

Go Make Disciples

A Book Review: *Follow to Lead* by Rev. Stan Gleason Benjamin Copple



Many people want to change the world, but very few have any idea how to do it. Some people turn to politics, some to business, and some to money. Some turn to the arts and try to influence minds through the power of paintings, sculptures, literature or music. Others attempt great successes in science, medicine or social activism, yet none of these things are truly what the world needs. But Pastor Stan Gleason has found the answer. On page 103 of his book *Follow to Lead*, he asserts that “Obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ will cure every social ill, and at no cost to the taxpayers.” As Peter says in John 6:68, it is Jesus alone who has the words of eternal life. So then how can we to use the words of Jesus to change the world? By making disciples.

In *Follow to Lead: The Journey of a Disciple Maker* Pastor Stan Gleason shows that the first-century Christian’s were prolific disciple-makers and he attempts to persuade twenty-first century Christians to follow in their footsteps. He does this by highlighting the need for a change in church culture starting with the individual church. Pastor Gleason argues that in our current church culture we see evangelism as focused on soul-winning on Sunday’s only, by a select few individuals, with the process completed once an individual fulfills the New Birth experience, but then goes on to argue that such a culture is counter to that of the early church. He shows how the early Christians were focused on making disciples, not just “soul-winning” and that they did it anywhere, anytime. He then argues compellingly that we must change our local church culture from one of soul-winners to one of disciple-makers. The entire church should be focused on guiding disciples from unbelief, to the New Birth experience and beyond until they are capable of making their own disciples. The thrust of the book can be summed up in this quote: “Salvation is not a diploma but a birth certificate,” (p. 56), meaning that disciple-making is not a destination that we can check-off once the disciple has been born again, but a journey that should continue indefinitely once begun.

Though Pastor Gleason calls for a return to the first-century method of making disciples, he does not negate or demean new methods of evangelism. In fact, he promotes new methods such as small group ministries, organized hospitality teams, and varied church programs for reaching different age and social groups. His goal is to help people understand that first-century disciple-making should be at the heart of all of our methods. This is not a case of the old man barking at the kids because they don’t do things the way he used to do them. Rather, this is a case of a concerned elder beseeching everyone – young and old alike – to return to a proven method of disciple-making. As he writes on page ninety-five, “Every born-again believer is qualified and capable of taking someone on the journey of becoming a disciple.”

Pastor Gleason does not write with a wide audience in mind. His book is specifically written to Apostolic Pentecostals – spirit-filled oneness believers who have been commissioned by Jesus to spread the Gospel, not casual Christians, wavering believers, or proponents of a social gospel. His book is not for those who want an easy road to spiritual contentment, but for those who want to take the hard road to spiritual effectiveness. He does not write to console or coddle, but to convict, to stir-up, and ultimately to encourage Christians to become true disciples by making their own. He writes for those who are ready to become what Jesus meant for them to be.



Follow to Lead is an essential book for any Apostolic Pentecostal, but it is especially important for young adults because we are uniquely placed to affect so many people. Pastor Gleason argues that disciples are being made every day by all sorts of institutions so why shouldn't we be making disciples too? The young adults with which we work and go to school are in the process of becoming disciples of something: drugs, alcohol, heretical institutions, blasphemous religions, feminism, atheism, celebrities, corrupt politicians, popular psychologies, or immoral peers. As young adults that are disciples of Jesus, we have a unique opportunity to affect those people who are still deciding who they are going to be. We can make them disciples of Jesus before they become disciples of something else.

We must learn how to make disciples not only because we have access to so many people, but also because we have access to one of the most influential institutions in the world: the university. Universities are hotbeds for the formation of new ideas, values, and ethics that will affect our world, and we have a spiritual obligation to affect those new ideas, values, and ethics in ways that glorify God. The people attending universities today are the people that will run the world tomorrow. We can try to combat the erroneous ideas they are being taught by arguing the Gospel, or we can make them into disciples who will *live* the Gospel. As Pastor Gleason writes, "The church must rise up and counter all the anti-God and anti-biblical disciple making by reproducing biblical values, principles, and practices in our disciples," (p. 71).

Above all, Pastor Gleason calls on every person who professes to be a disciple of Christ to make a deeper commitment to doing the ministry of Christ: making disciples. On page ninety-eight he paints a vivid picture of what a church with a changed culture will look like: "When the church knows that its mission is to make disciples, when there are more prayer requests about their disciples than about their personal problems, when their testimonies are more about changed lives and less about overcoming their challenges, when their prayers are more focused on others, then you know that the culture has changed." In the same way, when all of these things are true of us as individuals, then we will know that we have truly changed and become disciples-makers. Do you really want to change the world? Then get out there and go make disciples.