentionally affirm what you are already doing. You may discover the need to make an adjustment of resources and emphasis to align with your mission and vision.

### 4. Promote

Publicly promote your vision and commitment to that segment of making disciples ministries that align with your purpose. Let others know why you are enthusiastically and passionately engaged in the ministry that you are! Justify it by use of the Making Disciples Matrix. This is your mobilization role to the greater body of Christ.

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