

Faith2Share Depth Discipleship consultation

24-27 October 2016,
Accra, Ghana

Context and Need

Faith2Share has been organising Depth Life Discipleship consultations and events since 2012 and in 2013 we held our first two Discipleship consultations in Africa: one in Kenya and one in Nigeria. Since then we have been in constant communication with our members and partners in Africa (including plans for engaging North Africa) and the consistent feedback we have received has underlined the importance of such programmes both for the ministry of our members and for the wider church and mission community. In April 2016 we received a request from Torchbearers Mission Incorporated, an indigenous Ghanaian mission agency, to run such a programme in Ghana, following their participation in the 2013 consultation in Nigeria. The following objectives were identified:

- To create a platform for the churches, missionary organisations and para-church organisations to showcase their role in the work of cross-cultural mission and Christian discipleship;
- To develop a Christian mind set and identify existing resources for discipleship in homes, communities and the marketplace across West Africa;
- To develop and equip responsible leaders in the Church and the marketplace with passion for mission and discipleship;
- To create a platform for forming partnerships and collaboration to reach the unreached across West Africa.



In addition to Torchbearers Mission, Ghana Evangelical Missions Association (GEMA) also joined us as partners in planning and organising this consultation, thereby ensuring that delegates came from every region of Ghana (including remote areas of Northern Ghana) and that relevant local resource people contributed to the programme.

In the end, 56 participants came to a consultation venue in Abokobi, Accra, including 20 women – the greatest number of women we have had at such an event! The majority of delegates came from Ghana itself, but a small number also joined us from Nigeria, Togo, Liberia, Sierra Leone and

Network Members

AIMS Sri Lanka, Anglican Relief and Development Fund Australia, Antioch Mission, AsiaCMS, Asian Outreach Alliance, BORN, Church Army Africa, Church of Nigeria Missionary Society, CMS Africa, CMS Australia, CMS, CMS Ireland, Friends Missionary Prayer Band, Global Teams, IGOSA, Indian Evangelical Mission, Isa-e Church, Interserve India, iServe Africa, Lifeway Mission International, Mahanaim Ministries, Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association, Mission Together Africa, Mission Together Inc. (Canada), MSF International, NAMS Network, National Mission Commission of Nepal, New Life for India, New Zealand CMS, OMF International, PMI, SAMS Ireland, SAMS USA, SOMA UK, The Sheepfold Ministries, Torchbearers Mission

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Guinea. The full list of participants can be found in Appendix 1 on page 7.



Programme

Following the pattern established at our previous consultations, the programme relied heavily on local resource people and allowed plenty of opportunity for relationship-building and mutual learning through discussion and interactive group work. Although the main working language was English, French and local languages (especially Ga and Asante Twi) were also used throughout the consultation to ensure that all participants could contribute fully and express themselves fluently. The programme was also adapted to adequately address those issues which are of greatest importance for the West Africa region. Significant issues raised by participants included the persistent negative influence of corruption in society at large and also in the church, the breakdown of family life and the increasing presence of Islam in addition to traditional African religions.

The first half-day was devoted to building relationships within the group, most of whom had not met each other before, and clarifying their expectations (and anticipated outcomes) for the next three days of intensive dialogue. Pastor Enoch Nyador, the President of GEMA, led the first Bible Study focussing on several questions, including who is a disciple, whether Jesus himself was a disciple of God the Father (as seen in John 15:15), and asking delegates to reflect on who is continuing to disciple them now. Pastor Enoch also set the scene for the consultation by inviting everyone present to listen and ask questions, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the issues discussed.

Discipleship in the Family, Clan and Tribe

Day 2 focused on how Christian discipleship takes place in the family and what implications it has for relationships within marriage, the upbringing of children, and how we view our extended family and tribal identity. Mariam Forson Agbo (right) gave us an excellent introduction to this topic doing a Bible Study and drawing on her own experience of becoming a follower of Christ after coming from an Islamic background. Mariam reminded us that we should start by examining ourselves before teaching others and just as Genesis 18:17-19 shows, God's reaching out



to the nations starts with the family, or even a single person. She put it so well by saying: “When we want to talk about family, we will not finish” – and the rest of the day showed how engaged all participants became in discussing discipleship in the context of family.

Arc Titus Kumapayi from Church of Nigeria Missionary Society addressed the topic of Character Formation for Christian Families looking at the book of Daniel and Heb. 10:24. In particular, he reminded us that a Christian marriage should have the following components: - to be committed to the relationship; - to be considerate towards one another; - to be concerned about one another; to be caring and close to one another; - to show compassion and be complementary. Titus was joined by his wife Margaret Kumapayi who shared the principles that they have learnt as a couple and are now teaching others, either through family counselling sessions or fellowship programmes for men and women they run in Ibadan, Nigeria.

During the morning participants broke up into groups to look at different topics. The three chosen for specific consideration were (a) Christian marriage; (b) Children and youth; and (c) Family, Tribe and race.

In the afternoon a panel of three people helped us to discuss what resources are already available in Ghana and elsewhere in West Africa for doing discipleship with individuals and families.

Sampson and Janet Dorkunor shared about the work with school children and what resources they have developed and are using in Ghana. Pastor Prosper Kumado talked about his work in rural communities where there are no established churches, using vocational skills training and literacy education as platforms for engaging those communities. His real-life examples of how fetish-worshippers turned to Christ generated many questions and a very lively discussion among the participants! Margaret Kumapayi talked about her work in the area of child evangelism, relating to parents of those children that go through primary and secondary education and the need to equip teachers to be effective disciplers. Twice a year Margaret and Titus Kumapayi also run Family Harmony Fellowship training courses for couples.



What we have learnt from running previous consultations is the importance of providing times for prayer and for sharing individual stories, and this consultation was no exception. Participants formed prayer groups each afternoon and in fact they asked whether prayer times could be extended should similar training sessions be organised in Ghana again. The stories that people shared ranged from pioneering work among some of the most unreached people groups in Ghana like the Gonjas and the Nanumba, among the urban poor in Monrovia and young people in Freetown who were affected by the recent Ebola crisis, reaching out to Togolese people living in Western Ghana or planting churches in Northern Togo and Burkina Faso that have to meet under trees as they do not have funds to establish buildings. The common thread of many stories was the real sense of relying on God for daily provision or even using agriculture to build self-support, focus on relationship-building and learning local languages and cultures to be effective in mission

and discipleship and how important it is to act as Christians, rather than simply focussing on proclamation. As one delegate put it: “People interpret your life as Gospel, and not what you say”.

Discipleship in the workplace

Day 3 began with a Bible Study led by Joseph D. MacCarthy focussed on the story from the book of Daniel where three Jewish leaders were accused of disobeying the king (Dan. 3:8-18). We talked about the issue of Christian character and integrity and the fact that the work place is a unique opportunity to live as Christians.

Fred Forson gave an excellent presentation on Character Formation for work and professional life, based on the research he has done but also on his experience of working in the corporate world. He focussed on how in professional life we need to have character, competence and connections to achieve success and what practical steps this process entails. This session was followed by group work discussing Micro-Finance Projects, the role of Christians in business and Business as Mission models.

Later in the day another panel discussed what resources are needed to bring discipleship to the marketplace. Margaret Kumapayi distinguished between the human resources that she uses in her school (teachers, students and parents) and material resources (vision, time, prayer, different



training opportunities and internal procedures for due diligence) so that the school children grow to be godly, well-performing and morally sound. Enoch Nyador presented business training models designed by Economic Development Services International (an initiative of GEMA) and

empowering church members to succeed either in business (using the training called Mission Resource Int) or in their chosen professions. One example he mentioned was setting prayer meetings in clinics for nurses and doctors. Hyde Appiah spoke about the particular tool developed in Ghana for the working environment called “Empower to influence” and seven paradigms of correcting understanding of what worship is and what work is.

Discipleship in the community

Our final day together started with a Bible Study led by Albert S Ocran based on Matt. 18:1-35 and focussing on how community and fellowship are a reflection of the Kingdom of God. In particular, Rev Albert emphasised how the obligation to proclaim the good news, the establishment of a worshipping community and the essential nature of obedience, are all interrelated. Rev Albert asked people to pray individually, as couples, with other people from their organisations and finally for those communities where they work.

Femi Adeleye made a very powerful presentation on Character formation for transforming communities using the book of Ephesians as a blueprint of how a whole community can be transformed by the message of Christian faith. He reminded us that transformation is not about projects or statistics, it is about people and impact and having the right character is key for anyone who wants to be involved in community development work. In his own words, Matthew 4:19 (follow me and I will *make you*) precedes Matthew 28:19 (go and *make disciples* of all nations) – without being formed in the image of Christ we cannot hope to transform anyone else, let alone the whole community.

Richard Toxla then presented a very interactive session on what resources are available for community transformation. Richard spoke at length about six areas of human existence (spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual, physical and environmental) and the fact that community transformation should produce joy, peace, love, unity, faith and trust in God, prosperity and harmony as well as concern for the environment.



To summarise our four days together, Mrs Maria Ojo from Nigeria but working in Ghana and Rev Elkanah Thomas from Sierra Leone did a joint presentation which they divided in three parts: appreciation of the consultation and the contents of the training; several observations as a form of feedback and comments on how this event can be best followed up in the future. The consultation concluded with a corporate act of worship and commitment, led by a local music group as we prepared to return to our own ministry contexts. The record of all discussions is available as Appendix 2 on page 8.

Outcomes

This was our second Depth Discipleship consultation in West Africa and, whereas the event in 2013 was largely attended by delegates from Nigeria, this time our focus was firmly on the nation of Ghana and neighbouring countries like Togo or Liberia. We rejoice in the fact that thanks to our partnership with Torchbearers Mission, GEMA and the Anglican Province of West Africa, we had a very good number of key mission and church leaders and we managed to attract a significant number of women. But the most significant outcomes from the consultation are in terms of the change of outlook in the individual mission movements represented. In the feedback provided at the consultation and subsequently several leaders spoke of a renewed commitment to whole-life discipleship, the need to foster mentoring relationships with younger leaders and the challenge of dealing with issues such as corruption in the church and society at large.



Budget and Funding

The consultation cost came to \$5,410 of which the participants contributed \$1,644 (or 30% of costs) and Faith2Share paid the remaining \$3,766 with the generous support of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Wuerttemberg and The Torrs Charitable Trust. Faith2Share also paid three travel bursaries to bring participants to Accra from Monrovia and Freetown (a total of £900).

The quotations below give a flavour of some of the feedback we have received.

"I came expecting a talk shop like other conferences but the programme has challenged me and taught me a lot"

"I regret that my husband is not here with me for this wonderful programme"

"I wish more people are informed about this programme and the teaching"

"We don't just make converts and leave them but we should also ensure that they are disciples, therefore every church member should become a disciple"



"Being a Christian means being like Christ Jesus, transforming individuals and communities"

"I must be more intentional about one to one disciple making"

"The most important thing I learnt is that our character reflects what whatever we do, so we should always lead lives that reflect Christ-likeness in us, we are the salt and the light"

"Every Christian is an ambassador of Christ."

"To be Christ-like we must practise what we teach"

Appendix 1 – Names of Participants

1. Mrs Edem Adafia
2. Rev Sitsofe Adafia
3. Pastor Forson S. Agbo
4. Mrs Mariam Forson Agbo
5. Pastor Hayford Ahiabo
6. Anastassia Amankwa
7. Rev John Anafo
8. Mrs Bernice Anchor
9. Mr Stepehen Apau
10. Rev Daniel Hyde Appiah
11. Evang. Appiah
12. Mr Oscar Asugbe
13. Mr Vitus Attenang
14. Mr Jerry Ayehu-Fiavi
15. Rev Benjamin Ayitey
16. Pastor Amos Bitum
17. Apostle S.T. Debrah
18. Rev Lawrence Kwaw Donkor
19. Pastor Sampson Dorkunor
20. Mrs Janet Dorkunor
21. Mrs Patience Dzobo
22. Pastor Sam Dzobo
23. Rev Canon Anthony Eiwuley
24. Alfred Sona Gomez Guinea
25. Mr Fred Forson
26. Mrs Juliana Fuseini
27. Mr Paul Fuseini
28. Mr Joseph Gumah
29. Pastor Ishmael Adjei Kofi
30. Rev Richard Kpehe Liberia
31. Mrs Paulina Kumado
32. Pastor Prosper Kumado
33. Margaret O Kumapayi Nigeria
34. Titus O Kumapayi Nigeria
35. Apostle Moses Quarm Kristo
36. Mrs Georgina MacCarthy
37. Rev Joseph D MacCarthy
38. Rev Ray Mensah
39. Pastor John Nartey
40. Rev Mrs Agnes Nimako-Boateng
41. Ngozi Nwosu Togo
42. Pastor Enoch Nyador
43. Mr Seth Nyampong
44. Mrs Victoria Nyampong
45. Mrs Bernice Nyindam
46. Pastor Kingsley Nyindam
47. Rev Albert S. Ocran
48. Mr Ebenezer Ofori Osei Bonsu
49. Mrs Francisca Ofori
50. Mrs Maria Ojo
51. Mr Oyeyemi Ojo
52. Mr Isaac Oppong
53. Mrs Theresa Parbey
54. Mr Yenge Samuel
55. Rev Elkanah Thomas Sierra Leone
56. Mr Richard Toxla

Appendix 2**Working Group: Christian Marriage**

The issue of the basis of entering into Christian marriage – this means that counselling should be proper and extensive, this can help people to understand that it should not be treated lightly or to rush into for position or status. We supported the presenter in her statement that (1) the entry point is prayer not just dreams and visions, (2) look at the qualities and characters, here it was said when look at the qualities and character of our partner we must look at ours also to see if it can merge. Character like fruit of the Spirit and this should be transparent, our partner should know and see who we are. Transparency also in communication and action. We must be convinced that our partner is a believer or covenant child. We also looked at the will of God as the first area knowing where God is taking you to. It was also said that marriage is a missing fill, that is what is lacking in the partner is what God is bringing the other partner to fill.

Taking a look at how the world is going a concern was raised by Janet Dorkunor on what the marriage life of the next generation will be like. She suggested that a counselling forum should be established and lots of materials be made available for them. It was also suggested that we should make sure our children have right relationship with God at very early age so that they can grow with it and hold to it into adulthood. There are challengers raised by many concerning discipling the community where people are attached to and this has to do with traditions, culture and customs, especially in the area of marriage and often the Scripture is used to defend it, e.g. the women who married seven brothers when each of the brothers had died. It was accepted that Christ is above all culture and we are sent so that Christ can reign supreme, we must take our time to let Christ take roots, we must understand the culture of the people and not to ignore it. Some cultures have existed for hundreds of years and we must embrace cultural reconciliation or contextualization and when it comes to working cross-culturally we must know it is contextualization without compromise. We must always seek the will of God and we must support one another in prayer.

Working Group: Youth and Children

Children and youth are leaders of today and tomorrow.

The strategy of one person intentionally discipling another person (exponential disciple-making).

Intentional training of the youth.

Annual children or youth mission camps.

Children and youth in missions, youth groups go for missions.

A lot of shallowness in today's youth.

Innovative ways of attracting the youth in the technological era.

Design materials that young people can relate to.

Stick to the Master strategy – make disciples.

Start talk shows (discipline, good morals) for students.

Encourage our youth to accept service postings in deprived areas.

Tailor-made church programs for target groups.

Teachers as evangelists.

Focusing on educational institutions as a mission field.

ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International) practices.

Working Group: Business as Mission.

How do we achieve that?

- Declaration of our identity as Christians as employees, employers or investors.
- Effective utilization of our time.
- Cannot afford to be lazy or complacent.
- Be diligent, understanding theology of work.
- Comprehensive training for missionaries and Christians in general.
- Becoming proper disciples.
- Identification and utilization of our spiritual gifts at our places of work.
- Leading righteous and holy lives in our places of work.
- Certain types of business are not to be done by Christians.
- Quality businesses must be promoted by the Church so that missions can flourish.

What is the price (or cost) we are to pay?

- Ridiculed by fellow Christians and other people.
- Fellow Christians might force us to compromise our own Christian principles.
- Delay or non-payment for the work done.
- Misplaced priorities.
- Christians want to be rich but don't want to pay the price of smart and hard work.
- Long-suffering, unfaithfulness.

Working Group: Micro-Finance projects.

We learnt that "micro" means small and "macro" is big money or resource in our hands.

Every project needs money so that it can be carried out.

We must look around us to see a way to generate money to meet a project.

There are different fundraising methods but we must choose godly ways.

Have a business plan and write it down.

Business can start small but it must grow and make profit. Move from one level to another.

Be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound).

One must be reliable, committed, honest, caring and transparent.

There must be guarantors for those who want to collect loans from the group or start an investment club. Welfare Insurance Scheme.

As you understand the needs in your area start small, e.g. give people fowls or livestock.

Working Group: Family, Tribe, Race.

Why do we disciple family, tribe and race?

From the biblical point of view, God called Abram (Abraham). Jesus Christ told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come upon them before they go out. The covenant model tells us that God starts with individuals, in other words with families, tribes and race.

How do we disciple family, tribe and race?

Using the story of Abraham as a template to discuss discipleship in family looking at how he disciplined his wife, his servants, his nephew Lot and his son Isaac.

From the worldly point of view, the family is a prepared ground for discipleship of missionaries, irrespective of our calling: teaching in a family; - be a good example in a family; - good relationships with the members of the family and the community; - sharing of our belongings.

Tribe:

Doing discipleship among families in a tribe is a complex work that needs to be all-embracing. The missionary should not have denominational, religious or tribal biases.