

‘State of the “Aussie Psyche’, One Discipleship Journey?

Excerpt from Harvest Mentality Training Manual



“The Resurrection Changes Everything!” Nik Ripkin

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1. Start discerning PRE-CONVERSION Discipleship

When does disciple-making commence? That's a good question! To find the answer to that, I believe we must go back to the great commission. (Matthew 28:17-20). Jesus directed, commanded and resourced us (that's what a commission is) to go out into all-the world and make disciples of all nations.

Obviously, the majority of that world would be strangers to us, so I think disciple-making may commence something like this: "Hi, I'm Shane, what's your name?"

Disciple-making is a deliberate and planned thing, yet it is in the ease and context of relationship that it most readily takes place. In my opinion disciple-making has three simple steps (notice I said simple, not easy. One of the most inhibiting elements to not only Christian growth, but Missional success, is when people try to make it simple, easy. Many of God's commands are simple and straightforward, but they are difficult, especially to the self-preserving un-surrendered psyche. So, we start negotiating and 'massaging' the directive to make it easier for our-selves. This never ends well).

Pre-conversion strategies:

- **Prayer strategy for them – Ask God about them. Prayer for them.**
- **Relational strategy – How do I bring and include them, as well as, commit to and care for them?**
- **Time-table – What, where and when?**

(Warning! These are not systems to bring a result, rather strategies to intentionalize relationship - Okay!).

The following is what you will probably encounter within an Anglo-Aussie context:

2. Spiritually Silent State.

Though a bit of a ‘whinger’, and with a ‘keep to myself’ attitude, this person tends to be passive and indifferent. “It’s all stuffed mate”, but “She’ll be right mate, have another beer”. This can present a stone wall effect, but not an impenetrable one.

(Complainer)

3. Stirred State.

Disquieted. Not so much “She’ll be right”. The stirred state often induced by such things as unrest, stress, dissatisfaction, anxiety, depression, or trauma and crises. This is the “She’s a bit crook - stuffed, so let’s have another slab.” This not necessarily the best place to go for the ‘spiritual jugular’ and offer them Jesus as the great panacea, but a ground that can be ploughed a little more and seed sown; Seed of Hope, empathy, possibility and love. All, of course, based on your clear and uncompromisingly relationship to the only Hope for humanity, Jesus Christ.

(Casualty)

4. Sampling State.

These are folk who are often very interested in the “what?”- “what’s in it for me?”, “What can I get out of this?” and “When? – When can I get it?” They are pre-occupied with the quick fix and no cost option, we often confuse these people as being seekers when, in fact, they are merely in the stage of sampling or just that, samplers. A place to challenge them about First Order questions – The ‘Why’s’ of life. Why are we here? Where did we come from? What is our destiny? What about the question of evil, death, eternity? etc.

(Consumer)

Without wishing to ‘label’ people, it can be helpful to identify states, conditions, attitudes, paradigms and perspectives to help us engage well with them. I have noticed two major genres, if you like, that people can fall into. Can they change sets? Yes, but both need Christ for at least one of those sets to have any eternal weight, and that is the latter.

The two genres I’ve labelled are **C.A.R. people** and **M.A.P people**.

C.A.R. – These are the folk utterly absorbed by the ‘journey’ alone. Destinations have little relevance to this group. Movement, preferably pleasurable movement, are ‘enough’. They are pre-occupied with Consumption, Acquisition & Recreation. Met any one or all of these functions and ‘satisfaction’ remains.

M.A.P. – This group see beyond the ephemeral and see value and worth in more sustainable pursuits. This group tends to focus on Meaning, Achievement and Purpose. Yes, these too can land in an egoistic consumerist motive, and can do so when disconnected from the Divine emphasis in these spaces. However, the ‘fingerprints’ left by these two groups are markedly different and only one set really adds value to society.

5. Seeking State.

These folks tend to be asking investigative questions that go beyond 'what' and 'when'. They are seriously interested in Why? Where? and How? It is the responsibility of pre-conversion discipleship to help usher people along to this point, because it's those "*who seek Him with all their heart that will find Him*" (Jer 29:13) and those who believe "*God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him*" (Heb 11:6), that are serious contemplating the 'First Order' questions; Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? Is there a God? And How do we deal with evil? They are open to seriously examining the claims of Christ. *Remember it is disciples we are called to make, not decisions.*

(Candidate)

6. Step Into Salvation.

(Birthing time – when and WHY?).

This is the moment when the candidate is not merely awakened to the Christ but "*translates from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of His dear Son*" (Col 1:13). They recognise that they are in *need* of His saving power and an ongoing relationship with Him. (Not merely wanting him to actualise their anima!)

The following attitude is not the evidence of God's salvation – "I'm fundamentally a good person who just needs a series of second chances to get it right. Besides my life hasn't been all it could be and God owes me a shot a utopia and if He isn't forthcoming, I doubt if I will give Him time of day". When they truly 'translate', then in that place they're *convicted* of, then *repent* of their sin and begin to understand their need to *forgive* others.

Their response is more akin to..."I am intrinsically flawed. I'm not a sinner because I sin. I sin because I'm a sinner. I am wretched and

broken and desperately need Jesus to rescue me and make me whole. I am wrong and I yield to the immense Love and Grace that made Him die for me, as undeserving as I am of that. Wow! What a wonderful Saviour – I owe Him everything and want others to experience that forgiveness, restoration and freedom too.”

(Converted)

7. Start Post-Conversion Discipleship.

This is where the rubber hits the road. If the previous steps have been taken, this is the most exciting and rewarding relationship. Most times this new disciple **will chase you**, you will not have to chase them.

It is a relationship of committing to and caring for - parenting first, then apprenticing (don't try and apprentice someone who hasn't been parented well).

Helping them:

- establish a good devotional life,
- network - bring them into small group community for support and nurture,
- walk with them into maturity. *(See 5 A's of Discipleship)*.

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