

Releasing and Sending Indigenous Leaders Who Can Reproduce

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Questions About Releasing and Sending Indigenous Leaders

Key Questions to be Addressed:

Are we mandated biblically to release and send indigenous leaders?

Do we have a biblical model for releasing and sending indigenous leaders? If so, what is it?

Does it really matter if we release and send indigenous leaders, or can we simply multiply through the releasing and sending English speakers?

Should we be intentionally targeting indigenous leaders for training, releasing and sending?

Is there a process we should be following?

What are the key ingredients in the releasing of the indigenous leader?

How do we know when it is time to send the indigenous leader out?

How do we help indigenous leaders catch the vision of multiplying in other indigenous leaders? (ie cross-culturally)

What is our role and responsibility to the indigenous leaders we have trained, released, and sent after we have sent them?

I see these as key questions as we wrestle through how to multiply ourselves cross-culturally in the 21st Century. This paper seeks to ask the right questions and give some plausible answers based on present experience in the field and plans for the coming years. It should be noted that the lens that is being looked through is the multiplication of Jesus' strategy in the Latin American context. I do believe that the practical outworking of the principles discussed in this paper may not necessarily be true in other cultures. But the principles of training, releasing and sending indigenous leaders are cross-cultural.

Reproduction and the Multiplication Process

As I have been wrestling with the process of the reproduction and multiplication of indigenous leaders - there are five stages in the process:

1. Model

From the life of Christ: Jesus spent the first year or year and a half modeling what it meant to be fully devoted God lover He modeled a prayerful dependence on God the Father for each step in His ministry. (Luke 5:15,16; Mark 1:32-37; John 5:19-20,30; Sec. 45)

Principle: We need to first of all model the same prayerful dependence that Jesus modeled in God the Father and we must model being true Christ Followers.

Imitating: As we seek to imitate Jesus in Latin America our first priority is, *"to be a true disciple"* (The character of Christ)

Each team member in Latin America is first and foremost responsible to be a true Christ follower; actively pursuing an intimate relationship with the Father yielding to the process of transformation into the image of Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:29) Actively living the Sonlife: allowing Jesus to live in us and through us (Colossians 1:27; Galatians 2:20)

Our 1999 faith goals:

* All 14 team members consistently walking with God as true Christ followers. Actively devoting themselves to personal Bible study, accountability, prayer, giving and a local fellowship. (Acts 2:42-44). Serving as models to a watching world.

- 2 *staff* retreats (June and November)

- 24 regular team meetings twice a month.

Lessons learned: This time cannot be cut short in the process. Time is needed for the model ones life to be observed by others. The opportunity to move into the teaching and training step comes as a result of a consistent model of being a Christ Follower.

2. Select to Teach/Train

From the life of Christ: Jesus then selected those that he would spend the next several years teaching and training. Teaching and training them how to be prayerfully dependent on the - Father and how to be true Christ Followers, training begins: Mark 3:13-19; 6:12-16; Sec 53)

Principle: We need to intentionally be teaching and training those we are reproducing to be prayerfully dependent in God the Father as well as how to be a true Christ Follower.

Imitating: We are seeking to imitate Jesus in this area of teaching and training indigenous leaders; Making Disciples. (the priority of Christ)

Each team member in Latin America is actively involved in teaching and training indigenous leaders. Making disciples of indigenous leaders by intentionally investing their life in the lives of others, not only sharing the Good News, but our lives as well. (1 Thessalonians 2.8)

1999 faith goals:

- all 14 team members consistently involved in the making of disciples and imparting their lives to others.

- to invest our lives in the lives of 40 indigenous leaders this year.

This year we have four young men, Lisandro, Marco, Douglas and Saul, who began our two year internship program. These young indigenous leaders will be grounded' in the strategy foundations and healthy church material.

Lessons learned: This does not happen by accident. We must intentionally prioritize our lives and ministries to invest in indigenous leaders who will be able to reproduce in others.

3. Provide Opportunities to Experiment and Fail

From the life of Christ: During Jesus' stay in Capernaum He spent about a year welcoming His

disciples' participation and failures in the ministry. Most notably the story of the demoniac that would not leave at the disciple's word. (Matthew 17: 14-23; Sec. 87)

Principle: We must provide opportunities to experiment and room to fail for those we are multiplying in. They must sense the freedom to express *Jesus'* Strategy in a way that connects with the people they minister to.

Imitating: We are seeking to imitate *Jesus* in this area by providing opportunities to be involved in a local youth ministry, which is seeking to build a model.

Each team member is immersed in a local church youth ministry, actively working with the youth leadership of the church to produce a model that is reproducible in Latin America. (Hebrews 10:24,25)

1999 faith goals:

- all 14 team members consistently involved in a local youth ministry
- 6 solid youth ministry models lead by indigenous leadership in progress and up and running for others to observe. By direct, intentional and personal involvement in 10 local ministries.

Lessons learned: This is very hard but very much needed. It can be exasperating at times. Is this not what Jesus meant when He said, "*Are you still lacking understanding!*" in Matthew 17: 16. To allow people the freedom to fail is difficult but necessary in the learning process.

4. Releasing

From the life of Christ: After 2 1/2 years into *Jesus* ministry; He *releases* not only the twelve He has trained but those they have begun training; the 70 others. He releases them to go out on their own and exercise the God dependence that He has been teaching them. (Luke 10:14); Sec. 102)

Principle: We must *release* those we have multiplied in and allow them to exercise their prayerful dependence in God the Father.

Imitating: We are seeking to imitate Jesus in this area by releasing indigenous leaders in Costa Rica. Releasing them to train others in Christ's strategy.

We are working with churches in Costa Rica in the process of building a model, being available as a resource to the youth leaders of the church, visiting the ministry at least once a month to encourage, motivate, and equip.

1999 faith goals:

- to work with 5 other youth ministries in Costa Rica who have been through the strategy to help them build a model.
- to plant two new youth ministries (Carrag, June '99; Cachi, August '99)
- Strategy Seminars: 2 planned by us and 6 others for denominations
- UEMS (SEMP) January 12-16 in Guadalupe

Lessons learned: Releasing indigenous leaders is a great act of dependence and must be done prayerfully. We must rejoice with them as Jesus did in Luke 10, to answer questions and give counsel.

5. Sending

From the life of Christ: After 3 and a half 2 years of modeling, teaching, training, providing opportunities and releasing His followers; Jesus now sends His disciples out into the world to multiply; to reproduce - to make disciples who can make more disciples (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16: 15-18; 1 Corinthians 15:6; Sec. 181)

Principle: We must *send out* those we have multiplied in, to reproduce in other countries and cultures. It is our mandate.

Imitating: We are seeking to imitate Jesus in this area by sending indigenous leaders into other countries to train and reproduce in others.

We are impacting other Latin Countries by sending indigenous leaders to help build models in other countries.

1999 faith goals:

- to work in 4 other countries to build a model in each. (Columbia, Mexico, Chile, Honduras)
- Strategy Seminars; (Columbia, Mexico, Chile, Honduras, Guatemala and Ecuador) Country Leaders; to work with two guys from Columbia, Mexico, Chile⁷ and Honduras to build a model. Preparing them to be country leaders and Strategy trainers.

This year we will be *sending* Ernesto to spend the month of October in Mexico with Abraham to live with him. He will take him through the strategy and foundations material. He will study the life of Jesus with him and will help him for four weeks in his youth ministry

February we *received* our first two-year intern. Miguel will be with us for two years and then return to his homeland Ecuador. He will be trained in Jesus strategy and sent back to his own country to multiply

This year we will *be sending* Carlos, Jose Roberto and Jose' to Honduras three times. They will be training indigenous leaders in the strategy, foundations and healthy church material.

Lessons learned: Sending indigenous leaders is very tough. The biggest obstacles I see are money and systems. We must never abandon the indigenous leader but must maintain excellent communication and further training.

Conclusions

* We have biblical precedent to train, release and send indigenous leaders. Jesus and Paul both taught and modeled it for us.

* It has been well said, "*Begin with the end in mind*". We must begin this process with the end product in mind: A person who can reproduce others who can reproduce.

* Indigenous leaders will make better reproducers in their own culture and we must be committed to training, releasing and sending them to multiply

* We must be committed to training the indigenous leader to not only reproduce himself in his own culture but to go into other cultures as a reproducer

- * Indigenous leaders will make better reproducers in other culture because their culture is more similar to the culture of others than ours. (i.e. Youth Pastors, money and facilities)
- * We must be committed to reproducing spirit empowered indigenous leaders who possess both the character and priorities of Jesus Christ, not North American trainers with another color skin.
- * We must be careful to never abandon our indigenous leaders, which we have trained, released and sent. We must always act with loving support and encouragement.
- * We must allow indigenous leaders space to implement the Son's Strategy in the context of their culture and contextualize it.
- * We must harness the wealth of a nation in the area of youth ministry and *give it away* To sell it to the third world is to commit a great error (I am becoming more convinced for me personally this is sin) To withhold the transfer of Jesus strategy from people who cannot afford even the basics in life is to sin against them. I hope I am not overstating my point.
- * We must help the indigenous leader to put his/her dependence in God and not in us or US Dollars.
- * We must work hard behind the scenes to make the indigenous leader succeed.

APPENDIX:

The Model For Training Releasing and Sending of Indigenous Leaders: JESUS' MODEL

Jesus reproduced himself in indigenous leaders and then sent them out to do the same. He not only gave us the mandate to train and release indigenous leaders but He spent His life showing us how. Jesus modeled the reproduction of indigenous leaders. Jesus is our model for how to reproduce indigenous leaders who can reproduce.

"The Word became flesh and made ill's dwelling among us!" - John 1: 14

Jesus left his heavenly culture and home to come to earth. In his homeland he was perfectly loved and accepted. He was highly thought of and even worshipped. He left his home to go to a place where he would be despised, rejected and eventually killed. He was the ultimate cross-cultural missionary. He left all of heaven's splendor and the presence of his Father to come into our wicked, sinful earthly culture.

Think about it for a minute. What all did Jesus leave in order to come down to earth, Make a list below. This is key.

Jesus left heaven's glory and splendor to walk on our turf. *No two cultures could have been more different.* Yet, He did it willingly out of great love for you. Jesus could have simply given us the Great Commission and told us to multiply ourselves in indigenous leaders but He chose to not only tell us but to show us how His life models the training, releasing and sending of indigenous leaders on their turf. This is at the core of what we believe at Sonlife Ministries. Jesus' life screams at us to reproduce indigenous leaders who can then reproduce themselves in others.

Jesus never gave us this step while He walked on planet earth but He definitely commanded it and His disciples modeled it. We have Philip immediately going to the Samaritans in Acts 8 and also catching up to the Ethiopian eunuch and entrusting him with the gospel for his people. We also see the early church sold on cross cultural multiplication as they lay hands on Paul and Barnabas and send them out in the power of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13: 1-4) Every town Paul went to he trained faithful nationals to carry on the work of multiplication. It is obvious that God wants us to multiply ourselves in nationals. This should be our first priority and the bulk of our resources should be placed at multiplication through nationals. They know their culture better and have the mandate to reach their culture for Christ.