

Module 4

How to Guide Others in the Habits of a World Christian

My wife and I were driving on the highway doing about 80 miles per hour. All of a sudden I saw break lights ahead and a major traffic jam. As we closed in on the pile up of cars I realized that the cause of the traffic jam was a terrible accident. The timing was horrible because just as we were able to see what was going on they were pulling a dead body from the wreckage. It was something I will never forget. It impacted me so much that after we made it through the jam, let's just say I wasn't driving 80. I dropped down to around 60 miles per hour. I was far more cautious and attentive. Our conversation took on a whole new tone, we turned the radio off and made our way into the slow lane. There was something that I noticed though. The farther removed I got from the lights, the sirens, the bodies...the more I lightened up. Not only that, I sped up! Why? Maybe my memory is bad. Maybe I was already thinking of something else. Maybe I let the experience slip away!

This is a good parallel of a mission trip. Up until the day we leave, we are consumed with the world around us, trying to finish school, buying the next hit worship cd and hanging out with friends. Then off we go for three weeks to Honduras and...WHAM! Reality hits. We are moved beyond imagination by the street kids, the impoverished condition, the hospitality of the people and their openness to the gospel. Never before have we been so confronted, so changed. We vow never to shop at the Gap again, have passionate quiet times daily and burn for our peers to know the same incredible zeal that consumes us! Soon though, and very subtly, normal-ness creeps its way back in. And before we know it, the scrapbook under our bed is the sole remains of the summer that "changed us".

Is this as good as it gets? Should we just slough this off as status quo? Ho-hum, that's just what happens? I don't think so. I believe there is a deeper issue here. I think that as long as missions remains a geographical issue the result will be a lot of Christian American Dreamers with mission trip scrap books. If our missionary to Honduras had made missions a heart issue, the few months after his trip would have looked a lot different. His trip would have been the fuel for his passion, not the basis for it.

Once missions moves beyond the geographical issue and becomes more of a heart issue, no matter where you are you are still actively involved in reaching all nations. So how is that achieved? By carrying out the various habits identified in a World Christian. Not only should you be involved personally, but help others around you to incorporate the habits of a World Christian.

There are many things that a World Christian can do to keep his vision cultivated. The main habits are:

1. Going
2. Praying
3. Sending
4. Welcoming
5. Mobilizing

Everyone desiring to move toward God's heart for the world needs to cultivate these habits and be aware of how to live them out in daily life. As someone interested in mobilizing others, you need to be familiar with and well grounded in these. You also need to have the ability to equip students to live them out during college and in life beyond college.

A good place to start with the student is by sitting down and talking through what a World Christian would look like on a college campus. Here are some questions that might help you get started:

- How would a World Christian spend their time?
- How would they spend their money?
- What kinds of conversations would they have?
- What would an average week be like?

You will probably find that the student's answers do not include a very wide range of things. Maybe they focus on one or two aspects of being a World Christian, or maybe they think only of someone who goes overseas. Your explanation of the following five habits will help missions to be a daily application for them as it should be.

Going: This habit is most commonly associated with missions. In the past and even still today when someone thinks about missions this is the most natural association. A definition of the goer is the person physically present, laboring on the mission field. Going may mean a short-term trip or an extended amount of time. Ultimately, the goer is willing to completely immerse themselves in an unfamiliar culture with the intention of furthering the gospel in that culture. They are innovative, low maintenance, steadfast, and persevere with little fellowship. In Exodus 3:7-10 God mentions *nine* different times to Moses that He is concerned with the Israelites and their condition as slaves and is getting ready to bring them into the promise land. During this discourse, God has *one* reference to Moses. Look at Moses' reaction, "But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" (Ex .3:11). Sounds like us sometimes doesn't it? Our temptation is to focus on ourselves and our insufficiency! We think there is no way God could want us involved and so many of us never enjoy the blessing of participating. Look at God's reaction; He puts the focus back on Himself in the next verse, "I will be with you" (Ex. 3:12). Before Robert Morrison left to be the first Bible translator in China someone asked if he really thought he could change the 2,000 year problem of idolatry in China, his response, "No I don't, but I expect God can."

As you begin to challenge others to consider going on a short-term trip, it will be natural for them to look at their abilities (or inabilities) and become discouraged. It is at this point that you must remind them "But God chose the foolish things of the world to

shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him (1 Corinthians 1:27-29). In light of this truth we are all overqualified!

Due to modern technology a person can be anywhere the world in less than 17 hours. What an incredible opportunity! Even if a person feels they should not go long-term, I think it is worthwhile to invest some time in a cross-cultural experience. It will be to the benefit of any Christian seeking to have a heart for the world as God does. A good place to begin cultivating this desire into a student's heart is to ask them if the Lord has laid a country or religion on their heart. If so, where do they see themselves? Help them to get information on all agencies that are currently working in related areas. This will make going a tangible, do-able thing. It will also be helpful to discuss the potential roadblocks that might distract them from carrying this out.

Praying: If you could ask Jesus to teach you anything what would it be? Personally, I think I would want to learn how He multiplied the bread to feed the 5,000! Can you imagine? Well, in all of the scriptures we see only one time when the disciples ask Jesus to teach them something. The request, "Lord, teach us to pray." (Luke 11:1). Isn't it interesting that after knowing and living with Jesus, their desire was to pattern His prayer life. Maybe after following Him around for a few years they realized that when Jesus prayed things happened. Listen to Christ's response, "This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, *your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...*" (Matt. 6:9-10). Jesus was saying that when you pray, you should ask God to bring the activity of heaven down to earth. In other words, pray that what is going on up there, would go on down here. Well, what is going on in heaven? Right now in heaven all eyes are on Jesus, as a multicultural worship service is being held. Sound like your church? This is what Jesus asked his disciples to pray.

Another passage that challenges us to pray for the world is found in Matt 9:36-38, "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. *Ask* the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'" Jesus saw the vastness of lost souls compared to the scarcity of the laborers and He looks to the disciples and says, "Ask" What a powerful image! Not go, or preach, or have a conference, but *ask*. It's hard to read this passage and not get convicted about your prayer life. Let's evaluate our own prayer lives and see if we come to God with our desires or if we are concerned with His. Obviously, we need to pray for ourselves and yes, we need to lift up our family and friends but God also desires that we join together and intercede on behalf of all nations and beg Him to send forth laborers into the field.

As you are implementing world prayer into your own life help others to understand the importance of coming to Him and bearing His burdens. Hebrew 7:25 says, "Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him,

because He always lives to intercede for them.” If Christ is daily living to pray for those who come to know Him, I think it is worthy of my time and cultivation.

Sending: Paul the Apostle has an interesting observation, “And how can they preach unless they are sent?” (Rom. 10:15). The unreached do not have a chance at hearing the gospel if there are not people on the home front funding and praying for those that are going. It is like asking the question, “which is more important the rescuer who goes down into the well to save a life or the man at the top holding the rope?” You can’t have one without the other. There was a principle in Israelite warfare, “The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike.” (1 Sam. 30:24-25). Why, because they are equally important in God’s army.

In our culture we think we are entitled to live at whatever standard matches our income. Our reasoning is that since a person makes \$60,000 a year they should live at \$60,000. When a person gets a raise, their standard of living gets a raise too! But the World Christian should have a different mindset. Maybe when a Christian gets a raise or comes into unexpected financial gain God intends that person to be a resource for someone else! This thinking is so contrary to our culture. Challenge the student to set an appropriate amount to live on and help him develop healthy convictions about the stewardship of giving. Bill Stearns in his book, *Run With the Vision*, explains this point well,

“How different are World Christians from other Christians? In some ways, very little. They still spend much of their time doing day-to-day chores, filling their role in life (being a parent, spouse, friend), fulfilling the requirements of a job, fixing things around the house. They too work on character issues in their own life, study the scriptures, read Christian books, seek to be broken and humble before God. Both seek to keep the great commandment, loving God and loving others. But in other ways, they are very different.

The World Christian uses his free time differently, keeping in mind a global perspective. He prays more for the nations and helps others catch the vision for God’s glory throughout the world. He spends his finances wisely, freeing up more money for the global expansion of the kingdom. He always envisions how his ministry and activities can somehow result in eventually having an impact in the nations.

Living a World Christian lifestyle as a sender doesn’t mean taking a vow of poverty-since poverty isn’t necessarily spiritual and wealth isn’t necessarily unspiritual. But being good stewards of money as we seek first the Kingdom of heaven is definitely a mark of a World Christian sender...the lifestyle of a globally significant sender isn’t mostly about money. It’s about character.”

The role of a sender is not only integral, but diverse as well. The most obvious aspect of sending is giving of one’s financial resources to support a missionary. But this is

certainly not the only facet of sending. A sender may work in one of or all the following specialized roles: logistics, prayer coordination, communications, research, finances, or re-entry coordinator. A specialist in logistics deals with the practical side of sending. They deal with packing the missionary's goods, travel plans, cost and acquirement of items needed on the field. The prayer coordinator can find specific prayer needs based on research, missionaries in the field and missions societies. They are also needed to enlist others in intercessory prayer for the team and organize special prayer meetings. For prayer needs to be known, a communications specialist is enormously helpful. It is their responsibility to open lines of communication to the team so that prayer requests and equipment and other needs are known. The role of sending is neither glamorous nor easy. The task of dealing with the day-to-day, behind the scenes tasks of mission work may even seem thankless, but it is not without reward.

This is a seemingly difficult habit for college students to develop because they always feel broke! But the point is not the amount that is given. The point is that they are building a habit of sacrifice. No matter their income, help them to diligently set aside a portion to invest in missions.

Welcoming: America is hosting the largest number of internationals of any country and the world is at our doorstep! Over 650,000 international students and scholars are studying here from 188 countries of the world. What a perfect opportunity to extend God's grace and love to the world! And you don't even have to leave. The Welcomer gets his name from the idea that he welcomes those from other countries to his country.

The foreigner is close to the Lord's heart. Over forty times in the Old Testament alone we are commanded to care for the foreigner in our land,

"The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God" (Lev 19:34).

"He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt" (Deut 10:18-20).

God reminds the Israelites of their past exile in Egypt so that they will be motivated to love the foreigners, for they once were foreigners. Similarly, we should be reminded of our past, how we were foreigners to God and yet he had mercy on us.

Sadly, as available as this ministry is to college students, it is going sorely overlooked. Did you know that 80% of the internationals on your campus will never be invited into an American home? With high hopes they come to study, but soon realize that the hospitality they are used to is just as foreign to America as they are. So they live in their isolated community with fellow internationals and eventually return to their homeland. I wonder what they tell their friends about this renowned Christian nation.

Everyone can be a welcomer. All it takes is a little time, energy and a willingness to say hello. There is no reason that Christians on campus shouldn't have 2-3 new international friends each semester. Can you imagine how the gospel would spread if that

were a reality? At the college I attended, there were 80 students from Saudi Arabia who hung out in their corner of the Student Center. I can remember the first time I took two guys from my Bible study to meet and get to know them. After a few weeks of just saying hello and making ourselves available we became part of the group. We shared the gospel with about 10 of them over the next year. Its amazing to think of the hardship I would face should I go to Saudi Arabia and try to do the same thing! Yet here we have complete freedom to share with otherwise unreached people!

The need for welcoming is great. Help the students brain storm ideas to show love to the foreigners among you. A simple beginning step is to take them and initiate conversation with an international on your campus. There are tons of questions you could ask to get to know them:

- Where are you from?
- How do you like it here?
- How it is different from your country?
- Can we help you in anything?
- How do you like the food?
- Is English harder than you thought?
- Are you finding your way around?

You might choose a specific group of them to focus on. You and the students should regularly make yourselves ready to serve. Here are some suggested ways to do that:

- Run errands for them or be willing to take them on errands.
- Invite them over for holidays.
- Practice English with them.
- Invite them to Bible study.
- Invite them just to hang out with you and your friends.

The one who welcomes is willing to serve them and reach out to them in the hopes that Christ will be glorified. They will see how easy it is to get involved and soon they will be loving internationals and this strategic ministry.

Mobilizing: A mobilizer is a normal, everyday Christian who walks with God, yet has a global perspective and stays on the home front to rouse others to action. Anyone who has a vision for the world has at one time been mobilized. Whether someone asked them to go on a short-term trip, invited them to a missions conference, took them to a Bible study on the topic or introduced them to a missionary, somehow they were recruited. And that, in a nutshell, is a mobilizer, a *recruiter*. Mobilizers are out looking for others to enlist in God's agenda with their entire life. Their focus is Christians who are unaware of God's global plan and they consistently seek to raise the missions awareness in creative ways whether it is in a small group or large group setting. Like Habakkuk, they "Write down the vision and make it plain on tablets so that the one who reads it may run" (Hab 2:2).

A friend of mine has a saying that I have adopted. "*Every Christian a World Christian and every World Christian a mobilizer.*" Think about the awesome potential in that statement. Every Christian is orchestrating their life around God's heart for the world and fulfilling the Great Commission and at the same time passing on that vision to the new believers and next generation. Unbelievable!

So what exactly are the characteristics of a mobilizer? Bill Stearns lists 10:

1. Needs to be able to be a servant.
2. Desires to see laborers raised up to finish the task of world evangelization.
3. Possibly has the gift of encouragement and exhortation.
4. Is "apt to teach" but may be more effective in recruiting others to teach.
5. Speaks in front of groups without (too much) fear.
6. Leads others well.
7. Has a general heart for the world, possibly focusing in on one people group.
8. Sees the priority of waiting and mobilizing others as well as going.
9. Is part visionary - seeing what can happen as God matches empowered believers with key opportunities of ministry
10. Is part implementer - driven to see a vision become a reality.

In order to train others in mobilization it is critical that you pass on the ability to find resources and tools. Whether it is just the right missions book or a short video, magazine, agency, prayer profile, etc. you need to be able to show others how to get it. I can remember when I was in college gathering my own collection of tools. I labeled a manila folder "Mobilization Resources." Now it fills two filing cabinets! Part of being equipped with resources is being a networker. You will need to know what God is doing and who He is doing it with. I challenge anyone trying to cultivate their mobilization skills to help others collect and learn how to use the resources and material available in missions. As they are collecting and learning this material they are building a confidence that will enable them to teach others.

The mobilizer is a key player in the process of raising up laborers. It takes a burning heart for the world and yet a willingness to stay. It has happened to every World Christian and every World Christian can do it!

In Closing...

In order for missions to permeate your life at all times, on all levels, you will need to get beyond the mission trip burnout. It is not about a summer trip, its not about 10 summer trips! It is about your life reflecting the heart of God no matter your location. God has always been about redeeming all nations and we should reflect that through going ourselves, sending others, welcoming internationals, praying for the world and mobilizing Christians to go.