



Surrender, Care & Share

40 Day Prayer Focus



The Wordless Book

“A colorful Way to Share the Gospel”

The *Wordless Book* originally comprised of only three pages – **Black**, **Red** and **White**. It was introduced by Charles Spurgeon in 1866 when preaching at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. His sermon was entitled “*The Wordless Book*”. Mr. Spurgeon told of an elderly pastor who had put three pages of these colors together, and often referred to them to remind himself of his own sinfulness (black), of Christ’s blood poured out for him (red), and of the “whiter-than-snow” purification, as granted by the Lord.

It is not known exactly when the **Gold** page was added, but that brought another dimension to the book. It depicted the glory of God and his heavenly home. Nine years later, D.L. Moody used the book of colors at a children’s service. An estimated 12 000 people attended to listen to his message about *A book with four pages*: Black, Red, White and Gold.

When Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) began to print the little book in 1939, they added another page of **Green**, to represent Christian growth.

In 1993, **AMOS** was founded by Hennie and Janetta Viljoen. **AMOS** realized the value of the *Wordless Book* in teaching the gospel to the illiterate. They, however, wanted it to tell the complete message of the Bible, and therefore in 1994 added the final color of **Blue** to the *Wordless Book*, to remind us of the promised return of Christ.

It later came to light that the International Children’s Ministry Institute (ICMI) had the same vision, and had already added a blue page in 1988.



SURRENDER! CARE! SHARE!

40 Day Prayer Focus on Agriculture 2012

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Thank you for faithfully praying with us. Ask the Lord to fill the agricultural community in South Africa and Africa with people who surrender, care and share by the process of discipleship.

May you be the first to
surrender, care and share.



HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE PRAYER FOCUS

Keep the following in mind to make the most of these 40 days:

1. Plan and organise

Use existing prayer meetings. Create new opportunities for praying with others. There are many options but nothing happens by itself. You need to take trouble and to plan thoroughly. Consider the following:

- Your personal **quiet time**;
- **Mealtimes** (*this is one time when people can and should pray for agriculture*);
- At work during **morning devotions, during lunch time or after work**;
- Your **existing small-group meetings**;
- During **morning service** – ask a farmer, farmer's wife, child, farm worker or other member of the congregation to pray specifically for the rural and agricultural community;
- **Special prayer meetings, and all-night or half-night prayer vigils**;
- Mobilise the **elderly, children, women, prayer groups, etc.**
- **Advertise** the 40-Day Prayer Focus on Agriculture as widely as possible. Use local newspapers and radio stations. Remember, these guidelines appear on AMOS' web site: www.amosafrica.net, in English and Afrikaans and may be duplicated free of charge.

2. Read the Scriptures

Read the Scriptures! Answer the questions. You will not grow nor experience the full blessing if you merely read the daily message. Remember, the most important thing is to give the Spirit an opportunity to speak through the Word.

3. Confess sin

Even though it is not specifically mentioned every day, it is very important to remain committed to the four important issues mentioned in **2 Chronicles 7:14**:

- Let the Holy Spirit fill you with remorse;



- Pray and confess everything the Spirit convicts you of;
- Ask the Lord about his will and then obey it;
- Turn your back on your evil ways. Turn your back on everything God disapproves of, according to the Word.

4. **Prayer Guidelines**

The prayers provided merely serve as a guideline. Read and think about each day's portion. Then pray about everything the Holy Spirit puts in your heart.

5. **Cultivate the discipline of fasting and obedience**

There are various good books on fasting and prayer on the market. Read them. The 40-Day Prayer Focus is an ideal opportunity to hone your self-control and discipline. You could, like Esther, eat or drink nothing for three days (Esther 4:16), or like Daniel and his friends, only eat vegetables and drink water (Daniel 1:12).

Consider abstaining from something you really like for the duration of the prayer focus, e.g. coffee or Coke, sweets or chocolates, meat, or dairy products or bread. You could decide to stop having a second helping of food, to stop taking tonics or other stimulants. Spend the time you usually spend watching a particular TV programme in prayer. The possibilities are endless. It is important to ask the Lord what He would like you to do.

However, we must not only sometimes abstain from food or watching TV, etc. We must learn to **always abstain from sin and disobedience**. We must fast from our evil ways and put an end to our bad habits. Use these 40 days to cultivate and practice the discipline of obedience.



I am writing to you, Theophilus

Luke addresses his Gospel and Acts to Theophilus (Luke 1:3 and Acts 1:1). This is the only time he is mentioned in the New Testament. The name Theophilus is made up of two Greek words namely, *theos* (God) and *phileo* (love). Theophilus means *precious or dear to God*, or it may refer to someone who loves God, *a lover of God*.

I chose this name, Theophilus, because it best describes you, the one to whom I am writing these letters: *You are dear to God and you love Him*.

I am writing to you personally because I love you. Over the years, I (and other spiritual leaders) have tried to teach you so much that you are probably a little confused. I wanted to teach you many things well, but I forgot about a very true saying: *Less is more! Teach less, teach more!* I want to apply this to discipleship in particular. So much is being said about discipleship but most people still don't know what exactly it means. ***There is an urgent need for a simple, practical definition of discipleship in the church.*** Without it, members of AMOS and/or churches will not know what is expected of them. They will not know whether they have succeeded in making disciples or not. And so they will remain unmotivated and detached.

Through these letters I want to help you, Theophilus, to understand discipleship. What is more – I want to help you to be a disciple of Jesus, and as you journey through life, to make those around you Jesus' disciples too. I only discovered the meaning of discipleship 40 years after I was converted and I want to save you all that time. There is just too much at stake.

I thank the Lord for what He has taught me about discipleship through His Word and Spirit during the past few years. I thank Him for dear friends and good books to study. What I have to pass on to you is only what I have received. I have nothing to boast about. May Jesus receive all the glory and honour when these letters bear much lasting fruit in your life.

Hennie Viljoen
August 2012



Letter 1

I had a bad night

Theophilus

Things are going well on the farm, but I had a bad night last night. I was thinking about the farm – about the sheep, cattle, goats, the veld, fences and water. We are spending money on fixing up the *water network*. Our animals deserve enough clear, clean water because water is life. We are trying to improve the *quality of our grazing* each year by means of good management. Our animals need good food. We have also hired Gerrit to help us fix up the *sheep pens and fences*. Klaas and I are tired of our sheep wandering everywhere and anywhere. It is dangerous because there are many *predators*. We have various systems in place to protect our livestock. We have electronic *shepherds* in the veld that make themselves heard day and night and give off a smell that predators cannot bear. We also take trouble to protect our animals against *internal and external parasites*. We cannot allow life to be slowly sucked out of our animals.

While I was thinking about all these challenges I suddenly realised that all the right things Klaas and I are doing don't necessarily make us good farmers. These things are important, but if our sheep don't reproduce, we are not good farmers. Then we are merely caretakers. **Good farmers focus on reproduction!** The animals must multiply! If our livestock don't reproduce, we will have to keep buying new sheep from other farmers as our sheep age and die. That is expensive and foolish! And, if all the other farmers also attend to everything except reproduction, it will become increasingly difficult to get hold of sheep – especially if we are only interested in a particular breed or colour. Without reproduction and multiplication, our business will dwindle and go bankrupt. If this happens to one farming business after another, the whole business is in danger of being destroyed.

That was when the Lord's Spirit opened my eyes to show me the relationship with the church. In the church, we feed and water our sheep every week. Christian books, CDs and DVDs provide enough nourishment. We try to warn our sheep and protect them from the world



and all its dangers. We cannot bear others to prey on them. Yes, we do all the right things – BUT our flock is not increasing, not reproducing. That is why churches grow mainly by means of sheep from other flocks (churches). No matter whether the sheep are bought or stolen, or whether they cross the fence themselves because they prefer our grazing and the way they are treated in our congregation. The fact remains that they did not become part of our congregation by means of reproduction.

Lying awake was a worthwhile exercise. I believe the Lord showed me that we can summarise this problem in *AMOS* and the church in one sentence: **There is insufficient reproduction.** [It sounds better than saying that a congregation or *AMOS* is sterile.] In his book, *The Disciple-making Pastor* (2007 revised version), Bill Hull writes on page 169: *It takes 1000 Christians 365 days to introduce one person to Christ. At this rate, reaching the world is a fantasy.* Whether you agree with Bill Hull's statistics or not, just look at what is happening around you. How many unbelievers have been converted in the last year or two? How many were made Jesus' disciples? How many were taught to keep all Jesus' commandments? **How many decided to join your congregation because they were saved from the darkness for Christ by someone from your church?**

Theophilus, it is with shame that I confess that many good things are being done in *AMOS* and in many rural churches, but the one thing that is sorely lacking is REPRODUCTION!

Lord, today Theophilus and I are weeping about the inability of most churches to reproduce. We are so sterile. We beg you today to help AMOS and all the rural churches and congregations to reproduce. We don't want to be sterile. Amen



Letter 2

The root of the problem

Theophilus

In my previous letter I stated that the one thing that is sorely lacking in congregations is reproduction. But the lack of reproduction is the result of a deeper problem. Jesus gave the instruction to make disciples to those whom He had discipled. Only disciples can disciple others. Thus I cannot expect you to make disciples if no one has discipled you. I accept that I am jointly responsible for the fact that we make many people *members* of our churches but not Jesus' *disciples*. I deeply regret that this has happened.

The lack of reproduction proves that *there is an urgent need for a simple, workable definition of discipleship in the church.* Without it, members of AMOS and/or congregations will not know what is expected of them. They also won't know when and if they have succeeded in making disciples. Therefore, they will remain unmotivated and uninvolved.

That is why I am writing you these letters. I want to give you a simple definition of discipleship. The simpler the better. I am convinced that I will teach you more by teaching you less. ***“Less is more!”*** The shorter and simpler I can make the explanation of what a disciple looks like and what discipleship is, the greater the chance that you will become a disciple and disciple others.

Jesus says His disciples are all people who *surrender, care and share.* These three words are a very short summary of what are probably the three most important commands in the Word: *Love God; Love your neighbour and disciple others.* That is how the New Testament describes disciples.

SURRENDER is the summary of terms such as conversion; taking up the cross; dying to yourself; rising with Christ to a new life; giving up



your own self-interest; 24/7 obedience to the King; and to be under new management and control.

CARE is making love a verb. It is love in action. Disciples are characterised by love (John 13:35). Disciples care for one another and for people in spiritual, physical and emotional distress. They care for friend and foe, for fellow-believers and for unbelievers, for all people and for creation.

Disciples are people who, in obedience to the King, continually move with Him to establish His reign on earth. They SHARE Him and His Word with the world (pass Him and His Word on to the world) so that more and more people from every tribe, race and nation will *surrender, care and share*.

Lore, I confess that we often focus more on recruiting members to support the church financially than on making disciples in order to establish your Kingdom in the world and in agriculture. Please forgive us and help us change our focus. Help us to understand who and what a disciple of Jesus really is. Please start with Theophilus and me. Make us Jesus' disciples. Amen

Letter 3

From my heart

Theophilus

Thank you for feeling free to ask me some direct questions. I will not make light of them but will share my heart with you.

I cannot recall the exact date, but it was before or during 2000 that I read the following words in a church in Paarl: **Surrender – Care – Share**. The Spirit stored these words in my heart and in June 2001 I dared write a small group study on it for the first time. Over the years, I have increasingly discovered the rich and full meaning of these words. The three words are actually the answer to all five of your questions:



1. **You want to know what is important to me. Which values determine my life?** My answer is:

- **Surrender, care and share!**
- Why? I always want to surrender myself to God in everything I do. I want to submit myself to Him. The reason is clear: Because of what He did for me (Romans 12:1). These three words are a short summary of the three most important commandments in the Word: Love God; love my neighbour; disciple others.

2. **You want to know what I do every day. What is my daily agenda?** My answer is:

- **Surrender, care and share!**
 - Why? Because it is important to me. These are my values. Therefore, they are on my daily agenda. But it is important to understand that *surrender, care and share* are not items on my agenda. They are the paper on which my agenda is printed. In everything I do, I want to and must *surrender, care and share*. *Surrender, care and share* do not require extra time. They are the way in which I try to do all things.

3. **You want to know what outcomes I want to see in *AMOS*.** Where should our ministry lead people? What should they be like? What should they become? My answer is:

- **Surrender, care and share people!**
- Why? Because I can only trust *surrender, care and share* people to make God's Kingdom visible in the agricultural community. People with other values and other agendas cannot do it! Only disciples reproduce and multiply.

4. I have already partially answered your fourth question, but it bears repeating. **You want to know how I see disciples. What is my definition of discipleship?** My answer is:

- **People who surrender, care and share!**
- Why? Because this is how the New Testament describes disciples. SURRENDER is the summary of terms such as conversion; death and resurrection; giving up your own interests;



taking up the cross; 24/7 obedience to the King; being under new control and management. CARE is love in action and love characterises disciples. Disciples care for each other and people in spiritual, physical and emotional distress. They care for friend and foe, for fellow-believers and unbelievers, for the nations and for creation. Disciples are people who, in obedience to the King, go with Him to establish His authority in the world. Disciples SHARE Him and His Word with the world so that an increasing number of people from every tribe, language and nation will *surrender, care and share*.

- In his book, *Accidental Missionary* (The unexpected adventure of making disciples), Steve Murrell defines discipleship in chapter 3 as follows: **Follow** Jesus, **Fish** for people and **Fellowship** with others (3 x F). The similarity with *surrender, care and share* is clear. The only difference is in the sequence.

5. Your last question kept me busy for quite a while. **How do I define victory in AMOS? When can we rejoice and celebrate? I would say it is:**

- **When someone in the agricultural community surrenders, cares and shares.**
- Why? Because then we have made a disciple and have reproduced. Because multiplication has occurred. Because then AMOS has delivered the product we envisioned. Because more people's agenda has become to *surrender, care and share*. Because more agriculturalists are striving towards and living the same values. Because more people are doing everything Jesus has taught us. Because then His Kingdom is coming.

Just like Paul in Philippians 3:12, I don't want to pretend that I have achieved everything or that I am perfect. But I keep striving towards perfection. Jesus' life was characterised by *surrender, care and share*, and so it is my burning desire that these qualities or attributes will increasingly characterise my life too because Jesus lives in me. He has given me His *surrender, care and share* DNA. Therefore, I must, can and want to *surrender, care and share*.



Theophilus, thank you for asking me these questions. But what about you? What is your answer to these questions?

Holy Spirit, please keep reminding Theophilus and me of these important questions. Help us to answer them honestly. Help us to talk to You about them and not only to each other. Change our lives if you are not satisfied with our answers. Amen

Letter 4

When is a disciple a disciple?

Theophilus

I can understand your confusion about what discipleship means. It happens because we call people disciples who are not disciples. Do you think the following conversation could ever take place between two workers on the farm?

- Bert:** I bought myself a new *bakkie* cash!
- Ivan:** What? Where did you get the money from?
- Bert:** Come and see. I will show you! (Bert shows Ivan a wheelbarrow.)
- Ivan:** Rubbish, man. That's not a *bakkie*. You can't call something you push and that has only one wheel a *bakkie*! Even if you can load things in it, it is a wheelbarrow. It has to be pushed – it can't go by itself. A *bakkie* has an engine. You load things on the back and sit in front. It's not a *bakkie* if you cannot ride in it and it doesn't have an engine!

Ridiculous! But it seems to me that things work like that in church. The church calls many people something they are not. People are called disciples even though they don't measure up to any of the criteria Jesus set for disciples. What three important characteristics do Jesus' disciples have?

Read Matthew 16:24-26



What is demanded of Jesus' followers?

.....

Jesus is actually saying that all who are His disciples are people. (SURRENDER, CARE or SHARE people? Choose one.)

Read John 13:35

How does Jesus say will His disciples be recognised?

.....

Jesus is actually saying that all who are His disciples are people. (SURRENDER, CARE or SHARE people? Choose one.)

Read Matthew 28:18-20

What is the last command that Jesus gave His disciples? What should they keep doing?

.....

Jesus is actually saying that all who are His disciples are people. (SURRENDER, CARE or SHARE people?)

Theophilus, if you want to know who and what a disciple is, listen to Jesus. You cannot define discipleship according to the way most churchgoers live. **Jesus says all His disciples are people who *surrender, care and share.***

Theophilus, may I ask you a straight question: Are you already one of Jesus' disciples, or are you merely a member of a church?

Father, in the Name of Jesus, clothed in His righteousness and filled with His Spirit, I bring you His wish. Today I pray that Theophilus and all who are merely members of some or other church, will also become Jesus' disciples. Amen



Letter 5

Jesus defines discipleship

Theophilus

In my previous letter I shared Jesus' definition of discipleship with you. But, Jesus did not define discipleship by only using beautiful words like we often do. He defined it with His life. He lived it! If I had to describe Jesus' life in a few words, I would say that His life was characterised by *surrender, care and share*.

SURRENDER:

- ✓ Jesus obeyed the Father completely because He loves the Father (John 14:31);
- ✓ He strove towards nothing but the *plan* the Father had for Him (John 4:34);
- ✓ He was always in *conversation* with the Father and only spoke what He heard from the Father (Luke 5:16, and John 14:10 & 24);
- ✓ He carried out His calling and instructions to the letter (John 17:4);
- ✓ He was willing to die on the cross – He is perfectly surrendered to the will of His Father (Philippians 2:8)!

CARE:

- ✓ Jesus' ministry clearly demonstrates that He *cared for all people*;
- ✓ He cared for people: spirit, soul and body;
- ✓ He was willing to die on the cross – that is the extent to which He cares for us (John 13:1 and 1 John 3:16);

SHARE:

- ✓ He was the One God Sent (John 3:17 and 1 John 4:9-10), His Apostle (Hebrews 3:1);
- ✓ He was willing to die on the cross – so committed was He to sharing His salvation and victory with us (Colossians 2:14 and Hebrews 10:10 & 14);
- ✓ Jesus passed His obedience, His holiness and His righteousness (His perfect relationship with the Father) on to you and me. He shared it with us.



Who we are in Christ and the privileges we as God's children enjoy today, are ALL thanks to Jesus' *surrendering, caring and sharing*. Jesus is not merely a role model of how to *surrender, care and share*. He is much more! He is the Foundation on which we can *surrender, care and share*. He is the Source from Whom we *surrender, care and share*. He is the Alpha and the Omega of discipleship. Discipleship is from Him and through Him and to Him (Romans 11:36). Discipleship is His plan for multiplication and there is no other or better plan. His is the only plan. We just need to carry it out better.

Lord Jesus, help us to follow You – in what You came to teach us and in the way You lived. Amen

Letter 6

Surrender, care and share every day

Theophilus

It was not easy for me to tell others about my conversion after I responded to the Lord's call on 15 May 1972. But, deep down I knew I had to do it. I could not keep quiet. I did not want to keep quiet, but I was scared. I knew that the longer I postponed the more difficult it would become. And if I postponed it off for long enough I would never do it. Something wonderful happened when I eventually scraped together my courage and told someone: My faith and my relationship with the Lord grew. It was the first fruit of obedience.

Many people hide behind the excuse that they cannot care and share because they are still battling to *surrender* completely. They want to learn more first, attend another seminar, do this and sort that out. That is how Satan misleads them into blatant disobedience. The irony is this: If you do not *care and share*, you won't grow in your *surrender*. If you don't *surrender* more and more, you won't grow in *caring and sharing*. This is such an important issue that I want to illustrate it by means of two images:



You can only climb to the top of a **ladder** if you take turns in moving both your hands and your feet higher. You will never reach the top of the ladder if you keep one foot on the ground. If you keep your share-leg on the ground, you are limiting the height to which your surrender-leg and care-leg can reach. Consider a **three-legged race**. We all ran it when we were children. Think of the middle two legs that are bound together as the surrender-leg. The surrender-leg cannot reach the finishing post unless the care- and share-legs follow the surrender-leg every step of the way. All three move forwards together, or they all remain behind together. *Surrender, care and share* are three processes that occur in turn. One leg cannot be more than one step ahead of the other two.

When the Samaritan woman met Jesus at the well (John 4 – take note of verses 28-30, and 39-42), she immediately had a message and a testimony that she could *share* with those she *cared* about – even though she was still in some doubt. She did not believe that she first had to sort out her whole life or that she had to follow Jesus for three years before she had the right to share. No, she immediately began to tell. And, by her *sharing* she not only showed her *care* for others, but also proved her obedience, her *surrender* to God. When the other Samaritans believed, her faith was strengthened and she grew in her submission to God.

Care and share, and you will grow in *surrender*. The more you *surrender*, the more you want to *care and share*. *Surrender, care and share* go hand in hand. Therefore, I urge you to do all three from the start. If you leave *care* and *share* for later, you will not grow spiritually and you will probably never get to *care* or *share*. Take note, it also happens in churches that believe they should focus on *surrendering* first. Instead of growing spiritually and becoming more and more motivated for missionary work, they die spiritually and missions are only put off year after year because there is never money or time for it. *Surrender* becomes a theory instead of a way of life.

Therefore, I am not going to write about *surrender* first and then about *care* and lastly about *share*. I am going to write about all three from the



start, because you must *surrender, care and share* every day. **Jesus says His disciples are all people who *surrender, care and share*.**

Lord God, please convince Theophilus that surrender, care and share are three processes that occur simultaneously. Free him from the lie that states sharing is the end of the discipleship process and that he can only share once he has perfected his surrender and care. Amen

Letter 7

Disciples do good work!

Theophilus

I am thrilled by your question about whether Jesus' command means that you should drop everything – your farming business and your work to go and make disciples. I want to start by telling you about a woman who walked in front of me in a shop. The words, *Work is love made visible*, were printed on her black T-shirt in bold yellow letters. The meaning of the words was gripping. The skill, efficiency, competence and joy with which you do your job demonstrate your love for the people you work for, you work with and in whose interest you are working. The best way in which someone on the local board can demonstrate his care for the community is by doing honest work of a high standard. The only way in which a teacher can demonstrate her love for the children in her class is by providing quality education.

Read 1 Timothy 5:8 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12

How can a man demonstrate that he really *cares* for his physical and spiritual family?

.....

Read 1 Timothy 6:1-2

How can an ordinary labourer show that he *cares* for his employer?

.....



Read Ephesians 4:28

How should people who used to be lazy, bad and dishonest, show that they have been converted and are new people, Jesus’ disciples who *care* for others?

.....

Read Psalm 78:72 and Daniel 6:5

How did David a ruler and Daniel as an official of a heathen king demonstrate their *care* for the people and the king?

.....

Theophilus, it is therefore clear that Jesus does not expect everyone who wants to become His disciple to resign from his job. (Read 1 Corinthians 7:17-24). **Jesus says His disciples are people who *surrender care and share*.** So show that you really *care!* Show it by doing your job well, with integrity, skill and joy. And remember, *Work is love made visible*. Christians who are lazy and/or loaf give discipleship a bad name. They are like smoke in the eyes and vinegar on the teeth.

Lord, let Theophilus’ and my work prove how much we really care. Let us as your disciples set an example and be an inspiration to others in our workplace and on the farm. Let us make disciples for You in and through our work. Amen

Letter 8

Jesus does more than give a command

Theophilus

You were probably afraid of going to strangers when you parents weren’t there when you were little. My children were too. But, they were scared



of nothing when I was with them. They weren't scared of the dark or strangers or difficult tasks. Nothing could quell their sense of adventure.

I often reminded you of Jesus' *Great Commandment* in Matthew 28:18-20 in the past. However, I rarely if ever reminded you of *who* Jesus is or about His *promise* in the same section. Please forgive me. How could I expect you to carry out the *Great Commandment* without reassuring you of Jesus' *unlimited power* and His *personal presence*?

You see, where we place the emphasis often makes a vast difference. Someone once wrote the following on his friend's tombstone: *Here lies John. In heaven is he, not in hell, we know it well.* Someone else came along and merely moved the first comma. Then the epitaph read, *Here lies John. In heaven is he not, in hell, we know it well.* The position of the comma changes the entire meaning of the epitaph! What we emphasise when we read Matthew 28:18-20 also makes a huge difference. By emphasising Jesus' command, we frighten people off instead of motivating them to obey the command. The real motivation and inspiration to make disciples is found in verses 18 and 20 in which Jesus talks about His *unlimited power* and His *personal presence*.

Jesus was obedient (*surrendered!*) unto death on the cross and, three days later, rose from death. Based on that foundation, He declares that ALL POWER in heaven and on earth has been given to Him. This means that heaven and earth are under His control; that He has the say everywhere and always; that nothing and no-one are a threat to Him and they cannot thwart His plan; that He is always victorious - in every battle and in all situations. He is able and skilled to make all of creation achieve His goal. He has conquered death and destroyed the devil's handiwork. He can restore every broken relationship; break every addiction and every binding; heal every disease; solve every problem; turn every situation around; dry every tear and provide a way out of every hopeless situation. He can provide - always and everywhere. He is able to help you carry out His instruction successfully. And, because all authority is vested in Him, you *can* make disciples.



The cleverest scientists in the world daily discover new things that God already knows. Breakthroughs in genetics, electronics and space technology merely emphasise the wisdom with which He has created everything and that He still maintains everything (Hebrews 1:1-4). The richest people are merely enjoying what has always belonged to Him. The most powerful and influential people of this world only live, move and exist through Him (Acts 17:28). Therefore, you need never feel intimidated or inferior in their presence. Your instruction comes from Someone who is the Highest Authority.

But that is not all. Jesus promises to be with you always and everywhere when you are making disciples in your daily walk in life. He does not send you away from Him to carry out His instruction. He is in fact inviting you along, to make disciples with Him. He promises: *I am with you until the end of time.*

How is Jesus present with us? Through His Spirit! His presence through the Holy Spirit is far better than His physical presence, because, as a physical being, Jesus could only be present at one place at a time. But by the Spirit that He gave us, He is fully present IN EACH of His children. In you too, Theophilus. Therefore, Jesus said that it was for our own benefit that He was going away and sending the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-8 and 14:15-17).

Lord Jesus, we worship You because all power in heaven and on earth belongs to You. Thank You for not sending us away from You to go and disciple people, but instead inviting us to join You in discipling people. Father, in the Name of Jesus, clothed in His righteousness and filled with His Spirit, please motivate Theophilus with Jesus' absolute power and permanent presence, to carry out the Great Command. Amen



Letter 9

The Word and the Spirit

Theophilus

In my previous letter, I reminded you that ALL power and authority belongs to Jesus, and that He remains with you permanently through His Holy Spirit while you are discipling people.

I now want to talk to you about *how to* make disciples. Let us learn from Jesus. He did not disciple people only by preaching to them. He had various skills and He used them all in the process of discipling people: He taught, healed, exorcised devils and performed miracles. He had the wisdom to know what happened in people's past and what was happening in their hearts. He prophesied about the future. He could discern what spirit was present in someone. He had the insight to provide the right answer even before someone asked a question. When Jesus invites you and me to join Him and to disciple people, He is still going to do it in the same way.

By His Holy Spirit, Jesus is with you now. The Spirit manifests in all who believe in Jesus (1 Corinthians 12:7). He grants each and every disciple of Jesus, including you, with His gifts. These gifts (gifts that you did not earn because of your own goodness – cf Acts 3:12) are more than your natural capabilities. They are Jesus' abilities that are given to you by the Spirit of Jesus so that you can do what Jesus did (John 14:12-14).

It is clear that Jesus does not want us to try to make disciples only by talking to people. When He sends His disciples to disciple others in Matthew 10, He does not merely provide them with a sermon or a message. He also gives them authority and power and super-natural abilities (Matthew 10:1 & 7-8, and Mark 16:15-20).

I want you to see that the gifts of the Spirit we read about in Corinthians 12:4-13 and 12:28 are the same skills Jesus used to make disciples. Through His Spirit, Jesus is with you and me. Through His Spirit, He gives these skills (gifts) to you and me to carry on making disciples.



Theophilus, listen carefully. If Jesus thought that you and I only needed knowledge about Him to make disciples, why did He tell His disciples to remain in Jerusalem until they were baptised with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5)? They had already been at His “Bible School” for three years and had heard and seen Him making disciples. If Jesus thought the disciples needed only the Holy Spirit to make disciples and not knowledge about Him and Scripture too why did He spend three years teaching them? **It is clear that Jesus was convinced that knowledge of God’s Word and baptism by the Holy Spirit were both needed to equip His disciples to disciple others.**

Theophilus, because we (and I confess that I am also guilty) used to put such a lot on emphasis on knowledge you may believe that only highly educated people – ministers, pastors and missionaries – are able to make disciples. Although I never said so in so many words, I did create the impression that someone like James who works for you, is not able to disciple others because he is illiterate. I am sorry. It is a lie. James need not be literate in order to receive the gift of healing, to receive a revelation from God, or to pray in tongues. Because Jesus lives in James through His Spirit, James is also fully equipped to go out as part of the body of Christ and to disciple others.

Learning is not a prerequisite for making disciples (Acts 4:13). Learned and illiterate people; old people and children; men and women; employers and employees; those who hold an office in church and those who don’t, everyone can, when the Holy Spirit is upon them (Acts 1:8), make disciples. You can too! Do it with the Word and with the gifts the Spirit grants you. You need not do everything on your own. You are part of the body of Christ. Do it with Him and with your fellow-believers.

Lord Jesus, please let Theophilus believe that You have granted Him the same power and gifts of the Spirit to make disciples as You gave Your disciples. I remind you of Hebrews 2:4 and ask You, when Theophilus teaches people about You, to please confirm His message by means of signs and wonders and all kinds of mighty deeds. Pour out Your Holy Spirit on these people too. Amen



Letter 10

Let your friends learn from experience

Theophilus

I cannot tell you how grateful I am that you have already started on the road to discipleship with some of your friends. This is how disciples grow: I walk with you and you, in turn, walk with your friends. And there are other disciples of Jesus who walk with me. Therefore I have a Paul (someone who disciples me) and a Timothy (someone that I disciple). You have a Paul (because I disciple you) and a Timothy (because you disciple your friends). You should teach them to find Timothies to disciple from the outset.

You will learn quickly and grow a great deal when you are discipling your friends. You will learn because you would like to be able to answer your friends' questions. You are welcome to ask me your questions. It is not a burden to answer you because your friends will soon start to ask you the same questions.

I read your SMS about your friends who feel it is a risk to surrender. Some time ago, a few young people told me that they did not dare surrender themselves to the Lord. Surrendering to God seemed as scary to them as surrendering to the police after having committed murder. They were afraid that God would get back at them for all their sins and make life hell for them if they surrendered to Him.

I did the following activity with them and then discussed it with them;
I tied one of them (we will call him Surrender) who was willing but not to heavy, to a plank that was slightly longer than he was tall. I tied him down firmly from his shoulders to his feet so that he could not move. Then I called two bigger, stronger guys to help me. Helper 1 had to push Surrender (who could not stop himself from falling and therefore had to surrender) backwards. Helper 2 had to catch Surrender just before he hit the ground. Then Helper 2 had to push Surrender forward and Helper 1 had to catch him before he hit the dirt face first. Surrender was powerless and could do nothing to prevent himself from falling. He was



entirely at the mercy of the two helpers. Surrender was thrown back and forth two or three times.

I wish you could have seen Surrender's face. He was petrified, wondering "what if?!"

I discussed the following questions with the young people after the surrender game. Perhaps you can do this activity with your friends too. They will discover the answer to their question when you discuss the questions following the activity with them.

1. How did Surrender feel to be at the mercy of the two helpers? Why?
2. How would Surrender have reacted if the two strong helpers were replaced by two thin little girls who loved him?
3. How would Surrender have responded if the two helpers were replaced by two irresponsible young guys who kept playing pranks on others? Two guys who often take things too far? Why?
4. How would Surrender have responded if two total strangers replaced the helpers? Why?
5. To what kind of helper would Surrender most willingly surrender?

Clearly, Surrender would only dare surrender to someone who had a **combination of certain characteristics**. It would be a gamble if the helpers were strong but unreliable. It would be a gamble if they loved him but did not have the physical strength to catch him. It would also be a gamble if the helpers bore a grudge against Surrender. What if they decided to take the opportunity to get back at him?



Many people have their own idea of who God is and they are often entirely wrong. That is why it is such a gamble for them to *surrender* – they are not prepared to do it.

Theophilus, I want you and your friends to know, that God has the **right combination of characteristics** to ensure that it is not a gamble to surrender yourselves to Him. You can be sure of what He says about Himself in His Word, the Bible. I will write more about that next time.

Lord Jesus, thank you for Theophilus' obedience to You. Thank you for being with Him by Your Spirit. May he get to know you better each day and may he grow in confidence to talk to his friends about you. Convince them that it is not a gamble to surrender themselves to You. Amen

Letter 11

Wow! I want to SURRENDER to such a God

Theophilus

When you read your Bible, you will discover that God has the right combination of characteristics to make you (and your friends) feel safe and willing to surrender yourself to Him. I want to focus your attention on five of His wonderful characteristics:

God is Love:

You and I sometimes love, but God always IS love. That is who He is. He can be nothing else and nothing less. He created you with the express purpose of proving His love to you. Therefore, He has a strong desire to have an intimate, loving relationship with you. God remained love, in spite of your sin. He loved you even when you as a sinner rebelled against Him (Romans 5:8-10)! Because God is love, He always puts you first. He proved it by sending Jesus to take away your sin (1 John 4:9-10). Because God is love, you are completely safe when you *surrender* to Him.



God is Holy:

God has no dark side to His personality (1 John 1:5). God has never lied (Numbers 23:19); He has never been unfaithful (Psalm 119:75); He has never been hateful or unjust (Psalm 89:15); He has never been merciless (John 1:14 & 16 and Psalm 103:8). He has never done anything that could be described as wrong or sinful (John 8:46). This is the one characteristic of God that makes the four living beings call out in awe, *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty* (Revelations 4:8). Because God is holy, there is no risk when you *surrender* yourself to Him.

God is Just:

Sin caused discord between you and God. But God could not accept the estrangement. He loves you much too much. He also could not just accept your sin, because He is holy and just (Psalm 92:15, and Psalm 145:7 en 17). That is why He sent His Son to bring about reconciliation between you and Him and to close the rift between you. In His Son, God bore the punishment for your sin himself. Therefore, God's justice means that He no longer needs to punish you. His justice demands that you be justified by your faith in Jesus (Romans 3:26). Because you believe in Jesus, God never wants to punish you (Isaiah 54:9), because nothing in Him demands revenge. On the contrary, He is excited and glad about you (Zephaniah 3:17). Because God is just, you are justified when you *surrender* yourself to Him.

God is Creator:

By His Word, God created everything from nothing (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3; Hebrews 11:3). Therefore, He is best able (qualified) to advise you, to protect you and to provide in all your needs. Nothing is impossible to Him (Jeremiah 32:17 & 27). Because God is the Almighty Creator, you are safe when you *surrender* to Him.

God is Good:

God's goodness is often praised in the Bible! Psalm 145:8-9 is one of those instances: *The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made.* Because God is good, you are safe when you *surrender* yourself to Him.



Even if you don't always understand what God is doing (Isaiah 55:8-9), you can always be 100% sure of His character and traits. **GOD ALWAYS IS ALL HIS CHARACTERISTICS!** Therefore, you can always *surrender* yourself to Him in all circumstances. It is never a risk. It is a wise decision. Tell your friends that there is only one of two choices:

1. **Read Ephesians 2:1-3.** To whom is everyone *surrendered* by nature? (Name three.)
2. **Read Romans 12:1-2.** To whom should we *surrender* ourselves because of what He did?

All who have not *surrendered* to God are automatically at the mercy of this sinful world, the evil powers in the sky and their own sinful desires. The question, therefore, is not whether you and your friends are willing to surrender. The question is: To whom do you want to surrender? Do you want to *surrender* to the almighty and loving God of the Bible, or do you want to be at the mercy of the father of the lie, the one who has always been a murderer (John 8:44)?

Surrendering is only a gamble if you believe all the stories of the father of the lie, the devil (John 8:44), about God. If you believe what God says about Himself in the Bible, *surrendering* will become your heart's desire. It will be something you will want to do because it makes such perfect sense!

Lord God, I worship You because You are who You say You are. Thank you for not merely having some attributes like people, but for being all Your attributes. May Theophilus and his friends choose to surrender themselves to You completely. Amen



Letter 12

Just care

Theophilus

I am sorry that two of your friends have suddenly withdrawn. It seems to me that they are not yet ready to follow Jesus as His disciples. Do not try to force them to surrender. If you do, you will struggle later because their hearts have not really changed yet. Do not turn your back on them and ignore them either. You know that you also used to be satisfied by hardly ever attending church and not really *surrendering, caring or sharing*. Treat them with so much love that they will become more and more open to receiving the Gospel. The saying, *Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care*, is very true. It is not your newfound knowledge, but your *care* that will touch them.

Of course, you should *care* for your fellow believers in the first place. However, your *care* should never be limited to your fellow believers. (Read Leviticus 19:33-34, and Galatians 6:9-10 and 2 Peter 1:5-7). In fact, in the Bible the Lord teaches us to love our enemies and to *care* for all who insult us and treat us badly (Exodus 23:4-5; Proverbs 25:21-22; Luke 6:27-36 and Romans 12:20-21).

When Jesus' disciples really *care* for people chances are so much better that the people in question will *surrender* to Jesus. They experience Jesus' *care* because His disciples *care* for them. That makes it so much easier for them to *surrender*.

Remember that Jesus did not only *care* for those in spiritual need. He fed them when they were hungry. He healed them when they were sick. He freed them from bondage. He taught them when they were ignorant. He comforted them when they were sad. He provided when they were in a quandary (cf. John 2:1-12). He also taught His disciples to meet people's physical needs and relieve their distress (Matthew 25:31-46 and Isaiah 58:6-10).



Jesus was the *Great Carer*. Therefore, He expects you as His disciple to be a *carer* too. So keep *caring* for your two friends. If they realise your *care* is sincere, they will be willing to learn about the meaning of discipleship from you.

Lord, please teach Theophilus how to care for his friends practically until the Spirit makes them ready to surrender to You. Make him patient and daily fill his heart with a sincere love for his friends. Grant him the wisdom to keep saying the right things to them at the right time. Amen

Letter 13

Each other!

Theophilus

Are you still *caring* for those who still believe it is a gamble to surrender to Jesus? Remember, you must care for them and also for each other.

Jesus' disciples have a great responsibility towards each other. The words *each other* often appear in the New Testament. Disciples have been commanded to love all people, especially their fellow believers. Their love should not only be words and "lip service", but should be proven by their actions, according to 1 John 3:16-18. Therefore, believers should pray for each other and bear each other's burdens. They should accept each other, greet each other heartily, help, comfort, care for, admonish, encourage and forgive each other. The Word is full of it. Here are a few examples. Read them and write down the instructions in each text:

2 Corinthians 1:3-5

Ephesians 4:32 and 5:21

Colossians 3:16.....



Theophilus, these are things we must not only talk about. They are things that must be done. These are the different ways in which love and *care* become visible. *Care* is a verb and so it must be done. How? By means of a friendly smile; a little encouragement; a prayer or a warm bed; forgiveness or writing off debt; giving an orange or a slice of bread; solving a problem; a few rand in the hand or changing a flat tyre. The Lord is with you when you disciple people. Ask Him to show you how to make the fact that you care visible in various ways each day.

Theophilus, if you are battling to obey the *each other* commands in the Word, it is not only a *caring* problem, but also a *surrendering* problem. You need to *surrender* your old sinful self with all its selfish desires to die on the cross with Christ in order to *care* for others. This is the message in Philippians 2:3-8.

Lord, You are with Theophilus while he is discipling others. Therefore, I ask You to show him and his friends how to care for each other and to carry out the each other commands in your Word. Make them a blessing to each other and to other believers. Amen

Letter 14

Accountable friends

Theophilus

One of the best ways in which you as disciples can *care* for each other is by holding each other accountable. It is a practical way of helping each other to remain obedient to the Lord in everything and not to get entangled by sin.

One of the foundations on which our faith is built, is that Jesus Christ is LORD. That means that we must obey Him. If you and your friends believe this, and do what Jesus the Lord says, then the attacks from evil and the storms of life will not get you down. The single biggest cause of problems in the church and chaos in people's lives is because this foundation was never laid in their lives.



Read Acts 2:36. Who is Jesus?

Read Luke 6:46-49. What must people who call Jesus *Lord* do?

.....
What advantage is there for a disciple in obeying to the Lord?
.....

Therefore, you must keep helping each other to be and remain obedient. I repeat, the best way of doing so is by holding each other accountable. That implies regularly demanding accountability from each other and giving an account of yourself to each other.

Theophilus, do you remember the questions you asked me in the beginning? They were good questions and I could answer them theoretically. A more important question is whether that is how I live. You see, that is what accountable friends are for: **They keep asking each other specific (and often awkward and annoying) questions to make sure that none of them have given the devil a gap.** For instance: Is there any pornography on your cell phone or pc? Are you still committed to not having sex before marriage? How is your marriage? Are you entirely honest in your business? Does the Lord enjoy the jokes you tell? Are you still having regular quiet times? Have you forgiven all who have treated you badly? Are you bitter about something? And so on.

Theophilus, I know you don't feel comfortable asking me any of these questions. **Therefore, I must give you the right and encourage you to do so.** By giving you that right, I am growing in my commitment to obey the Lord, even before you ask me any questions! I will not think you arrogant for asking me these questions. On the contrary, it will convince me that you really do *care* for me. By demanding accountability from me, you are making sure that sinful thoughts and desires are wiped out of my heart before they bear fruit. You should also give your friends the right to ask you such questions. They won't if



you don't give them your consent. If you give them the right to do so, they will give you the same right!

Read James 1:13-15. What process must be stopped?

.....

What questions should you ask each other according to the following Scriptures to keep each other accountable for obeying God?

Read Ephesians 5:1-5

.....

Read Hebrews 13:4-5

.....

Lord, I thank you for friends who keep making sure that I obey You and don't give the devil a gap. I pray that Theophilus and his fellow disciples will really care for each other by holding each other accountable for living pure, holy and obedient lives. Amen

Letter 15

New ownership – new authority!

Theophilus

Do you still remember when we bought *Hopola*? You were visiting us at the time. We did not only take over ownership of a neglected farm, but also the control and management thereof. If not, the farm would have remained in the same pitiful condition. When the sale was done, it was our right as new owners to decide who would manage the farm in the future. The previous owner had no say in the matter. The new management was responsible for making the new ownership visible.



Discipleship has everything to do with *ownership*. And with *authority, control* and *management*. Let me explain it to you. Make sure that those you are discipling, will understand this.

Ephesians 2:1-3 describes the time before my conversion. Then I thought I was my own master. Little did I know that I was a slave, governed by the evil world, evil spirits and my own sinful desires. Nobody has ever been their own master.

But, in Ephesians 2:4 Paul says that God is *rich in mercy and has a great love* for us. From verse 4 on he describes the time after God mercifully intervened. Everyone remains a slave to the devil, the world and their own sinful nature until they have been redeemed - redeemed at an astronomical price!

Read 1 Peter 1:18-19 and write down the price at which you were redeemed!

.....

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 to see what the result of this transaction is. To whom do you no longer belong? Who lives in you now?

.....

Read Galatians 5:25 to see Who God put in control and management after taking over ownership. It is the job of this new Management to show everyone that you have a new Owner.

.....

In contrast to a spare tyre that (like a passenger) just goes along without having an influence on the vehicle, **the Steering Wheel has an influence on the vehicle all the time.** The whole vehicle is *surrendered* to the steering wheel. The vehicle goes where the steering wheel steers it. Similarly, the Holy Spirit is not a passenger in our lives who just goes along for the ride. He has been put in control of the



property that was bought by Christ in order to manage it in a new, efficient manner. Christ sent His Spirit to live in us and to be the steering wheel of our lives. He wants to and must control and manage your whole life. You must *surrender* the authority for your life to Him! He is the **President** of your life, not only a **Resident** in your life!

New ownership of your life also means new authority over your life. Disciples' lives are under new management therefore, there is only one thing they can do with the old management (the devil, the world, and your own sinful desires): Fire the old management! Sack them. Refuse to give them any say or influence! Ignore their advice! They have no more say. They are lying when they say they do.

New ownership of your life also means new authority over your life. Give the Spirit of Christ complete control over your life so that He and His management can make it increasingly clear that you are Christ's property.

Surrender, care and share characterises Jesus' disciples! Therefore, I must remind you: *Surrender* means accepting that you have a new Owner and willingly putting your whole life under His control and management.

Lord, let Theophilus not merely be glad that You are his new Owner. Daily make him more and more willing to accept the authority of Your Spirit over his life. Let him always remain surrendered to You and always obey You in everything. Amen

Letter 16

Teach them to be obedient

Theophilus

You are entirely right: You must also disciple your children. They are not too small. In fact, the sooner you lay the right foundation in their



lives, the better. As I said in a previous letter, **one of the foundations on which our faith is built, is that Jesus Christ is LORD. That means He must be obeyed.** Lay this foundation in your children's lives. They may experience storms in their lives, but with the right foundation, they will remain standing in spite of the storms.

It is very easy to teach your children to **disobey**: Say one thing and do the opposite. Let me explain: What are you teaching your children if you tell them not to swear but often do so yourself? Are you teaching them to swear? Yes. But, you are teaching them something far more dangerous too. You are teaching them to **disobey**. You are teaching them to ignore your rules and instructions. Telling your children not to exceed the speed limit while doing so yourself is teaching them to **disobey** the traffic rules. Disobedience is deadly, but also highly contagious. Once someone has been infected by disobedience it infects his/her whole life. Soon no authority will be recognised and no rules obeyed. Christ's authority and Word are also ignored. Teaching someone disobedience is far easier than you can imagine. Just say one thing and do the opposite.

Jesus' command to His disciples, and to you and me, is to teach people obedience. If you and I don't take the trouble to do so, we are not making disciples. **Read Matthew 28:18-29** and write down the command in verse 20 here:

.....

You can only teach people to obey Jesus in everything (24/7 = 24 hours of every day, 7 days of every week) if you obey Him in everything. If you tell people what Jesus commands but don't do it yourself, you are teaching people to be disobedient. You are actually saying, *It is a good thing to do what Jesus says if you feel like it. But, it does not matter if you don't feel like it. Do as you please. It will be OK with Him. He is merciful and He will forgive you.*

Theophilus, this is a dangerous and deadly attitude. It is refusing to *surrender* to Jesus and to subject yourself to His authority. It is exactly



the opposite of *surrendering*. Therefore, I beg you, be obedient so that you can teach your children and friends to be obedient too.

Lord, make Theophilus and me obedient to You 24/7. Give us the grace to teach our children and all Your children, to keep all the commandments and instructions You have given us. Amen

Letter 17

Let love motivate you

Theophilus

Today I am reminding you what your name means: Someone who loves God! This and only this should motivate you to be obedient!

I am emphasising the fact that Jesus' disciples should obey Him, but please don't get the impression that I want to force you and your friends into a legalistic religion (of which Christ has set you free). I remind you of that which Paul reminds the Philippians in chapter 3:9: *... I no longer have a righteousness of my own, the kind that is gained by obeying the Law. I now have the righteousness that comes from God and is based on faith.* (Good News Bible. Also read Romans 3:21-28 and Galatians 2:15-21.)

Do not obey the Lord merely in an effort to try to deserve your salvation by keeping a lot of rules. Don't obey the Lord because you are afraid of Him or His punishment. Surrender yourself to Him and obey Him out of love. A bride does not surrender to her bridegroom out of fear or in an attempt to deserve a life with him. Her surrender is only motivated by her passionate love for her bridegroom.

Listen to what Jesus says about why we should obey Him?

Read Luke 6:46

.....



Read John 14:15 & 21

.....

Read 1 John 5:3

.....

Why did Jesus obey His Father? **Read John 14:31**

.....

Is obedience really so important? **Read Matthew 7:21-23**

.....

Surrender becomes visible by obedience and obedience is the result of our passionate love for Jesus, our LORD and Saviour. Disobedience shows a lack of love and draws a line through *care* and therefore discipleship. Remember: *Surrender, care and share* characterise Jesus' disciples!

*O Holy Spirit, daily pour the love of God out in the lives of all Jesus' disciples so that we may love Him, our Bridegroom, passionately. According to Romans 5:6, that is your job. Please do it so that we will **want** to obey Him. Amen*

Letter 18

Disciples are bearers of good news

Theophilus

Once there was a war. The soldiers fought hard to stay alive. When they realised they were not going to make it, they had one of two options: They could keep fighting unto death in the hope that someone might think they had died bravely, or they could surrender. That would



mean admitting that they could do nothing more to stay alive. Then someone heard good news: The commanding officer against whom they were fighting was a merciful man. And so the soldiers who were losing the battle decided to stop fighting to stay alive and to surrender, believing and expecting that the commanding officer would be merciful and save their lives. And he did!

Theophilus, the word *gospel* means *good news* or *good message*. That is why we speak of the four Gospels and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When Jesus was born, the angels said that His coming was good news about which we could rejoice (Luke 2:8-11).

What is the good news? Wait. Let me first ask, *What would not have been good news?* It would have been very bad news if we heard that we had to keep on trying to save ourselves even though we knew that we could not do it.

A previous letter made it clear that the good news of the gospel is that nobody needs to try to deserve their salvation by means of good deeds or good works. Why not? Because Christ, by His sacrifice on the cross, has already saved us completely and dedicated us to God (Hebrews 10:10 & 14).

It is impossible for us to save ourselves. If it were possible for us to deserve our salvation by means of good works, God would not have sent Jesus. Why pay such a dear price for something that people could do for themselves? Then Jesus would not have said that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life and that no-one comes to the Father but by Him. Read Galatians 2:15-21 and be sure to mark verses 16 and 21. Mark John 14:6 in your Bible too.

The good news you need to *share* is that people can *surrender!* The good news is this: God declares righteous all who believe in Jesus and who stop trying to save themselves (Romans 3:26). He absolves everyone who believes (Romans 3:27-28)! He treated Jesus as a sinner in our stead so that He could redeem us (2 Corinthians 5:21).



When you disciple people and *share* the good news, the most important thing you need to teach a new disciple is this: Stop trying to save yourself by means of good deeds. Surrender! The notion that salvation must be deserved, is bad news. It is one of the devil's lies. The good news of the gospel is the exact opposite. You do not deserve life, but receive it by the grace of God.

Read Ephesians 2:8-10 and summarise it here:

.....

Lord Jesus, thank you that none of us needs to try to deserve our salvation. Thank you that You have already done everything that was required and that we can accept salvation as a gift from you. May we never turn this good news into bad news by creating the impression that salvation needs to be deserved. May more and more people believe in Jesus. Amen

Letter 19

Discipleship is a Kingdom issue

Theophilus

There is a vast difference between practicing religion and living in a relationship. Discipleship is about the latter. It is following Jesus and not just a set of rules. It is surrendering to Jesus, committing yourself to Him, and not just taking note of His doctrines. It is allowing Christ to live His life through you and to share His love with others through you.

Jesus says that His disciples are surrender-, care- and share-people. Discipleship focuses on the whole Kingdom of God and not just on the limited sphere of the church.

You and I must **surrender** and obey God:

- Not just for an hour on Sundays, but 24/7. That means 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every week;



- Not only in church, but also in the workplace;
- Not only about religious issues, but in everything.

You and I must **care**:

- Not only for an hour on Sundays, but 24/7.
- Not only for the church, but also for society;
- Not only for believers, but for our friends and enemies too;
- Not only for our own race or language group, but for all people;
- Not only by what we say, but also by the way we do our daily work;
- Not only for people, but for all of creation.

You and I must therefore **share** the good news:

- Not only with those who come to church now and then, but with everyone who comes to work every day;
- Not only during an annual outreach, but every day at home;
- Not only with words, but also by our way of life;
- Not only with sermons, but with all the gifts of the Spirit.

Theophilus, when you make disciples, you should teach them to pray, but also to work. You should teach them to preach, but also to farm. You should not wait for them to come to you, but you should go to them. You should teach them to read the Bible and to solve problems. You should give them bibles if they don't have any and jerseys or blankets or food if that is what they need. It is easiest to disciple people with whom you spend most of your time, right there where you are.

When Jesus' disciples *surrender, care and share* in everything 24/7, they are establishing His dominion and authority in agriculture, education, medicine, at universities and in the business world. They are *living* Jesus' character wherever they are. They are making His voice heard everywhere. They bring victory and restoration to all that typifies His Kingdom. One can see this wherever He reigns.

Theophilus, it is our calling as disciples: By *surrendering, caring and sharing* we are establishing His Kingdom and are making part of heaven a reality on earth.



Our Father in heaven, holy be thy Name. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done here on earth as it is done in heaven. Amen

Letter 20

Anchor yourself in the Word

Theophilus

It was good to hear from you again yesterday. I am especially pleased that you discuss all the letters I send you with your friends. That, by the way, is what all Christians should do with the messages they receive each week. Unfortunately, many church people have an attitude of: *It's only for my information, not my transformation.*

What pleases me even more is the fact that you say you look up, read and discuss all the texts. It is the right thing to do. It serves to anchor you and your friends in the Word. The Word of God has wonderful attributes that I want you to discover for yourselves.

Read 2 Timothy 3:15-17. Although Paul is referring to the Old Testament here, it applies to the whole Bible.

Where does Scripture come from (verse 16)?

What value does Scripture have? See if you can find at least six things.

.....
.....

Read Matthew 4:1-11. Was Jesus anchored in Scripture? How do you know?

.....

Read John 14:10 & 24. Where did Jesus hear what He had to say and do?



.....
Read John 14:26 and 16:12-14. Where does the Spirit hear what He has to tell you and me?

.....
Where did the prophets and the authors of the Bible hear what they had to proclaim or write? **Read 2 Peter 1:20-21 and again 2 Timothy 3:16.**

.....
Read acts 2:42 and 6:2-4. What did the apostles focus on and what did the believers do?

.....
Read Colossians 3:16. What should believers do?

.....
Theophilus, keep reading the Word. And keep reading it to others. Your relationship with Jesus will keep growing if you listen to what He says and not only to what I or someone else say *about* Him. Jesus' disciples listen to Jesus' Word daily.

Lord, I am thinking about Psalm 19:11 and so I ask: Make your Word more precious than gold and sweeter than honey to Theophilus, our families, friends, personnel, and to me. Fill us with love for Your Word and give us a burning desire to get to know it better and better. Amen

Postscript: See how excited David is about God's Word. In Psalm 119 he sings about its value and what it means to him. Take time to read it!



Letter 21

Giving something is not surrendering

Theophilus

Remember all the stories I told you when you were little; stories in which animals could talk and think and reason like people. You aren't a child anymore, but I want to tell you a short story, a parable.

One day, the farm animals decided to take a trip into town. The pig and the chicken walked down the road together. As they were walking past Vincent's butchery, they noticed an advert in the window: **Wanted: bacon and eggs. We pay cash.** The chicken immediately responded. *"Let's go and help the man. He wants bacon and eggs and he pays cash."* *"Huh, that'll be the day!"* replied the pig after thinking about the advert for a while. *"It is easy for you. You can give the butcher something, but I will have to give him myself!"*

Jesus' parables always had a special message. He told parables to help us understand things better. There is an important message for you in the *bacon and eggs* story. It is this: You must be willing to die and to give yourself to Jesus to be one of His disciples. If, like the chicken, you are only willing to give Him something before carrying on with your life as before, you will be disqualified from being a disciple.

Being a disciple is wonderful! There is no better way of life. Nothing else is as exciting, satisfying or fulfilling, because it is what you and I were destined to be! But that does not mean it is easy. There is a price to pay. Unbelievers believe the price is too high. But it is nothing compared to what you gain. (It is also nothing compared to the price people pay when they are at the mercy of evil, the world and their own sinful nature.) But don't listen to me. Listen to Jesus:



Read **Matthew 16:24-26**. What does the Lord demand from someone who wants to be a disciple? What must you and I give Him?

.....

Read Romans 12:1-2. What does the Lord ask of you in return for everything He has already done for you and for His life that He sacrificed for you? What must you give Him?

.....

Theophilus, while you read Romans 12:1-2, take note of the wonderful result of complete surrender: You will know what God wants you to do; you will know what is truly good, acceptable and perfect. Just think of the advantages it will have for you if you always know these things!

The road to discipleship is a road on which you and I must die (*surrender!*) so that we can share in His new life. Only by dying will we be freed from evil, cosmic powers (Colossians 2:20). Only by dying will we be freed from the power and bondage that sin has over us (Romans 6:6-7). Because we have died with Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14 and Colossians 3:3), you and I must rid ourselves of a lot of earthly things. We must take them off like dirty clothes and put on Jesus' new life! We must put the old to death! They have no right to existence in the lives of Jesus' disciples.

What, according to **Colossians 3:5-11**, should you put to death in your life?

.....

.....

What new behaviour should you put on (acquire, learn) according to **verses 12-17**?

.....

.....



You see, Theophilus, *surrender is surrender!* It is putting to death the **whole** old you, not the amputation of one or two limbs. We cannot just *surrender* something like the chicken. Like the pig, we don't have a choice: It is all or nothing!

Lord Jesus, help Theophilus and me to surrender daily. But help us today to make the final decision to surrender daily. We cannot afford to reconsider this decision every day and in every situation. It is final Lord: I surrender! I surrender all! Amen

Letter 22

The rich family in our church

Theophilus

It is story time! Years ago, I visited uncle Louis. He was well into his eighties. He was a true disciple of Jesus. His life was characterised by *surrender, care and share*. His house was filled with religious books and letters from missionaries. I found the following story on a page in his house. The author is Eddie Organ, but the rest is unknown. I think you will find this story about *surrender, care and share* inspiring as there are so many poor people (some physically and others spiritually) in your area. The title is **The rich family in our church**.

I will never forget the Easter of 1946. I was 14, Ocy 12 and Darlene 16. The three of us lived with Mommy and knew what it meant to do without. My father had died five years previously and left my mother behind with seven children and no money. By 1946 the eldest four children had already left home.

A month before Easter, the minister announced that a special collection to help a very poor family would be held at Easter. He asked everyone to save money, to really sacrifice and to give generously. Back home, we started talking about what we could do to help the poor family. We decided to buy 50 pounds (about 23 kg) of potatoes and to live on it for the whole month. In that way we could save \$20 of our grocery money. We



also decided to use as little electricity as possible so that we could save more. We cleaned people's homes and back yards and took every opportunity to look after people's children. With every 15 cents we received, we bought enough wool to knit three potholders that we sold again for \$1. In this way we saved another \$20.

It was one of the best months in our lives! We counted the money every day to see how much we had already saved. At night we sat in the dark talking about how the poor family would enjoy the money the church was going to give them. Because there were about 80 people in church, we calculated that the congregation would be able to give at least 20 times more than we could. After all, the minister reminded the congregation of the special collection every Sunday.

The day before Easter, my sister and I went to the grocery store and exchanged our change for three new \$20 notes and one \$10 note. We raced home to show Mommy and Darlene. We had never had so much money before! That night we could hardly sleep, we were so excited. We did not mind that we did not have new clothes for Easter because we had \$70 for the special collection. We couldn't wait to go to church the next day.

It poured that Sunday. We did not own an umbrella, but did not mind getting wet. Even Darlene's feet were soaked because her shoes had holes in them. We sat in church proudly. I heard some of the teenagers whispering something about the Smith girls who were wearing their old dresses again. I looked at them in their new dresses and felt very rich.

When the collection was taken, Mommy put in the \$10 bill and the three of us \$20 each. We sang all the way home. Mom surprised us for lunch. She had bought a dozen eggs and we ate them with our potatoes.

Late that afternoon, the minister stopped outside our home. Mommy opened the door, spoke to him for a while and then came back inside with an envelope in her hand. We asked what it was, but she said nothing. She opened the envelope. Some money fell out: Three new



\$20 bills, one \$10 and seventeen \$1. Mother put the money back in the envelope and no-one said a word. We all just sat staring at the floor. A moment ago we all felt like millionaires, but now we felt like poor worthless trash.

We led such a happy life that we felt sorry for everyone who did not have our father and mother, or a house full of brothers, sisters and friends who kept popping in. We thought it was fun to share cutlery and to wonder what you would get to eat with – the fork or the spoon? We had two knives that we passed around the table to whoever needed them.

We knew that we did not have many of the things other people had, but we never thought of ourselves as poor. But, that Easter we found out that we were indeed poor. The minister had brought the money collected for the poor family to us and that meant we had to be poor! I did not like being poor. I looked at my dress and tacky shoes and was so ashamed that I did not feel like going to church again. Obviously, everyone knew that we were poor. I was in grade 9 at school and was first in a class of more than 100 children. I wondered if they also knew that we were poor. I decided to quit school because I had already passed grade 8 and that was all the law required in those days.

We sat like that in silence for a long while. Later we went to bed. We did not talk much during the week. On Saturday, Mother broke the silence and asked what we wanted to do with the money? We wondered what poor people do with money? We did not know, because we didn't know that we were poor. We did not want to go back to church on Sunday, but Mother said we had to.

It was a lovely sunny day, but no-one spoke on the way to church. Mother started singing, but no-one joined her. A missionary spoke at church that day. He told us about how people in Africa build churches with sun-dried clay bricks, but that they needed money for the roof. He said that \$100 was enough for one church's roof. The minister asked: *Can't we all make an offering to help these poor people?*



We looked at each other and smiled for the first time all week. Mother put her hand in her handbag and took out the envelope. We passed it on to Ocy and she put it in the collection plate. After the money was counted, the minister announced that there was just over \$100. The missionary was very excited. He did not expect such a big contribution from our little congregation. He said, *You must really have some rich people in your church.* Then it hit us. We gave \$87 of the just more than \$100. We were the rich family in church. The missionary had said so himself. From that day on I was never poor again.

I always remember how rich I am because I have Jesus!

Jesus' disciples are *surrender, care and share people.* What in the story indicates that the Smith family were Jesus' disciples? Talk about it with your disciple friends.

Here we have a **rich poor family.** In Luke 18:18-30, we read the story of the **poor rich young man.** Theophilus, what are you? Poor *rich* families, or rich *poor* families?

Read 2 Corinthians 8:9! What did Jesus do?

.....

This is the heart of the gospel: to turn poor people into rich people. Theophilus, do it by discipling all people.

Spirit of God, show us how to be your disciples amongst poor people, and to make disciples for you where we live and work. Spirit of God, show us how to be Your disciples among poor people. Show us how to disciple people for you where we live and work. Teach us to make people who are physically poor your disciples. And those who, in spite of their material wealth, live in spiritual poverty. Amen



Letter 23

When do you get on your high horse?

Theophilus

It seems we have not finished talking about the fact that *surrendering* means death and dying. You still seem to have many questions. Can I just first remind you that the cross is the symbol of our Christian faith. When someone was seen carrying a cross when Jesus was on earth, everyone knew: *he is going to die; he has no more dreams or ideals; he has come to the end.* Christianity and discipleship is not for people who refuse to die to themselves, to die to their own I.

How do you know when your “I” is still alive and kicking in some area of your life? Just ask yourself another question! When do you get on your high horse? When a friend or member of your family admonishes you about *what?* Or when do you always come up with an excuse for your bad behaviour? Instead of crucifying what is wrong, you are trying to justify it or give it a positive slant. Let me tell you two short stories to illustrate what I am saying:

Gerry gets mad when the minister preaches about money. Eventually he can't handle it anymore and shouts at him. *Don't talk to me about money! Talk to me about my soul!* he said. The minister immediately replied, *I want to talk to you about your soul but your soul is stuck inside your purse!*

Ouma Hettie was 98 years old when she died. She lived off a tiny pension, but whenever the topic of money was raised, Ouma Hettie said, *My child, the good Lord and I have only one purse. When I need money, I ask the Lord. And when the Lord needs some He asks me. It works very well!*

It is clear who had *surrendered* completely and who still has some *surrendering* to do.



Theophilus, let me talk to you openly. A man who hopes to disciple his wife and children cannot be self-indulgent, bossy, loud, vulgar, materialistic, touchy, racist and lazy. He is there to serve his family and to put them first. They are not there to jump every time he wants to be served.

Read Mark 10:42-45. What do true leaders, who are also Jesus' disciples, do?

.....

Ephesians 5:21 and Philippians 2:3-8. What attitude should men have? (I am not excluding women.)

.....

Women should also beware. Women should take good care of themselves and dress well. But when their whole life revolves around their outward appearances, the latest fashion, magazines, visiting their friends and gossip, there is still a great deal they need to *surrender*. They won't succeed in discipling people with such a lifestyle, especially outside their own social circle. *Surrender, care and share* should be visible in their everyday life.

Read 1 Timothy 2:9-10. What is expected of women?

.....

Read 1 Timothy 5:13. What habits should die?

.....

Theophilus, people differ and different things are important to different people. That is a fact, but there are things in all our lives that must be put to death! Let's do it!



Lord, make us willing to put all our sinful, irritating, selfish behaviour to death. Start with Theophilus and me so that our families and fellow-workers will also want to be your disciples. Amen

Letter 24

Like Jesus, you must make time to pray

Theophilus

All relationships are based on communication. No relationship can exist without communication – neither can discipleship. Prayer is communication with God. Surrendering to God is demonstrated by an ongoing communication with God, by continual prayer. Just think of the way Jesus lived. His prayer-life demonstrated His complete *surrender* to the Father.

Jesus' disciples should follow His example regarding their prayer lives too. He did not only come to show us how to live. He also came to show us the best way of living - how to keep experiencing the blessings and power of God in our lives. He often told us to pray. But, He also often withdrew to pray (Luke 5:16).

Jesus spent a great deal of time in prayer. *He made time to pray in spite of his full programme.* In Mark 1:32-36 we read that He worked late into the night. We can accept that the healings and driving out of demons tapped His reserves (cf. Mark 5:30). Early the next morning the people went looking for Him. He had a busy schedule. Yet, He made time to pray. He rose long before dawn and went out to a quiet place to pray.

Theophilus, you are busy too. So many things demand attention and take up your time - your family, farm, friends, various societies, the church and even television. The list is endless.

But, listen carefully: fellowship with the Word of God is one of the foundations of discipleship. So too is an intimate prayer life. If you do not pray, and if you don't teach those you disciple to pray, you will have



a very superficial relationship with God. Don't wait until you have time to pray – it might never happen. Like Jesus, you must make time to pray. It is part of the discipline of discipleship.

Prayer characterizes people who have *surrendered* to the Lord. I am not convinced of people's surrender when nothing is happening in their prayer life. Prayer is one of the most important ways of *caring* for people. Do you know how many people really need someone to pray a sincere prayer for them? Prayer is essential when we want to *share* the Gospel with others. We pray for the process of *sharing*. But, prayer is also a way of *sharing*. *Surrender, care and share* become visible in prayer! Therefore, disciples are people who pray.

Jesus always made time to pray, no matter the circumstances. Like Jesus, you and I must make time to pray ...

- ✓ Despite our busy schedules (Mark 1:32-36);
- ✓ When everyone wants advice and needs help (Luke 5:15-16);
- ✓ Before making important decisions (Luke 6:12-13);
- ✓ When we are tired after a hard day's work (Mark 6:31-49);
- ✓ When time is little and precious [When it was time for Jesus to die on the cross He spent the precious time He had left to pray for His disciples and for us (John 17)];
- ✓ When the battle with Evil is at its worst (Luke 22:39-46).

Jesus' whole life demonstrates the importance of unceasing prayer. As Jesus' disciple, prayer must be your priority. Jesus is living in you. He conquered the temptation to neglect prayer every day of His life. He can and He will help you to do so too.

Jesus wants to shower you with the blessings and power of heaven in answer to your prayers. Therefore, you should dwell before the Throne. Study the booklet, ***Dwell before the Throne***, to learn more about prayer. It is available from AMOS.

Holy Spirit, please come and teach us to pray. We desire a living, intimate and dynamic relationship with our Lord and Saviour. May our



surrender, share and care be visible in our prayers. May Theophilus and I make time to pray the way Jesus did. Amen

Letter 25

The who, what and why of discipleship

Theophilus

Thus far, I have written to you mainly about the **what** of discipleship. In other words, **what** should you teach people? You already know. *Teach them to surrender, care and share.*

My answer to the question, **why** do we disciple people? is simple: *Because Jesus said so. Because He said everyone must be reached!* Discipleship is the only strategy that results in multiplication (2 Timothy 2:2). People teach people who teach people to teach more people! If every disciple takes six months to lead someone to Jesus and to make a disciple of them so that they can lead and disciple someone else for the next six months, the number of disciples should theoretically grow as follows:

After 6 months	=	2 disciples
After 1 year	=	4 disciples
After 18 months	=	8 disciples
After 3 years	=	64 disciples
After 16 years	=	4 294 967 296 disciples (4.3 billion)
After 16½ years	=	the entire world population!

Even if the church could claim to convert 3 000 people a day, they would lead 1,1 million people to Christ per year. But, after 16 years, they would only have led 17,6 million to Him in comparison to the 4,3 billion that could be reached and led to maturity by means of constant discipleship. **The world cannot be won for Christ in any other way. It can only be done by means of *disciples who multiply*.** Remember what I wrote to you in my first letter.



You also know the answer to the question **who** must make disciples: *All Jesus' disciples (everyone)*. This is the core of the New Testament's teaching on the church: **Everyone!** In the New Testament, ministry is the privilege and responsibility of **every** member of the body. **Everyone** has been filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). **Everyone** has at least one gift of the Spirit. **Everyone** must do their share. **Everyone** has a contribution to make. (Read 1 Corinthians 12 to 14 and Ephesians 4:1-16.) **Everyone** must tell how wonderful God is – the God who called them out of the darkness into the light (1 Peter 2:8-9). **Everyone** must serve and minister to everyone (1 Peter 4:10-11 and Romans 12:3-8). **Everyone** has been commanded to make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20)! **Everyone** must tell that God is wonderful – the God who called them out of the darkness and into the light (1 Peter 2:8-9). **Everyone** must serve and minister to everyone else (1 Peter 4:10-11 and Romans 12:3-8).

To leave (or limit) ministry to the church, to church officials, or to the so-called “spiritual elite”, is, Theophilus, an unbiblical falsehood of which you must please rid yourselves. It is a mistaken notion that overworked mission committees should do all the *caring*. Do the majority of our church members feel nothing for lost souls? Aren't they equipped to share the message – do they have no knowledge of the Word and no power of the Spirit? How are they able to really believe without talking about what they believe (2 Corinthians 4:13)?

Theophilus, the church is not a passenger ship with a small crew who do all the work and many passengers who sit back waiting to be served. The church is a battleship. No passengers are allowed, only crewmembers who each have a definite job to do.

This ship belongs in the water, Theophilus, but the water does not belong in the ship. The ship does not fit the bill when it is not in the water. But, when the water enters the ship, the ship will sink sooner or later. Similarly, the church belongs in the world, but the world does not belong in the church. (Please read John 17:13-19.) If the church starts to think and reason like the world the end is in sight - warning lights are flashing!



Lord Jesus, please reveal to Theophilus that You have given the privilege and responsibility of ministry to ALL (each one) of your children. Make him and his friends willing and able to share your good news with unbelievers with determination, while living and working in the world. Protect them, so that even though they are in the world, the world will never be in them. Amen

Letter 26

How are disciples made?

Theophilus

I will get straight to the point. We need a strategy and a plan if we want *everyone* to make disciples. If not, it will never happen. Therefore, I will now answer your question, **How** are disciples made? How does the process work?

In his book ***Accidental Missionary***, *The unexpected adventure of making disciples*, Steve Murrell describes four phases to the process of discipleship namely, ***Engage, Establish, Equip and Empower***. (Buy and read the book. It will change your way of thinking.) I want to link up with what he says.

Discipleship occurs in small groups. Discipleship occurs in relationships. However, not all small groups are discipleship groups. Some congregations use small groups to try to keep their members from leaving the church. Small groups are the key to keeping the backdoor locked so that members won't escape through it one by one. I see discipleship groups as the key to unlocking the front door so that those who are still outside will come in. Then we will be able to expose them to Christ and the Good News. After all, the goal is to win everyone for Christ.

Theophilus, this means that you should **deliberately reach out** to people outside the church. **Associate** yourself with them. Form a relationship with them. Care for them and literally become part of their



lives (not of their sinful lifestyle). They will not simply change to your *religious* way of life of their own accord. You need to reach out to them.

Because you are deliberately entering their world to introduce Christ to them there, you need to start sharing your faith resolutely. Tell them what you believe and why. Lead them to Christ and **provide them with Biblical foundations**. Make sure their faith is based on Christ and the truths in His Word. Introduce new converts to a church in which they will be able to grow to spiritual maturity with other believers. Steve Murrell writes, *Being a disciple is and always has been a team sport, a group activity, a family affair, a community event. It is not a solo flight or an individual achievement* (page 129).

When someone's faith and assurance is founded on Christ, he/she should immediately be **trained and equipped** to fulfil his/her function in the body (congregation). He/she must also be trained and equipped to deliberately reach out to unbelievers and to lead them to Christ. He/she must be taught to found the next group on Biblical foundations.

Then he/she must be **sent out and trusted** to go and do what he/she has learned. You must show that you believe that all believers are in full-time ministry, that it is the privilege and responsibility of all believers to make disciples. If you keep equipping people but never send and use them, they will be frustrated and you will lose them.

Theophilus, think about this and ask the Spirit to give you insight. I will try to explain each step in more detail if you want me to.

Spirit of Christ, please teach us how to make disciples. How to teach people to surrender, care and share. Forgive us for thinking it is only the responsibility of spiritual leaders and people who are paid to do it. Amen



Brief 27

Crossing frontiers with Christ

Theophilus

I find it strange that so many Christians are not, and do not want to be, personally involved in *sharing* the Gospel with the world. We have become so used to this state of affairs that we don't even realise that it is strange and unbiblical.

You and I have been saved because God loved the world so much in spite of its sin that He sent His Son *to cross the gap between heaven and earth* to reach out a hand of salvation to us. (Read John 3:16; Romans 5:8-10 and Philippians 2:6-8.) How is it possible that people in whom He lives are unable to cross the farm road, the tar road, the train track, the ditch, the cultural border, language, social or racial barriers?

Everyone is quick to share the good news of victory on the sports field with everyone who wants to listen. The good news of the birth of a baby spreads quickly and in every possible way. But, thousands of people in our immediate vicinity have not heard the good news of Jesus - the news of the Child who was born and the victory of victories that He has gained on the cross. They only know and use His Name as a swear word. Something is wrong! Something is very wrong, Theophilus!

I am sorry to say that I think people who are against mission, against the *sharing* of the Gospel with all people, are demonstrating that they aren't, and have never been, part of God's *workforce*. They are still part of His *workplace*. Theophilus, you will never get them motivated to *share*, because they have nothing to *share*. You need to give them the whole Gospel first.

Yes, I know that Peter also struggled to cross the *gap* to the heathen, but it has been almost 2 000 years since the story was written down for us to read in Acts 10 & 11. We cannot keep using Peter as an excuse for not breaking down barriers with Christ.



Consider the image of the ship and the water once again. What did Jesus do without becoming immoral, corrupt and dirty Himself? **Read Matthew 9:9-13.**

.....

.....

Jesus did not spend all His time on earth with religious people and in synagogues. He crossed every possible barrier to seek out and save all who were lost (Luke 19:10). It is unthinkable for anyone to call himself a Christian (meaning that Christ lives in him), while spending all his/her time in and around the church and amongst believers. The Christ who lives in His children and spends all His days with His disciples, still wants to seek out and save all who are lost.

Holy Spirit, show us that it is impossible to belong to Christ and yet to refuse to cross frontiers with Him to seek and to save all who are lost. Give us your love for all people - the love we read of in John 3:16 and 1 John 3:16. Amen

Letter 28

Biblical Foundations

Theophilus

In my previous letter, I explained that Jesus' disciples continually cross barriers with Him. With Him, they are always busy seeking out and saving those who are lost. **Deliberately reaching out and associating with unbelievers** is the *first step* in making disciples. Get close to people, in their homes. Read how Jesus and Paul did it (Luke 7:34; Hebrews 2:14-18 and 4:15; Philippians 2:5-8 and 1 Corinthians 9:19-23). *And yet the water never got in the boat.*

The *second step* is laying **Biblical foundations** in your *sinner friends'* lives. You could do so by inviting them to your small group meeting



during the week at a time and a place that will suit them. Tell them why you are inviting them. Do not pressurize them if they aren't ready. Pray and ask the Lord to make them ready. Introduce your friends to Jesus at the small group meeting and start working at laying the foundations.

How does Peter describe the foundations in his first sermon? **Read Acts 2:36-42** to find the answer.

1. What is the essence of Peter's sermon? (verse 36)

.....

2. What did the people ask in response to Peter's sermon? (verse 37)

.....

3. What did Peter reply? What did they have to do? (verse 38)

.....

4. What did Peter say they would receive when they were converted and baptised? (verse 38)

.....

5. To whom does this promise apply? (verse 39)

.....

6. What else did Peter say? (verse 40)

.....

7. What happened to those who accepted the message? (verse 41)

.....



8. What did the believers do then? (verse 42)

.....

Lord Jesus, You are the Son of God, our Lord and Saviour. That is the foundation on which You built your church. Help us to understand the importance of foundations. Help us to lay the right foundation in the lives of the newly converted. Amen

Letter 29

Learn from two tin cans

Theophilus

Explain why a good foundation is necessary to your friends as follows: *Take two tin cool drink cans – a full one and an empty one. Give the full can to the biggest, strongest person in the group. Give the empty can to the smallest, weakest person in the group. They must both try to squash the tin they were given.*

The empty can is easy to squash. But the big, strong person cannot squash the full can. This demonstrates the difference between someone who has a Biblical foundation and values, and someone who does not. People with Biblical foundations and values are able to resist violent storms and assaults. They cannot be squashed. But, those who don't have such foundations, snap under the slightest pressure and give in to every temptation.

Read Luke 6:46-49 and Matthew 7:24-28.

In the course of time, you must make sure that the following outcomes have been reached and the correct foundations set:

- ✓ **Conversion** – a decision to believe in Jesus as Lord and Saviour and to *surrender* to Him;



- ✓ **Unshakeable faith** – a firm and steadfast faith and trust in Jesus and in what God, by His grace, did through Jesus to save us and to make us His children;
- ✓ **Baptism** – an act of obedience. Openly identifying with the message of the death and resurrection of Christ. It is a public confession that we have died and risen with Him and that He has broken the power and hold of sin over us and given us a new life.
- ✓ **Baptism (filling) in the Holy Spirit** – it is the fulfilment of Jesus' promise that the Holy Spirit will, in a supernatural way, equip us to carry out His instructions (commands);
- ✓ **24/7-Obedience** – because Jesus is accepted as Saviour and acknowledged as King and Lord!
- ✓ **Anchored in the Word** – because it has been inspired by God, introduces us to Him, is reliable, provides us with a strong foundation for our faith and equips us to live for Him (cf. 2 Timothy 3:15-17).
- ✓ **Prayer** – because an intimate relationship with God is impossible without personal communication with Him. Because prayer is a special way of demonstrating that we *surrender, care and share!*
- ✓ **Joining a local faith community (church)** – because every believer is part of the one body of Christ and shares in one Spirit (Romans 12:5, and 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 & 27); because everyone is a member of God's family (Ephesians 2:19) and people (Ephesians 1:11).

Theophilus, Christ is the foundation on which our faith is built. Therefore, each one of the foundation stones is important. If they are missing, people's lives are shattered by every onslaught.

Lord Jesus, I am sorry for often begetting spiritual children without laying foundations in their lives. Forgive me that so many of them have been hurt and crushed by the storms of life. Please help Theophilus and me to do everything we can to lay the proper foundations in people's lives when making them disciples. Amen



Letter 30

The Church

Theophilus

You have many questions about the Church. To summarise, they boil down to the following: 1. *Who and what is the church?* 2. *What church should new disciples join?* It is impossible to say everything that must be said in one or two letters, but I will try my best.

Hosea 2:15-19 already envisions a day when the relationship between the Lord and His people will be radically different and new. A day when He will take the initiative to recreate the relationship and turn it into a loving marriage; a marriage in which He will not be honoured less, but will be loved more; in which He will not be obeyed less, but will be perfectly obeyed in love; in which His bride will not live in fear of punishment, but will rejoice in His mercy; in which prayer will not be a religious ritual, but an intimate communication of love; in which service will not be a burden, but a joy; in which the wife will praise Him spontaneously from a heart overflowing with appreciation. All this will happen because He faithfully grants her righteousness and faith.

The Church is precious. She is the apple of the Lord's eye! The Church is the Bride of Christ. The Bride cannot be *of a different kind* and so the Church (every member of the Church) is destined to be like Christ. Scripture is clear about this. **Please read Romans 8:28-30** and take note of the words in verse 29: *For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son* (NIV). The Good News Bible says, *Those whom God had already chosen He also set apart to become like His Son, ...* John confirms that we will indeed one day *be like Jesus* (1 John 3:2). Therefore, no-one can become part of the Church by joining a church. You need to be *born of God* (John 1:12-13). This gives the Church a new identity, which is described in many ways in the New Testament. The Church is God's children, His people, His property. The Church is the Body and the Bride of Christ. The Bride has been redeemed and has been called out of this world (Acts 20:28 and Romans 1:7). By His blood, their relationship has been restored, once and for all



(Hebrews 10:10-18). The Bride is perfect in the eyes of the Bridegroom! Therefore, the Bride only has eyes for the Bridegroom and prepares herself for His coming (1 John 3:2-3). She yearns for Him and keeps calling to Him (Revelation 21:17)!

Theophilus, you and I are the Church. So is everyone who believes in Jesus Christ. Everyone who has been born of God has received a new identity. I will make a few short statements about the Church and answer your second question in my next letter.

Lord Jesus, thank you for the wonderful privilege You have given us of being your Church. Thank you that we can be your Bride. Thank you that You did everything that was needed to restore the relationship between us. Thank you that we, the Church, are precious and perfect in your sight. Amen

Letter 31

Let us paint the church

Theophilus

As you know, we live far from town. We decided to have a **church** meeting at Sandplaas once a month for people who find it difficult to attend **church** regularly. We use the old house there as a **church** - the lounge is our **church**. But the lounge needs to be painted. One day I asked everyone to wear old clothes to **church** next time so that we could paint the **church** after **church**. Everyone was glad and looked forward to it eagerly. When the day arrived, I said, *Here is the paint. Gather around and let's paint each other!* Everyone was shocked and no-one was willing to paint someone else or to be painted. But everyone got the message: We call places, things and gatherings **church** when they are not really **Church**.

- Notice boards announcing *church times* mislead people and reinforce the unbiblical idea that there is a particular time for church. It turns



people into Sunday Christians and Week atheists. Church is a 24/7 issue and cannot be limited to specific times on Sundays.

- When people are invited into the *house of the Lord* during Sunday service, they are brought under a misconception. The Lord does not live in temples (buildings) built by people (Acts 17:24). The children of God *are* the temple of God in which His Spirit dwells (1 Corinthians 3:16). Wherever you meet, there is God (Matthew 18:20). The idea that God lives and must be worshipped in a particular place adds to people's habit of being Sunday Christians and week atheists.
- The world's measure for successful churches is Numbers, Buildings and Money. These things are not necessarily good or bad, but are just plain meaningless when we use them to measure or judge the quality of the bride's relationship with the Bridegroom. The Bridegroom wants His bride to *surrender, care and share*, thereby showing that she is one with Him.
- When being a church is so expensive that a congregation no longer can or wants to *share*, there is something radically wrong with their understanding of church and mission. If money is needed for a church to be a church, then rich people in rich countries should be better churches than poor people in poor countries. What rubbish! *Surrender, care and share* can be done equally well without money, as with money.
- Church is:
 - ✓ **People**, not a place (Acts 17:24 and 1 Peter 2:5)
 - ✓ A **body**, not a building (1 Corinthians 12:18,26,27 and Ephesians 4:16)
 - ✓ An **army**, not an audience (2 Corinthians 10:3-4 and Ephesians 6:10-13)
 - ✓ A **Spiritual family**, not a religious organisation demanding membership (Ephesians 2:19; Colossians 4:15; 1 Timothy 3:4-5 and Hebrews 3:4-5)
 - ✓ **Relationships**, not rituals (Matthew 5:23-24)

Read Hebrews 10:25 and see what the author calls that which we call *church*:

.....



Now for your question, Theophilus: *What church (denomination) should new disciples join?* Let me share my pain with you first. I am filled with remorse about the times in my life that I sent new believers (of all races) back to “churches” (or just groups) that could not and did not give them a Biblical foundation while they were there. I was disobeying **1 Corinthians 5:9-11**. Most of them eventually just went back to their old way of life. They need to be found and disciplined all over again. Don’t send newborn babies (young Christians) back to “churches” where one thing is being said and another done. This is life-threatening, because you are teaching them to disobey the Lord from the start. I know no church is perfect, but it is clear that *surrender, care and share* are top priority in some churches, but not in others. Some churches lay foundations and equip believers to serve the body, but others just practice religiosity.

Theophilus, it is important for every believer to join a spiritual family. As I said earlier, the Lord’s children are responsible for each other. When a burning log is taken out of a fire, it dies and just lies there smoking. The same happens to someone who does not become part of a spiritual family. New converts rarely survive on their own.

Lord, help Theophilus and me to help every new disciple to join a spiritual family; a spiritual family that will accept joint-responsibility for providing the disciple with a good Biblical foundation. Grant us wisdom, Lord, because it is not easy to make the right decision in a country filled with “churches” but with little surrender, care and share. Amen

Letter 32

Train and equip

Theophilus

I need to say something else about the third step of discipleship or else reproduction and multiplication will not occur. All who believe in Christ must now be **trained and equipped** to fill their position in the body.



Members have different tasks and functions, but there are things that *everyone* is responsible for. One of these is making disciples. Therefore, *everyone* must be trained to do so.

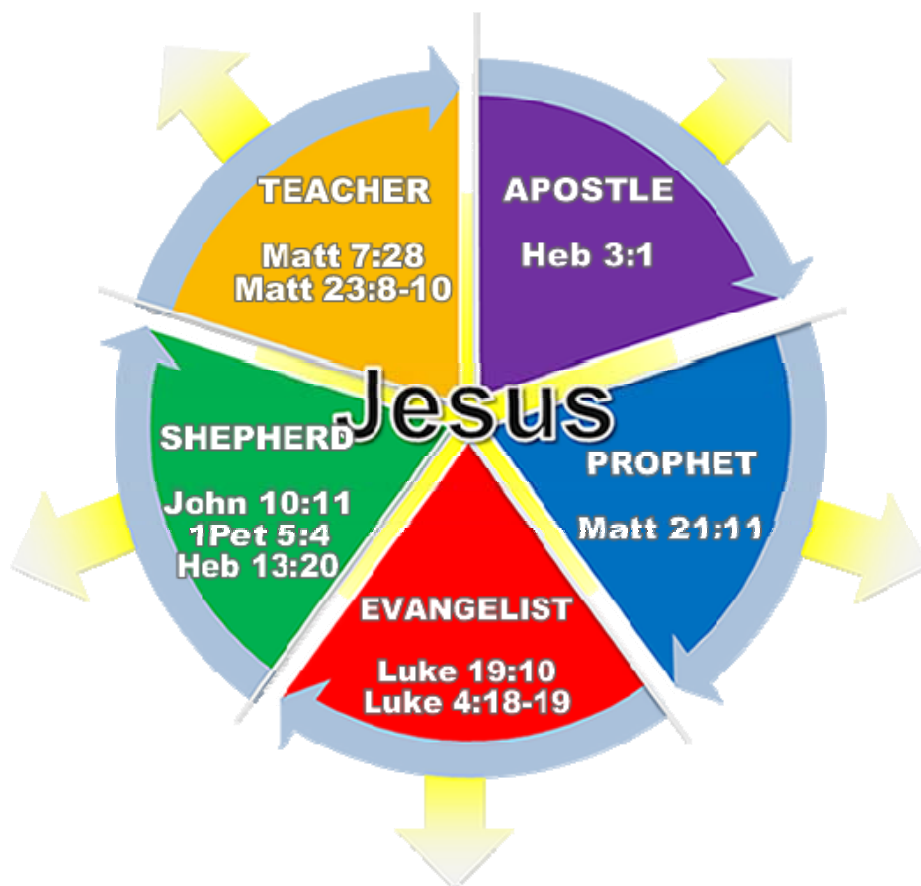
Read Ephesians 4:11-16. What did the Lord do according to verse 11? Why?

.....

.....

.....

The concept of a *fivefold ministry* may be traced back to Jesus. He is the perfect role model for each of the five ministries. As Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Shepherd and Teacher, He disciplined people.



All five these ministries are needed to disciple people. Believers must be equipped by all five these ministries. Think of a fruit tree that needs water, sun, fertiliser, pest-control and pruning for optimal fruit production. Serious problems arise and deficiencies occur in the body of Christ when believers are not exposed to all these ministries. The body of Christ will not be able to reach maturity. Consequently, the Church will struggle to fulfil its God-given task and function properly. The Church will struggle to *surrender, care and share*.

Thus, everyone needs to be trained and equipped, because everyone has a function in the body of Christ. It cannot be left to volunteers. May I also remind you that making disciples is a *function*. Nobody holds the *position* of being a *disciple maker*. Believers must be trained to fulfil a function and not to fill a position (Ephesians 4:11-16 and Matthew 23:8-10).

Theophilus, although preaching may also be viewed as training, it is about a specific, systematic content with a view to a specific outcome: *Every believer must be able to fulfil his or her function in the body and disciple those outside the family of God*. Such programmes and courses are available from AMOS and various churches. Take the trouble to get hold of appropriate material, as well as exposure to all five the ministries named in Ephesians 4:11.

Lord, please restore the fivefold ministry in your Church and fill every believer with a desire to be trained and equipped. Start with Theophilus and me. Equip us by apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and ministers. May we grow to maturity and may we reflect Jesus' life of surrender, care and share. Amen



Letter 33

Go!

Theophilus

What a pity that most Christians feel they are unable to introduce Jesus to the world or share the good news with others. They are wrong, because ...

- ✓ All who have the Spirit have the power and ability to do so;
- ✓ Every Christian whose life is based on Biblical foundations knows enough to convey the message to others;
- ✓ Everyone who has met Jesus and has an intimate relationship with Him, has something to tell! Testify (tell) just what you have seen, heard and experienced (1 John 1:1).
- ✓ God always makes it possible for all His children to carry out His commands (Philippians 2:13). This attribute of God always makes me bow before Him in humility and gratitude.

Because many Christians believe they are unable to *share*, you must keep reassuring them that they can. Pronounce your faith in them. Encourage them. Show them how. Provide them with opportunity and give them responsibility. People are never empowered to do something unless you put them in the position to accept responsibility to do so. Give them an opportunity to report back to you and to ask questions and for advice. That is what Jesus did with His disciples (Luke 10:1-24). This is the last step to discipleship! **Send people out with the command to share.** The more they do it, the better they will become!

Remember that there are different ways of passing on the Gospel. They are all important and you cannot use one as an excuse for not doing another. Be ready for everything, but let the Spirit show you which method is most needed and best. Under no circumstances should you yield to the temptation of *passing on* a weak, ineffective gospel that cannot change people's lives. People yearn for salvation, deliverance and victory. They want to see and experience the fact that Jesus makes it possible.



See if you can discover at least six ways of *sharing*:

Go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19 / John 20:21):

By as Jesus did. (1 John 2:6)

By..... (Matthew 9:35-38 / 2 Thessalonians 3:1)

By (Acts 1:8)

By (Luke 8:1-3 and 3 John verses 6-8)

By(2 Timothy 2:2)

By people. (Matthew 5:1-2 and 28:20)

And remember:

- ✓ You have the Word and the Spirit;
- ✓ Jesus is the One to Whom all power belongs;
- ✓ Jesus is with you, every day and in every situation, forever!

Live, pray, testify, give, entrust the Word to others and teach them! You can! In the Name of the Lord Jesus, I command you: **Do it!**

Read 1 Timothy 6:13-16

What must you do?

How must you do it?

How long must you keep on doing it?

What motivates you to do it?

Theophilus, it is not about a long-term commitment to make disciples, but about a lifelong commitment to carry out the Great Commandment.

Lord God, please make us faithful in carrying out Jesus' last commandment. Let the love that made You send your Son inspire and motivate us to go! Let us never tire of surrendering, caring and sharing. Amen.



Letter 34

The Wordless Book

Theophilus

Quickly try to memorise these two numbers: **361425** and **123456**. Which is easiest to memorise? Which number will you remember longest? Why?

Read Luke 1:1-4. What did Luke do and why?

.....

Theophilus, when sharing the Gospel with others it is important to remember that many people do not have a Biblical frame of reference or a complete picture of the Bible. Many don't even know who Paul or Moses are; they don't know what the Old or New Testament means; they don't know why Christians speak of the cross and blood; they don't know what happens after death; etcetera. Therefore, it is important to provide them with the *big picture* first. Summarise the *whole message* of the Bible for them simply and briefly. You can elaborate afterwards and explain each issue in more detail later.

The **Wordless Book** is a very good tool to help you to do this. It is exactly what it says – a book without words. It summarises the message of the Bible in **six colours**. Each colour refers to an important part of the one message.

- **GOLD:** There is only one true God and He loves you. He created everything. He rules over and maintains it. He has wonderful characteristics, but He has no sin. He is only good. He hates sin.
- **DIRTY:** Sin separates God and people. Sin makes my life (and yours) dirty. You and I can do nothing to restore our relationship with God.
- **RED:** Our sin does not stop God from loving us. Therefore, He sent His Son to reconcile us to Him by His blood and to take away the punishment for our sin.



- **CLEAN:** All who believe in Jesus are cleansed of sin. They can be 100% sure that their relationship with God has been restored and that He has accepted them as His children. As proof, He sent His Holy Spirit to live in them and make their lives anew.
- **GREEN:** All God's children must grow spiritually and become more and more like Jesus. To grow, they need to read and obey the Bible, to pray, testify (*share*), confess, stop sinning, and to join a spiritual family.
- **BLUE:** Let us look up to heaven (the blue sky) and expect Jesus to return the way He ascended. He is coming to fetch us to be with Him forever.

AMOS offers you five Wordless Book resources in various languages. The more time you have available, the clearer you want to convey the message, the more time you can spend to explain each colour.

- Wordless Book: To explain what each colour means in simple terms;
- One page explanation: To help you remember key texts and terms, and to make the transition from one colour to the next;
- Short manual to the Wordless Book: A pocket-sized booklet with a summary of each colour's message. It provides a number of Scripture references.
- Farm Devotions Manual: Contains 24 lessons with visual introductions and flash cards that elaborate on the six colours of the Wordless Book.
- Basic Truths of the Word: This course covers the six colours in nine illustrated manuals. It may be presented over a period of 80 hours.

Theophilus, the Wordless Book is a precious resource that will help you *share* the good news! I encourage you to use it.

Lord God, please bless the sharing of the message of the Bible. Help Theophilus to do it in a manner that will make it easy for people to understand and remember it forever. Let them believe it so that they may be saved. May an increasing number of people from all tribes and races praise You for saving them. Amen



Letter 35

The background against which to *share*

Theophilus

Look at the following:

God loves you!

God loves you!

Which of these two phrases are clearest? Well, both are equally clear. The difference is in the background. The words seem clearer and are easier to read against the *clean* background than against the *dirty* background. How clearly people will hear your testimony and whether they believe what you say, depends on the background against which you say it: It depends on how clean or dirty your life is. If your life is clean you can whisper the message and everyone will hear it (cf. 1 Peter 3:1-2). However, if your life is dirty and full of sin, you can shout the message out at the top of your lungs but no-one will hear it. They will certainly not believe you.

Years ago, a farmer in the Hex River Valley shared his experience with me: "I had been recently converted but my life hadn't changed much. I carried on smoking and tried to justify it in various ways. One day I held farm devotions and gave a *powerful* message of salvation. I really felt that the Lord was using me. As I was leaving, I lit a cigarette, as was my habit. The next moment, one of the workers tapped me on my shoulder. *Sir, he said, You say the Lord can save me from everything: from alcohol, sleeping around and from dagga. But sir, He can't even save you from smoking your cigarette. How will he ever manage to save me from the mess I'm in?* Hennie, I tell you, I put out that cigarette there and then, and I have never smoked since. I gave my workers a worthless message, but the Lord gave me a powerful message through one of them: My life should be a testimony to the salvation, victory and righteousness Jesus gives us."

Theophilus, people are tired of an ineffective religion that cannot change their lives and provide them with victory over sin. They are looking for



an intimate relationship with a living God who will radically change their lives, the way He promised to do.

Jesus is the *Lamb* who was slain and the Saviour who takes away our sin and our guilt (John 1:29 and Revelations 5:6). He is also the *Lion* of the tribe of Judah, the Lord who has conquered and who has made us more than conquerors (Revelations 5:5 and Romans 8:37).

Theophilus, how effectively we *share* the message depends mainly on the extent to which we *surrender* ourselves to Him in obedience. That is why I emphasised the fact that Jesus is Lord and that He must be obeyed. We have died and risen with Christ. Therefore, we can and must conquer our sin (Romans 6). How else will the world be able to believe that Jesus has conquered sin, the devil and death?

Jesus, thank you that You are the Lamb that was slain to cleanse us from our sin by your blood! We worship You as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, mighty King, eternal Conqueror and Ruler. Come and reign in Theophilus and me so that the world will believe what we tell them about You. Amen

Letter 36

Win the spiritual battle

Theophilus

Jesus *surrendered, cared and shared* by praying. Prayer is an integral part of discipleship. Without prayer, *surrender* is only a good intention, *care* is ordinary humanitarianism, and *sharing* is merely retelling a religious tale.

In one of the most valuable books I have studied, *Intercessory Prayer* by Dutch Sheets, the author uses the image of war. The first part tells of the battle in which the war is won. The second part is about the job of collecting the spoils of war. Then he makes the following statement: The real battle takes place in prayer. The work we do afterwards is



merely claiming and gathering the fruit of the victory gained in prayer. (Theophilus, you should really buy and study this book or watch the DVD-series under the same title.)

You have already heard of spiritual warfare. Let me explain it to you simply: Know your Bible and conquer the devil! Read Matthew 4:1-11.

Every believer is engaged in an intense spiritual war (Ephesians 6:10-20 and Revelations 12:12-17). The world has been ensnared by the devil and sin (2 Corinthians 4:4 and 1 John 5:19). But, the devil may not gain the upper hand. We know his plans all too well (2 Corinthians 2:11). Christ came and bound this “strong man” (Mark 3:27), conquered the devil (Hebrews 2:14-15) and destroyed his work (1 John 3:8). God plucked us out of the power of darkness and put us under the authority of His Son – the Son He loves dearly (Colossians 1:13). Now we share in His authority over evil (Ephesians 1:18-22 and 2:6). Therefore, we have been called to win people for Christ in order to deliver them from the power of sin and the devil (Acts 26:16-20).

How do we do this? By prayerfully witnessing to the love, grace and salvation found in Christ. By attacking and destroying the works of Evil in prayer (Matthew 6:13 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-5). By praying that the will of God will increasingly prevail in the lives of His children, and in **more** people’s lives.

In short: In the Name of Jesus, you must attack and destroy the things Satan does in the lives of people on your farm and in your community (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5). Then you must pray that the will of God will prevail in their lives. I will give you a list of the works of the devil and of the will of God in my next letter.

Lord Jesus, thank you so much for the victory that You have already gained. Help us to gain victory on our knees so that we will not share in vain. Amen



Letter 37

Destroy! Establish anew!

Theophilus

You must attack and destroy the things Satan does in the lives of people on your farm and in your community, by prayer (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5):

1. As a liar, he deceives and leads people astray (John 8:44).
 - He makes people believe he does not really exist.
 - He makes people believe that they can sin without bearing the consequences of their actions. He makes people believe that they can benefit from sin (Genesis 3:1-5 and Proverbs 1:8-19).
2. He sets traps to ensnare believers (1 Timothy 3:7).
3. He blinds people so that they ...
 - cannot see their own sin (Revelation 3:17 and Malachi 1:6-7).
 - do not believe the Gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4).
4. He tries to destroy Christians' faith (Luke 22:31).
5. He uses violence, intimidation and persecution to get what he wants (Acts 4:21-29 and 5:40; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelations 2:10-13 and 13:16).
6. He frightens people, discourages them and makes them depressed (1 Kings 19:1-4; Matthew 10:28; Romans 8:15; Revelations 2:10).
7. He thwarts the Lord's work (1 Thessalonians 2:18).
8. He gives people evil thoughts (John 13:2 and Acts 5:3).
9. He spurs people on to be disobedient and to sin (Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 2:2; James 3:14-16).
10. He uses unbelievers to gossip about and slander God's children (Jeremiah 18:18; Acts 13:50 and Revelations 2:9).
11. He puts his followers in the church to thwart God's work from the inside (Matthew 13:25 & 38-39).
12. He makes people passive, ensnares them in an outward, ineffective religion (2 Timothy 3:1-5 and Revelations 3:15-16).
13. He makes believers waste their time on trivialities. *Satan is an expert in getting us to major on minors, and to minor on majors.* (cf. Matthew 23:24 and Philipians 1:9-10).
14. Satan occupies and takes control of people (John 13:27).



15. He quotes texts out of context and so deceives people to make them sin. (He tried it with Jesus - Matthew 4:1-11).
16. He makes people believe they can achieve the right thing by doing the wrong thing. (He tried it with Jesus too - Matthew 4:8-9).

You must pray for the will of God to prevail. His will is ...

1. For all people to be saved!
(Matthew 18:14; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9)
2. For those who have been saved to testify about Him
(Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 2:9 and 3:15)
3. For Christians to be controlled by the Word and the Spirit!
(Galatians 5:16 & 25; Ephesians 5:17-18; Romans 8:8-9 & 14)
4. For us to love Him and our fellow human beings!
(Matthew 22:37-40; 1 John 3:16-18 & 23)
5. For us to live holy lives, the way Jesus did!
(1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; 1 Peter 1:16; 1 John 2:6)
6. For us to subject ourselves to authority (including government)!
(Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-15)
7. For us to be glad and grateful in every circumstance!
(1 Thessalonians 5:18; Ephesians 5:20 in contrast to Judas verse 16a)
8. For Christians to love each other and to be at one!
(John 13: 34-35 and 17:20-23; Romans 15:5-7)
9. For us to pray without ceasing.
(1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Jeremiah was called to *uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant* (cf. Jeremiah 1:10, NIV). Prayer is the most effective way to destroy evil and to realise the will of God. Therefore, know your enemy and his strategies. But, especially know Jesus who has already conquered the enemy (Hebrews 2:14-15; Revelations 5:5)!

Father, teach us to pray according to your Word. Help us to identify the work and plans of the Evil One and to destroy it by prayer. Let us pray with renewed zeal and gravity – that your Name will be made holy, your Kingdom come and your will be done. We ask it in the Name of Jesus, clothed in His righteousness and saturated by His Spirit. Amen



Letter 38

Conversion is necessary

Theophilus

Your questions about conversion are important. The first question boils down to the following: *Does God convert people or are people responsible for their conversion?* It would seem that we need to choose between the two, but is that really the case? Can't we accept both without placing them opposite each other? Is this not *spiritual antinomy*? (Antinomy is a paradox; the opposition of one law, principle, or rule to another; a contradiction existing between two apparently indubitable propositions). For instance: If God makes everything happen according to His will, does it necessarily mean that people don't have a choice? If people have a choice, does it necessarily mean that God is not in complete control?

In his book, *Die Persoon en Werk van die Heilige Gees*, Jan Oosthuizen refers to a certain JI Packer who used the following illustration to explain the antinomy of the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of people: Scientists are confronted by an antimony when they study **light**. It has been proved that light exists of *waves* and *particles*. It is not clear how it is possible for light to consist of waves and particles, but the proof is irrefutable. Both sets of proof are equally valid and one cannot be chosen over the other, equally valid proof. Neither may one be considered of more or less importance. Both these seemingly irreconcilable, conflicting truths **must be upheld and accepted as the truth**. Packer closes by saying, "*Such a necessity scandalizes our tiny minds, no doubt, but there is no help for it if we are loyal to the facts.*"

My answer therefore is: *Conversion is both the work of God and the responsibility of "man". We may not over-emphasise one at the expense of the other, or explain one in terms of the other. Scripture clearly proves both are true and we should merely confess that our minds are too small to understand how both can simultaneously be true.* (Read Acts 2:38 & 40 / 5:31 / 11:18 & 21 / 13:48 / 15:14 / 16:14 / 16:30-31 / 26:18).

Your second question is easier to answer: *Who should be converted?*



Read Romans 3:23 for the answer:

Read Romans 6:23. What is the consequence of sin?

Who needs conversion? Everyone, without exception! There are two groups of people: **Rebellious people** and **Religious people**. By religious people I do not only mean people who follow other religions, but especially those who associate themselves with Christianity but do not have a relationship with Christ. Read the following Scriptures and write down the words that indicate that these people are rebellious and/or religious:

Romans 1:18-32 en 5:8

.....

Romans 9:30 to 10:4

.....

Your last question I answer as follows: *People are converted when they believe with their hearts and confess with their lips what the Bible says about Jesus.* This is usually preceded by a sincere realisation of their sin and that they are lost, and a sense of their own inability to do anything about it - a realisation that good works cannot save them! Afterwards, the authenticity of their faith and the sincerity of their confession must be proven by their deeds.

Read Romans 10:8-13 and summarise it in your own words:

.....

Read Acts 26:20 and James 2:14-17 and summarise it here:

.....



People have been converted when they believe in their hearts, confess with their lips and prove by their deeds that Jesus, the Son of God, is their Lord and Saviour.

Spirit of God, Theophilus and I call rebellious and religious people - all who are lost - to be converted. Please do what You did at the time of Acts: Convert people. Make them receptive to Your Word. Make them believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Letter 39

What do you say?

Theophilus

Jesus' disciples are willing to learn and to be taught. This is an important attribute all disciples must have. How can they teach others if they are not willing to be taught and to practice? If you have an unteachable spirit, you will convey that spirit to those you are discipling.

I remember years ago when I was a minister in a congregation. Elder Mark and I were making house calls. On one farm, I did the Bible reading and then asked him to pray. He started off very well, but froze after a few sentences. Silence! I realised that he wasn't going to carry on and so I took over and ended it – the prayer and the visit! We left as soon as I said, *Amen*. I apologised to him as we drove off, *I am sorry. I didn't know you battle to pray in front of others. Relax. I won't put you on the spot again*. Imagine my surprise when he replied, *Ask me to pray again at the next farm, because if the Lord wants me to pray for people, He will teach me*. A year later, few elders could pray such focussed and meaningful prayers in the vestry before morning service as Mark could. Why? Because Mark was willing *to learn and to practice!*

Theophilus, one of the reasons Christians battle to testify is that they are not taught and not given an opportunity to practice.

Read Matthew 16:13-15. What does Jesus want to know?



.....
Read 1 Peter 3:15. What should disciples always be ready to do?

.....
Read Acts 18:24-26. What is happening here?

.....
Read Galatians 1:11 to 2:2. (Take special note of 1:11 & 18, and 2:1-2.)
What is happening here and why is Paul doing it?

.....
This is exactly what I want you to do, Theophilus. Write down what you believe! Formulate your faith in your own words. You may use any structure (e.g. the colours of the Wordless Book, the attributes of a disciple, a piece of Scripture, etc.). Share what you have written down with at least five other disciples. Ask them to listen to your testimony and to judge whether it is in line with the Word. The purpose is to help you practice expressing your faith in your own words. After all, you are willing to practice!

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Lord, make Theophilus and me, and all your children, willing to be taught and to practice. Help us to express with our lips what we are convinced of in our hearts. Help us to be open to the help and advice of our fellow believers so that we will learn to share the whole truth with others better and better. Amen

Letter 40

Time to say good-bye

Theophilus

I initially only wanted to share my worry with you about the lack of reproduction in *AMOS* and many churches. Gradually, however, I wanted to fill the gaps I suspected you still had in your faith. I wanted to give you a short, usable definition of discipleship, one that is easy to remember and to use. I wanted to make sure that you realise that you are not supposed merely to be a church member, but that you should also be Jesus' disciple. Today I am convinced that you are not merely a disciple, but that you are also serious about your calling to make disciples.

Every disciple can only walk the walk personally with a limited number of other disciples. In order to make new disciples, you must reach a point at which to say goodbye to those you have already discipled and to move on. There is a world out there waiting to become disciples! If people depend on you permanently, you have not made them disciples.



Read Acts 20:17-38. This is how Paul took his leave of those he disciplined in Ephesus.

- ✓ He reminded them of the example he set - to *surrender, care and share* (verses 18-24);
- ✓ He summarised the message he proclaimed to them in a nutshell (verse 21 & 24). Write it down here:

.....

- ✓ He passed the responsibility on to them! He was able to do so because he gave them the whole message and laid the necessary foundations in their lives (verses 25-28) so that they could brave the storms of life (verses 29-31);

- ✓ He did not leave them in the lurch. What did he do according to verse 32?

.....

- ✓ He again reminded them of the example he set and of Jesus' words (verses 33-35);

- ✓ They prayed and cried together and took their leave (verses 36-38). This confirms the personal bond between the person making disciples and those who are being disciplined.

Theophilus, I trust that we will keep seeing each other now and again. After all, we are God's co-workers in the agricultural community. I trust that we will still learn from each other and keep praying for each other. I thank the Lord that He made you a *surrender-, care- and share-*person, a true disciple!

Therefore, I now entrust you to the Word and the Spirit. I entrust you to our Lord Jesus, who by His *surrender, care and share* made it possible for you and me to *surrender, care and share*. Praise, honour, and



thanks be to the Father for what He is still going to do in and through you.

*The Lord will show you what you must see;
He will teach you what you must know;
He will tell you what you must do, and
He will make you what you must be: His Image.*

My regards to your family and all the other disciples.
I love you all.

Hennie





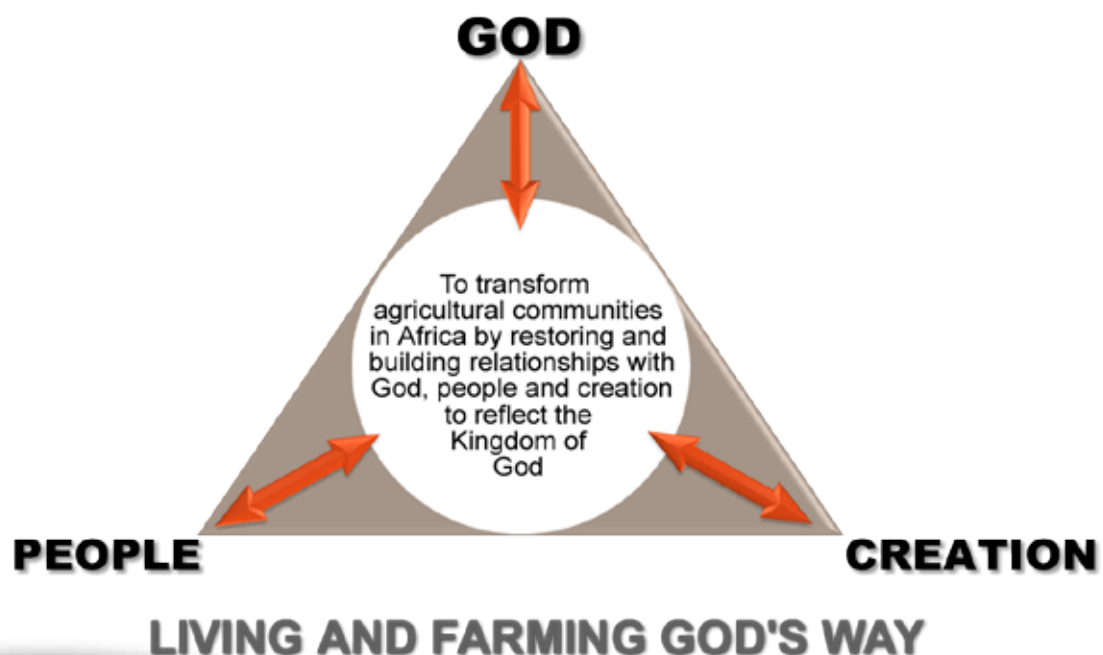
The name **AMOS** is derived from the Bible. Amos was a prophet and farmer of the Old Testament. As prophet, he warned against formalistic religiosity, and all kinds of exploitation and injustice of the day. Accordingly, God's children are encouraged not to be merely religious, but to live according to His will 24 hours of every day (24/7). The word **Agrimin** is an abbreviation for *Agricultural Ministries*.

AMOS' logo is rich in symbolism. The name is prominently printed. The windmill symbolizes agriculture. The windmill provides water and brings life and prosperity to the farm. We at **Amos** acknowledge Christ (red cross) as the source of Living Water (blue water issuing from the cross). He is the One without whom an abundant life is impossible. With this logo, we also acknowledge our dependence on the mighty working of the Holy Spirit, just like the windmill depends on the wind.


The core business of Amos Agrimin

We want to see the **Kingdom of God** manifested in the **agricultural community**.

Therefore Amos Agrimin's core business is:



Amos Agrimin

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