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Disciple—A Unique Identity

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Inside

Editorial	3
A Unique Identity	4
Prayer Points	6
Quotable quotes: Meaning of the word 'disciple'	10
My conversion to Christ	11
Look at the field	15
Mother to the Motherless: Amy Carmichael's Legacy Review: 'A Chance to Die' by Elisabeth Elliot	16
What is Disciple?	19

Global vision

It is a great privilege to connect with you through this magazine. This is our first magazine from the Global Discipleship Renewal Ministries. We thank you for being a supporter and well-wisher in this God given ministry.

The eternal Son, Jesus Christ asked us to go and make disciples. It was a clarion vision for his disciples and those who saw him before he was taken into heaven. The global vision of Jesus Christ, was not only meant for the people who witnessed his ascension but is extended to us to continue to 'be his disciples and make disciples of all nations.'

The global vision commences from the day of his resurrection; the resurrection is the day of inauguration of God's kingdom. The inauguration of his kingdom will culminate on the day he returns and take us to the ultimate perfected kingdom. Within the period of inauguration of God's kingdom and the perfected Kingdom, Jesus gave the global vision to his disciples to bring nations, tribes and languages to his perfected kingdom. We are not alone in this mission; Jesus is with us till the end of the earth; He is the Lord who directs and monitors the vision till his return.

The disciples must grasp the global vision of being disciples and making disciples, living with a hope of reaching to the perfected kingdom and bringing many people from our nations where we are living for him.

In this magazine, I concentrate on the disciple's identity as God's child presenting with the frame work of Discipleship. I have taken few themes from various resource materials to enable us to know more about the concept of discipleship.

In his vineyard,

Peter Joseph

A Unique Identity

It appears that, to be a disciple is being alone in the world as a stranger and wanderer facing persecution and insult from those who oppose us. In line with this thought, Peter said that the disciples are strangers and wanderers and, Paul adds further saying that we are not of the citizen of the world. Jesus said that he is not from this world; it means that he is from above and his kingdom is heavenly.

As disciples, we are strangers to the world, then the question arises, 'what is our identity as a disciple? 'where we belong to and how we belong to and why we belong to', it is important and significant to understand this to be clear with our journey as a disciple.

A unique disciple:

A disciple, as a title, is not an isolated word; it is connected with the person whom he is following. The disciple mark was first given to the follower of Moses, Jesus Christ calls his follower as a disciple.

Jesus' disciples are not mere followers of few instructions or set of commandments; They are the followers of Jesus Christ who promised to be his disciples forever and ever. The relationship of the disciple and Jesus Christ is a unique one. The absence of this unique relationship will lead to a one-way relationship and the disciple will become a devotee.

Jesus' disciples are followers of Jesus Christ with a purpose of being his disciples and making disciples of all nations. The fruit of making disciples ends with an ultimate relationship with him in the new heaven and new earth.

Jesus' disciples are not followers of a different path but the path of Jesus who took a path of persecution and crucifixion to reach his father in heaven. Just like Jesus, we must go through persecution and trials to reach the destination of being with Him.

B B. An Unique relationship:

Jesus' disciples don't chose to follow him. It is He who has called us to follow him. Jesus calls Peter, John, and Andrew to follow him. He takes the initiative to open our hearts to receive Him as our personal Saviour. The initiative comes from him because we are dead in sin and are trespassers. After we accept him, he seals us with his Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13).

Our relationships with our closed ones have questions, doubts and limitations hence the assurance of relationship with Jesus is a significant one for his disciples. The relationship with Jesus is extended to his father through the holy spirit. The holy spirit dwells in our heart and gives a spirit of calling him 'Abba father',

C. A Unique identity:

As we call him 'Abba' 'Father' through the holy spirit, we become the heavenly father's child. Once we become his children then there is no need to create our own identity or chase after other identities. God's child is the greatest identity that God has given us.

Jesus' main aim is to reveal His father, to show that He and His father is one, and He is the only way to the father. He also promises us to take us to His Father's house (John 14:2-4). Jesus is the eternal son to the father, then we become the father's child. By this, the Father's son Jesus becomes our elder brother (John 1:12, John 20:17). We get included in the divine family through the identity of God's child and we belong to God's divine family.

As disciples, we look like fools before the world but we are God's children. God is our father; shepherd and He is the creator of us. Being God's child gives me the answer to the question of who am I? where am I coming from? Where am I going? and what is the purpose of my life. All these questions get answered with the unique identity of 'I am God's child'.

Peter Joseph

Prayer

January to April 2022

Day 1: Pray for the Bible study groups in various languages via on line and face to face. Pray for the needed potential to start a Hindi bible study group.

Pray for participants and leaders who are leading the bible study

Day 4: Pray for Samuel Gansesan's ministry in AG church, an independent church in Chennai. Pray for his travel to different parts of Tamil Nadu to meet people in various churches.

Pray for his wife, for the completion

Day 2: Pray for Selvadurai, for his travel to establish contacts with the north Indian states. Praise God for starting a core group in Raipur.

Praise God for his visit to Nepal, Chattisgarh, Guwathi, Assam, Orissa and Bangalore. God has enabled the heart of people to be disciples and make disciples.

Day 5: Pray for office staff Mala Vinoth and Thangaraj who are looking after administrative related work and also conducting bible study in and around area. Pray for Thangaraj, his effort in conducting emerging leaders meeting in Madipakkam and other prayers. Pray for conducting prayer cell in different areas in a nod around Chennai.

Day 3: Pray for the three discipleship camps to be held in Jan 2023 in Thiruvallur, Usilmapatti and Shengottai. Pray for needed finance for three camps amounting to Rs. 4,00,000 (AUS \$ 8,000). Pray God for the official need of Rs, 200,000 (AUS\$2000) per month expenses for staff, salary, staff travel, magazines and other expenses.

Day 6: Pray for Vikas John, doing ministry in and around Raipur. Core group is formed in Raipur. Pray for the Hindi Bible study and the formation of a core group. Pray for God's opening door in Chhattisgarh to start a bible study group. Pray for Vikas John's sister Vandana Samuel to recover from the surgery done in the right leg.

Day 7: Pray for developing contacts in 28 states and 8 Territories. God has to raise leaders and disciple to start bible study groups and conduct discipleship camp in various areas.

Day 11: Pray for Mohan Suresh's ministry in West Bengal. Pray for God to follow up the believers and the students who attended the discipleship camp. Pray for the formation a a core group in West Bengal.

Day 8: Pray for Mr. Rathnaraj and his family, founder of DRM in India, for his health and strength to lead the organisation. Pray that God may provide a successor for Mr. Rathnaraj to take up the ministry to the next level with the same vision and mission.

Day 12: Pray for the need of eight field staff to minister in Northeast, Bangalore, South Tamil Nadu and north India. Pray for the board members to involve in the local ministry and provide guidelines for the organisation.

Day 9: Pray for the leaders in India to govern the people with wisdom and understanding. Pray for the protection of the minorities. Pray for church leaders to lead their church in accordance with the Gospel and encourage believers to evangelise and think of building another church. church.

Day 13: Pray for Isaac Henderson in Germany, who has come forward to take up the ministry in Germany. Pray for his German contacts and for the ministry among his colleagues. Pray for his work and testimony in the work place.

Day 10: Pray that God gives an opening in the church and theological colleges to introduce the ministry that will encourage theological students to join DRM and church members has to allow the DRM Staff to conduct youth retreats and Discipleship trainings.

Day 14: Pray for God to raise mission minded, gospel focused people to form a core group in Germany.
Pray for Christmas get together with his friends to build up the relationship.
Pray for an opening in church.

Day 15: Pray for an opening in the 16 federal states in Germany. Pray for the awareness to be brought among the believers to understand the need of discipleship.

Pray for forming a core group in Germany. Pray for bringing out a news letter in German.

Day 19: In Germany, there are about 300 abortions a day. We shall pray for the organisation which is working to protect the life of the unborn.

Pray for people who are standing against heterosexual marriage

Day 16: Pray for the teens and youth who are confused in the false philosophical ideologies on sex, marriage, identity, and expressive individualism.

Pray for the leaders and church pastors to handle the confused youth with God's wisdom and understanding.

Day 20: Pray for God to bring a second reformation in Germany. Pray for the people in the sports field to proclaim God's word and know the truth. Pray that the youth will understand the Truth and know that Jesus is the Truth and accept him as their personal Saviour.

Day 17: Pray for Y family as they are waiting for their daughter to join with their family who was taken away as per the German's law. Pray for B to know Christ and grow in him. Pray for Isaac's involvement in youth meeting in the local church. He has been sharing God's word from time to time. from time to time.

Day 21: Pray for the Middle East, consisting of 18 countries. Pray for the opening to evangelise local people and migrants. Pray for God to open doors to teach and train believers to become disciples and disciple makers. Pray that God may raise 18 contacts to represent DRM.

Day 18: Pray for the transformation and revival in state churches. Pray for the churches to act as a light and give hope to the people in need. Pray for churches to stand against abortion law and be a voice of the unborn.

Day 22: Pray for Pethuru to take up the responsibility to develop ministry in his country, Kuwait and also take initiatives to contact people in other countries to equip and train them as disciples. Pray for the formation of a core group in the Mid-

Day 23: Pray for the ministry in Perth. God's grace Christmas Celebration and a weekend away went all. Pray for the follow up and the new family to join our fellowship in the new year. Pray that God will raise full time workers, volunteers and well-wishers for GDRM ministry.

Day 27: Pray for the youth and teens who are confused with the theories of gender and identity. Pray that God will protect the children, youth and university from the secular narratives and philosophy. Pray for the wisdom of youth to discern between the lie spread by the secularists.

Day 24: Pray for the two prayer cells in Perth: North of the River and South of the river. Pray for the Teens bible study and young graduate fellowship. Pray for the fasting prayer on 26th January 2023. Pray for the planned one-day retreat, half day retreat and a weekend away in 2023.

Day 28: Pray for the youth who have fell behind in their faith after joining the university. Pray for the students who believe in the lie about 'truth, tolerance, marriage, sexual ethics, looking for yourself, Happiness is within you and other secular agendas that is being infiltrated'. Pray for the protection of Christians in their jobs

Day 25: Pray for establishing ministry in Adelaide, Melbourne, Darwin and Brisbane. Pray for potential contacts in the different states to start a bible study group. Pray that God may raise a core group for Australia to develop ministries.

Day 29: Pray for the Christians in the western world to be brave enough to face the persecution from the world. Pray for Christians to be a light and salt to the world. Pray for the developing ministry to other nations from Australia.

Day 26: Pray that God may lift up people to own the ministry and initiate to support the ministry in Australia. Pray that we'll find contacts in churches and theological colleges to introduce DRM and its significance.

Day 30: Pray for the Burmese church in Australia to grow in doing ministry among the Burmese and connect with their friends and colleagues in Burma. Pray for Peace and harmony in Burma. Pray for the establishment of a democratic government.

Quotable quotes: Meaning of the word ‘disciple’

The word “disciple” is packed with meaning, but it is clear from the New Testament that it meant, first and foremost, students of Jesus. They followed him and learned from him (Luke 10:38-42). Second, it meant putting allegiance to Jesus first in your life (Mark 1:16-20). Lastly, it meant to be a man or woman in mission, sent into the world to minister both in word (Luke 10:1-20) and in deed (Luke 10:25-37), both sharing your faith and loving your neighbor.

=Timothy Keller

A disciple is someone who learns from him to live like him — someone who, because of God’s awakening grace, conforms his or her words and ways to the words and ways of Jesus. Or, you might say, as others have put it in the past, disciples of Jesus are themselves “little Christs” ([Acts 26:28](#); [2 Corinthians 1:21](#)).

Jonathan Parnell

And He said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (ESV).

A framework for the three key parts we find in the rest of the New Testament on what it means to be a disciple. These three parts include:

1. “following” Jesus (head)
2. “being changed” by Jesus through the Holy Spirit (heart)
3. “fishers of men” being committed to the mission of Christ (hands)

<https://discipleship.org/blog/>

A disciple is someone who believes in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, intentionally learns from Him, and strives to live more like Him. Discipleship is a widely-used word to describe a journey of spiritual growth. This growth happens as a person comes alongside another to witness to them, pray with them, study the Bible with them, and fellowship with them.

My family were not Christians. We often attended our local Anglican church at Christmas and Easter. My father's parents had been Baptist Christians but died before I was born. My mother's parents were Anglican and Roman Catholic. My Roman Catholic grandmother was still alive, but not practising.

I went to a church school where we sang a hymn each day. I began to be drawn to God when I was 9. I had a class teacher whom I did not like, and who was not a Christian. But his father had been a Christian minister. I never met his father, but his witness was mediated through his unbelieving son. For when his son, my teacher, talked about his father, and his father's values, I thought, 'Whatever his father had, I want'. So I told my parents that I wanted to start going to church every Sunday. My mother was ill at the time, so my father kindly agreed to take me to the local Presbyterian church, which he did for about three months. After that, I went off each Sunday on my own.

Well-used Bibles

I remember my first Sunday School lesson. The teacher told us that God did not like Bibles that were not well used. I had a pristine Bible so I took it home and scribbled in the margins, and loosened a few pages, thinking that God would be pleased with me!

Perhaps as a response to this fit of church-going, my parents decided to have me baptised when I was 10. My two older brothers had been baptised as babies, but my parents had not got around to organising it when I was born.

A few years later my brother was heading off to university to study medicine. We took him to his residential college, where he was a share a room with another student. We opened the door, and this student was sitting on his bed, reading his Bible. He was a theological student, from the country. He was very embarrassed and put his Bible away very quickly. I do not know his name. This had a deep effect on me. I had heard the Bible read in church, but did not know that you could read the Bible on your own. So I began a strenuous program of daily Bible reading, though I found it very difficult to understand.

The same year Billy Graham came to do an evangelistic mission [the famous 1959 Crusade] in Melbourne. The parents of a friend from school invited me to go with them on the final day at the MCG. So I went, and found it very moving. I thought I was already a Christian, so I made a re-commitment. I received follow-up material from the Crusade, which I read carefully.

By this time I had moved to the Anglican church in which I had been baptised. I soon began attending church three times a Sunday, became a server at communion services, joined the choir, and played the piano for Sunday School, and learned to play the pipe organ as well. By the age of 14, I felt called to ordained ministry and thought I was a Christian. My mother gave me a copy of the biography of Peter Marshall, Chaplain to the Senate in the USA, to encourage me.

I had very high standards of daily prayer in the morning, at lunchtime at school, and at night, continued my daily Bible reading, and disciplined myself not to laugh at dirty jokes. My nickname at school was 'Pury', for Puritanical! I tried hard to live as a Christian, even though I was well aware of my daily failures and sins.

Nice People

I thought that Christians were very nice people, friendly and loving, and welcoming of eccentrics and difficult people. I loved going to church. I thought that if I could live this way, I would also be a Christian.

We had a liberal chaplain at school, who attempted to make Christianity acceptable by explaining away the Bible miracles. [Elijah had some kero under his mantle, and this is how he called down fire on his sacrifice ... Jesus walked on a sand-bar, not on water etc]. I found his explanations

harder to believe than the miracles themselves! I began putting the letters AMDG [Ad Maioram Dei Gloriam: 'to the greater glory of God'] at the top of my school essays, to the confusion and consternation of my teachers. I fear that very few of those essays brought any glory to God! I continued to want to be ordained.

I was converted in my last year at school. I was visiting a church [Holy Trinity Williamstown] to play the organ for a Sunday because the regular organist was on leave. The minister, John Moroney, was also away that Sunday, so Harrie Scott Simmons was filling in for him. We both happened to live in the same part of Melbourne, so travelled home in the train together. He soon worked out I was not yet a Christian, so invited me to his home.

The Gospel

Harrie was an Anglican minister, who had worked as a faith missionary with Amy Carmichael at the Dohnavur mission in south India, then as a chaplain at Vellore Hospital, and as a chaplain at Lushington School. He had just returned home, suffering from amoebic dysentery, and had begun to work as Chaplain at Malvern Grammar. I visited him after school on the 3rd June, 1963; he opened his Bible, explained the gospel, invited me to respond, and converted me in 20 minutes! Praise God!

He then met with me once a week for 3 years, to pray with me, disciple me, answer my questions, help me with my problems, and show me how to live as a Christian. What great generosity! He was a gifted personal evangelist and counsellor and had a large number of 'laddies' whom he met with regularly and prayed for constantly. He seemed to see someone each afternoon after school, and each evening. And he was a great intercessor. Once you were on his prayer list, he would pray for you regularly, and would not remove you from his list, even if he lost contact with you.

It was my privilege to preach at his funeral in 1999, and St James' Glen Iris was full of men to whom Harrie had ministered. He had a wonderful combination of high standards, and deep compassion and understanding when we fell short. Harrie had a deep love of classical music, and an outrageous sense of humour. He wrote poetry, developed expertise in Egyptology, and had an attractive simplicity of life. He truly was a 'Father in Israel' to many. His life, ministry and prayers are still bearing fruit.

After I was converted I thought that I should put any idea of going into ordained ministry out of my mind. However the idea came back within six months, and Harrie was instrumental in nurturing me towards training at Ridley College under Dr Leon Morris,

and then being ordained as an Anglican in 1970.

After I was converted I tried to think who had been praying for my conversion. Neither the Presbyterian church nor the Anglican church I had attended were evangelical. I had a great-aunt who was a believer, and no doubt she prayed for us. God must have used the general prayers of people who did not know me, but who were praying for conversions!

An Encouraging Life

I was recently asked what it was like to live a long time as a Christian. I said that it was very encouraging! My confidence and faith in God and Christ had grown, as had my confidence in the Bible and the gospel. The atoning death of the cross was still the heart of my message. I had seen God answer 30-year and 50-year long-term prayers! I could now see that even when I thought everything was a mess, God had been working for good. I had learned that God could use my weaknesses, as well as my gifts. I had learned that God's ways were best, and to trust his goodness. I still see new truths when I read the Bible, and am praying that I would continue to grow as a Christian until the day of my death.

Praise our God for his grace and mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ, and for his Spirit-inspired Scriptures.

Peter Adam is formerly principal of Ridley College Melbourne, and vicar of St. Jude's. (<https://au.thegospelcoalition.org/article/conversion-christ-peter-adam/>)

Global Discipleship Renewal Ministries

We need Volunteers / Missionaries

- ⇒ To start bible study group in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Darwin.
- ⇒ To develop ministry in eight regions: Africa, Asia. The Caribbean, Central America, Europe, North America, South America, and Oceania.
- ⇒ To develop ministry in north India.
- ⇒ Volunteers: to compile newsletter and write new articles.
- ⇒ To train, equip, mentor a disciple to be a disciple and make disciples.
- ⇒ To develop discipleship training materials.
- ⇒ To sell and translate GPS book in other languages.

Look at the field

Germany:

Total area: 357,021 km²

Population: 82,175,700 (2015)

Literacy: 100%

Official languages: German

GDP (PPP) per capita: \$48,111
(2016 est.)

Life expectancy: 80 years

Religions:

32% Protestant,

31% Catholic,

30% Agnostic Atheist,

5% Muslim,

4% other religions



Pray for 16 federation states. God has to raise one family or contacts in each state.

Pray for the churches to raise to this occasion to stand truth and proclaim the gospel in midst of opposition.

Pray for a second reformation to make the Church culturally relevant and Biblically sound

Pray for a spiritual awakening among the predominantly lost youth.

Pray for wisdom, compassion, and provision as the nation receives and assimilates historic numbers of migrants.

Mother to the Motherless: Amy Carmichael's Legacy Review: 'A Chance to Die' by Elisabeth Elliot

After 11 hours of travel down the east coast of India, I finally arrived.

In reality, I began this journey 24 years ago when I first read *A Chance to Die*, Amy Carmichael's biography written by another missionary, Elisabeth Elliot. That book about Carmichael's life, ministry, and most of all, devotion to God—her "Unseen Leader"—helped set my life's course. It portrays a life seeking to trust and obey the Lord through every twist and turn.

Carmichael, born in Ireland in 1867, had a "propensity for upsetting things," usually when she felt her way was the right way and even if it wasn't the usual way. Saturated in godly influence, beginning with her Presbyterian family, Carmichael's young life was shaped by the Keswick movement and Hudson Taylor's China Inland Mission. At age 25, she set sail for the East, giving her life to sharing Jesus in Japan, China, Ceylon, and finally India, where she spent the final 55 years of her life.

Dohnavur Fellowship

During her first five years in South India, Carmichael diligently worked to learn the local language (Tamil), connect with local women, and use every opportunity to share the Bible. She

also learned of the *devadasi* (temple prostitute) system of enslaving little girls, but she initially couldn't gain access to them.

These were girls who had been dedicated to Hindu temples for various reasons: to fulfill a vow or family custom, to settle a social issue, because their poor mothers could find no suitable husband for them, or because the family lacked funds to pay for funeral rituals. As a result, little girls became currency. And knowledge of this system became a "sword in Amy's missionary soul."

In 1901, despite attempts to frighten girls in the temple by calling Carmichael a "child-stealing *amma*" ("mother"), a 7-year-old girl named Preena fled from a Hindu temple and found Carmichael. Within three months of Preena "adopting" Carmichael as her mother, four more children came into Carmichael's care. To them, she became known as "Amma," and the "overwhelming desire to save the children became a fire in her bones."

The overwhelming desire to save the children became a fire in her bones.

Eventually, Amma worked to establish the Dohnavur Fellowship. Near India's southernmost point, this became the home for a peculiar yet God-woven family of women and girls. Later, rescued boys joined as well, along with missionaries from India, Ireland, England, Scotland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Germany, and Switzerland. By the time of Amma's death in 1951, the Dohnavur family included nearly 900 souls.

Things as They Are

Through *A Chance to Die*, Elisabeth Elliot introduces her readers to a vibrant and driven woman who battled evil forces and cultural norms on two continents. It also reveals the toll her intense personality sometimes took on relationships. It's a book that demonstrates Carmichael's incredible strength but doesn't shy away from her weaknesses and humanity.

One such weakness was likely Carmichael's relationship to the local church. Ecclesiological matters didn't concern her much. She set the family rules of Dohnavur around believing in the Bible's verbal inspiration, trusting God's power to handle his Enemy, and maintaining family loyalty. Carmichael loved learning. She devoured the biographies of missionaries and books on a great many subjects. She also loved writing, producing a mountain of poetry, songs, and more than

35 books.

One of her earliest and most controversial books, *Things as They Are*, had the missionary community in an uproar due to its honest telling of the unglamorous side of missionary work. Carmichael wrote honestly about her difficulties and struggles. While *A Chance to Die* highlights her overarching story and the birth of a tremendous ministry amid darkness, it's *Things as They Are* that truly spotlights, well, things as they are.

For many years, Carmichael fought for the truth and love of Jesus to be known across South India. The Dohnavur Fellowship rescued thousands of children from earthly suffering and eternal torment. She held fast to the "Pattern Shewn," the principles she believed God gave her for her family. Although Amma's adamant adherence to her vision occasionally produced conflicts within the missionary community and caused some to part ways with Dohnavur, her family loved her.

In October 1931, Amma had a terrible fall that left her partially bedridden until June 1948. Later, she suffered another fall that made her practically immobile. On January 18, 1951, Amma went to be with Jesus from her bed in the main bungalow of Dohnavur. Still today, the community of the Dohnavur Fellowship expresses great affection and gratitude for their Amma.

Hearing Their Cry

Twenty-four years ago, I first read the story of Carmichael and the Dohnavur Fellowship. Carmichael's life, lived on "a razor edge between faith and presumption," continues to inspire me to pursue trust in and obedience to God in all things. Through her story, I too "heard 'the cry of the heathen,' and could not rest," eventually following that cry to India.

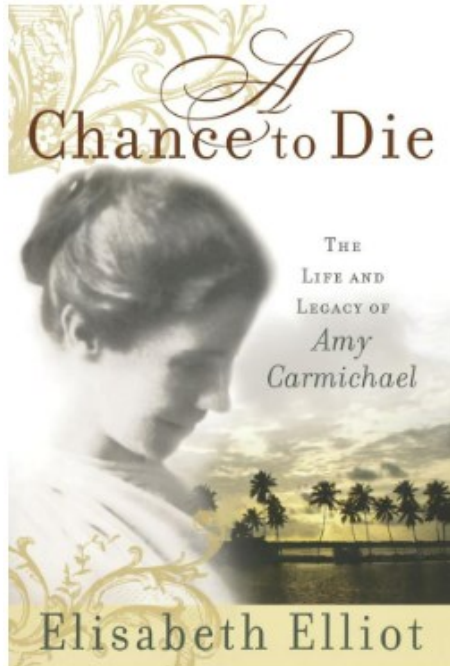
Today, most of the buildings at Dohnavur are no longer in use. The population on the compound is aging quickly, and the peacocks seem to outnumber the children. Only about 20 girls live in the residence, and everyone else is very senior.

As I wandered the grounds, the older sisters in their beautiful purple and blue saris would stop to say hello and ask how I had come to Dohnavur. Then they would immediately tell me their names and say, "I came here as a 4-day-old (or 14-day-old, or 8-day-old) baby." They would fondly recall childhoods spent in Dohnavur before being sent out for a time of study and work. However, each returned to answer God's call for service at Dohnavur. It's a call to forsake all and live a life of trust and obedience.

This is Amy Carmichael's true legacy, a legacy of people changed forever through trust in Jesus and obedience to follow Amma's Unseen Leader, even if it means

service and sacrifice in the darkest corners of the earth. I pray that as you read *A Chance to Die* you will hear the "cry of the heathen" and follow it to wherever God is not known, whether that be to the one sitting next to you or those halfway around the world.

Sydney Dixon (PhD student, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary) is a missionary who spent five years living in Eastern Europe and who has been serving in South Asia since 2015. [Review: 'A Chance to Die' by Elisabeth Elliot](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/review/a-chance-to-die-by-elisabeth-elliott/) ([thegospelcoalition.org](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org))



What Is a Disciple?

When Jesus speaks we listen.

That makes sense, right? Jesus is the one to whom all authority in heaven and earth has been given (Matthew 28:18). Jesus is the one of whom it will be said, forever, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” (Revelation 5:12). He’s the one to whom every knee will bow (Philippians 2:10) — the one on account of whom all the tribes of the earth will wail (Revelation 1:7), and from whom the fury of God’s wrath will be executed (Revelation 19:15).

Jesus has that kind of supremacy — so what he says matters.

And beyond that, we’ve been united to Jesus by faith (Romans 6:5), made alive in him by grace (Ephesians 2:4–5), counted righteous in him because of his work (Galatians 2:16). Jesus, in all of his supremacy, is also our shepherd — so we know his voice (John 10:27).

Therefore, by virtue of his power and grace, because he is the Sovereign and our Savior, when he tells his church to make disciples of all nations, we really want to do that.

Toward a Definition

Jesus commissions us to “go” — be-

cause of his authority — “and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19–20).

This raises a fundamental question, though — one that even takes priority over the how-to’s of discipleship. What does it actually mean to be a “disciple” of Jesus? If we are going to make disciples, we need to know what that is.

The standard definition of “disciple” (noun) is someone who adheres to the teachings of another. It is a follower or a learner. It refers to someone who takes up the ways of someone else. Applied to Jesus, a disciple is someone who learns from him to live like him — someone who, because of God’s awakening grace, conforms his or her words and ways to the words and ways of Jesus. Or, you might say, as others have put it in the past, disciples of Jesus are themselves “little Christs” ([Acts 26:28](#); [2 Corinthians 1:21](#)).

A disciple of Jesus is a worshiper, a servant, and a witness.

The four Gospels give us the definitive portrait of Jesus in his life on earth, and if we really want to know what it means to be his disciple, the Gospels are likely where we start. In particular, John's Gospel shows us three complementary perspectives on what it means to follow Jesus, each patterned after Jesus himself. Building off of John's profile, we could say that a disciple of Jesus is a worshiper, a servant, and a witness.

Disciple Means Worshiper

Most fundamentally, to follow Jesus means to worship him exclusively. This is at the heart of Jesus's ministry on earth. As he told the woman at the well, the Father is seeking true worshipers — not faux worshipers, but true worshipers — those who worship him in spirit and truth (John 4:23–24). Which means, as it did in her case, we shouldn't be so quick to change the subject. If we will follow Jesus, we must worship God — through Jesus, because he is our Mediator (John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5), and Jesus himself, because he is God (John 10:30; 20:28–29).

This is the fundamental perspective of a disciple because it is more ultimate than anything else we are or do, and most distinctive in our context. As far as ultimate, worshiping Jesus — gladly reflecting back to him the radiance of his worth — is the

greatest act for any creature. As far as context, nothing will irritate our pluralistic society more than being an exclusive worshiper of Jesus. Lots of people are cool with Jesus (at least their notion of him), and even following the "ways" of Jesus, when it leaves out the exclusivity part. Jesus the Moral Teacher, the Nice Guy, the Judge-Not-Lest-You-Be-Judged Motivational Speaker — that Jesus is everybody's homeboy. But that is not the real Jesus. That's a manmade figure — a far cry from the portrait Jesus gives of himself.

To follow Jesus, to be his disciple, doesn't mean community involvement and the veneer of tolerance. It means, mainly, first and central, to worship him — with joy at the heart. Making disciples of Jesus means gathering his worshipers.

Disciple Means Servant

John shows another picture of the Jesus we're to worship, and this time he is kneeling before his disciples to wash their feet (John 13:5). I know, it doesn't sound right, especially when we think of him as the object of our exclusive praise. It didn't sound right to Peter either, until Jesus said, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me" (John 13:8). But Jesus is a servant. He came to earth not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as the rescue for sinners (Mark 10:45).

And as a servant, Jesus says of his disciples, to his disciples, “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” (John 13:14–15). In one sense, the posture of servant should characterize Jesus’s disciples on all fronts. But in another sense, being a servant like Jesus has a particular focus on disciples serving disciples. It’s a family thing. “Let us do good to everyone,” Paul said, “and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10).

This one-another angle is where Jesus takes us in giving “a new commandment,” just after he washed the Twelve’s feet: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another” (John 13:34; see also 1 John 3:23). In fact, it is this love that disciples have for one another that identifies us as disciples of Jesus to a watching world (John 13:35), and even assures us of saving faith (1 John 3:14).

To be a disciple of Jesus means to serve like him. It means to serve, primarily, by looking at your brothers and sisters and going low in acts of love, even when it’s an inconvenience to yourself, even when it flip-flops the world’s social order and expectations. Making disciples of Jesus means making servants who love one another.

Disciple Means Witness

John gives us another helpful picture of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. This time it comes in the commission of Jesus, when he says of his disciples, to his disciples, “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you” (John 20:21; see also John 17:18). This means that Jesus’s disciples are on a mission. It means, in the broadest sense, that they are missionaries, that they are envisioned and empowered to step into this world (not of it, but sent into it) as his witnesses (Acts 1:8).

Jesus was sent for a purpose — to reveal God and redeem sinners (John 1:14, 12) — and he set his face like flint to see it accomplished (Luke 9:51; Isaiah 50:7). We too, as his disciples, filled by his Spirit, are sent for a purpose — to tell his good news (Romans 10:14–17).

To be a disciple of Jesus means to point people to him. It means to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love so that others would know him and worship him. It means, in other words, that we gladly seek more worshipers-servants-missionaries. Which is to say, a disciple of Jesus makes disciples of Jesus, as Jesus tells us to (Matthew 28:18–20). And, of course, when Jesus speaks we listen.

Article by: Jonathan Parnell, Pastor, Minneapolis, Minnesota [What Is a Disciple? | Desiring God](#)



Call to inherit the nations:

God called Abraham - and promised to bless all the nations through him! Through one man God wanted to bring blessings to all nations.

King David echoed the same, focussing on the messianic king, in Psalm in Ps. 2:8 : “God will give the nations as inheritance”. God’s promises are fulfilled in Jesus Christ who is the descendant of Abraham and David, to bring all nations to his kingdom which is an everlasting kingdom through Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ has given the command “to make disciples of nations”. As Jesus Christ inherited the nations from his father, we have become his brother through His work on the cross and resurrection, to inherit the nations by proclaiming his gospel to all nations.

The Global DRM has taken Jesus’ final words as Global vision: : “Being disciples and making disciples of all nations". We need you to disciple the nations and bring the nations to the grand finale of worshipping Him in heaven with all nations.

Global Vision: “Being disciples and making disciples of all nations"

Global Mission:

- To train disciples to shape their life to be Gospel focussed, grace oriented and mission minded
- To teach, nurture, mentor and equip disciples to make disciples in their own nations.
- Disciples to be a blessing to nations, church and society by developing tomorrow’s leaders.
- To establish DRM in 170 nations with the help of local disciples in partnership with the church and Christian organisations.