

# EXPLORING UNDIVIDED WITNESS

Jesus followers, community  
development and least-reached  
communities.



Participant Guide  
not for sale

# EXPLORING *UNDIVIDED WITNESS*

## PARTICIPANTS GUIDE

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### Introduction and Principle 1

What can I expect in the course *Exploring Undivided Witness*?

We long for God to be glorified: in our lives, among those who do not yet know him, and indeed, in the whole world and in all of creation (Revelation 5:13).

We often pray to our heavenly Father, 'your kingdom come, your will be done'. How do we put feet to our prayers? What do the messengers of the good news look like, and what do they do, those messengers with beautiful feet who declare that God reigns (Isaiah 52:7)?

*Exploring Undivided Witness* is built on the ten principles developed in the book *Undivided Witness: Jesus followers, community development, and least-reached communities* (Regnum 2020). Those principles were drawn together by experienced community development workers serving with OM along with participants from the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, All Nations Christian College, and two other organizations.

Starting with the kingdom of God and how we enter it, the principles move through themes of glorifying God through truly integral mission. Discussion of spiritual warfare is followed by a link to caring for creation and the need for intentionality in our undivided witness. The need for excellence in community development is coupled with principles for planting new communities of Jesus followers, then wrapped up with a reflection on why the least reached are often overlooked.

This course is designed to spread over eleven weeks: one for each of the ten principles, then a wrap-up session to consider what we have learned, what we still want to learn, and how we might move ahead. The core of the weekly sessions should take about 75 minutes; we suggest you plan on 90 minutes to give time for the group to greet each other, chat, and pray together.

Sessions will be led by a facilitator; learning will come from reflection and discussion (not from lectures). The book *Undivided Witness* is an excellent resource; we encourage students to obtain a copy and read it if possible. However, participants can complete this study and benefit from it without reading the book.

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As together we *explore undivided witness*, we hope that you will gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be truly whole people. The gospel is not merely proclaimed, nor are good works done in isolation. Demonstration and explanation of the good news cannot be separated nor forced into categories of priority. The people we approach are whole people; they are not just unconnected bodies to be healed or souls to be saved. Just as Jesus did, we come to communities as whole people, or we should not come to them at all.

We look forward to exploring together!

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# Principle One: Understanding the Kingdom of God is Fundamental

## Goals for this Discussion:

1. People in our team will recognize how Jesus used both demonstration and explanation to help people understand the kingdom of God.
2. People in our team will begin to consider how understanding the kingdom of God can shape their own ministry.

## Introduction to the *Exploring Undivided Witness* Study

1. Read “What to expect from this study” on the previous page.

## The Kingdom of God

2. Let’s begin by looking at Principle One. The List of Principles will be sent to participants as a separate document.

Principle One summary: *‘Understanding the kingdom of God is fundamental’*

3. Understanding the kingdom of God is fundamental, so let’s look at what the kingdom of God is. A kingdom can be defined as the place where the king reigns. If there is a kingdom, that means there is also a king. The kingdom of God centres on our beloved King.
4. How do we understand the kingdom of God? We suggest the best place to grow in understanding the kingdom of God is to look to Jesus, the King!
5. We want to focus on two ways that Jesus helps us understand the kingdom – through Demonstration and Explanation.
  - A. Demonstration: By demonstration, we mean *actions*, things Jesus did that show us what the kingdom of God looks like.
  - B. Explanation: Explanation is about words Jesus used to help us understand the kingdom. Jesus helped us understand the kingdom by telling stories to the crowds and, at times, explaining them to the disciples. Jesus explained the

kingdom through his teaching, as well as through both asking and answering questions.

6. Let's look at both of these more closely, starting with Demonstration. Just below there are some statements we could make about the kingdom of God, based on Jesus' actions.
  - A. The kingdom of God is where people who are ill are healed.
  - B. The kingdom of God is where the hungry are fed.
  - C. The kingdom of God is where the power of darkness is overcome.
  - D. The kingdom of God is where each person has value.
  - E. The kingdom of God is where everyone is welcome.
7. Next, let's look at Explanation. There are several places in Scripture where we hear Jesus say, 'The kingdom of God is like ...' and then he tells a story to help us understand the kingdom. What are some of the "kingdom of God is like ..." stories that Jesus told?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓  
✓

8. What are some other ways that Jesus used words to explain the kingdom of God?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓  
✓

9. What do you see as the relationship between demonstrating and explaining the kingdom of God?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

10. Jesus' life offers us an example of what the kingdom looks like. It gives us an example to follow in *demonstrating* and *explaining* the kingdom to those around us. What could it look like to follow Jesus' example today?

## A Story from India

11. Let's consider an example from India.

*Ten or so years ago I visited a village while working with a well-known international evangelical denomination and mission movement. The village was low caste and in a desperately poor, fundamentalist Hindu state.*

*The organisation ran a self-help group programme in such villages facilitated by members of the church who had basic training in setting up women's self-help groups. They were known as field organisers (FOs). The aim of these groups was to establish a micro-saving and micro-lending system, provide a structure for training in livelihood skills, and promote collective action to address social, economic, spiritual, and environmental issues their community might be facing.*

*In a particular village, the FO was making good progress with one newly empowered group that had confronted unjust landowners who wanted to sell productive village land to a plantation owner. This would have not only taken needed farmland away from the villagers but would likely create environmental issues with irrigation from scarce groundwater resources, chemical leaching, and soil erosion. The landowners were attempting to divide the villagers socially through an unequitable system of compensation.*

*The self-help group was saving and lending successfully; a number of women had started small businesses or helped their husbands to do so. The FO helped the women to start a micro-saving fund to help manage the relentless run of religious feast days. A deep connection with this group of women was forming.*

*One day, the women of the group asked the FO if she was married. She replied that she was, and they asked why she was not adorned with the jewellery of a traditional Hindu wife. She explained that, as a follower of Jesus, she was not required to. This sparked significant interest. The women asked more about her faith and whether there was a Holy Book that they might see.*

*On the next visit, she brought her Bible and, as the women were illiterate, read to them. In time, two of the women gave their lives to Jesus. In the Hindu beliefs of that area, women who had committed to Jesus were no longer considered 'their'*

*people and, although still part of the group, they faced persecution from neighbours.*

*One day, the child of a believer became very sick. The doctors said the child would die without a transfusion. Due to their status of being outside of the Hindu faith, none of their neighbours dared donate blood. The FO was called; she donated and also prayed for healing. The child made a miraculous recovery.*

*The combination of the miraculous healing and the love of the FO compelled many more in the community toward Jesus and today there is a VCJF in that community.*

12. What are some specific ways we see the kingdom of God being demonstrated and explained in this story?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓  
✓

13. We see the kingdom of God at work over the natural and supernatural principalities of the landowners, over the sickness of the child and over Hindu teaching and belief that had entrapped them. The kingdom is marked by healing, deliverance and other signs and wonders as well as by changed lives and God's day-to-day care. In the gospels and Acts we see that the disciples practiced these, as have countless Christians throughout the ages. Are we expecting God to act like this? If not, we are unlikely to be looking or praying for this and so are less likely to experience these aspects of God's kingdom.
14. The danger of reading a short story like this is that it sounds quick, but in reality, this story took place over a period of two or three years. As we seek to see the kingdom established in our communities, there is usually no quick fix. Change takes time! It is important to remember that so we don't get discouraged.

### Application (15-20 min)

1. Principle One is 'Understanding the Kingdom of God is fundamental'.

As a team, how can a growing understanding of the kingdom of God shape the way we interact with the community?

What is one situation where you have been longing to see God's kingdom come in power to transform?

2. What from today's discussion has been meaningful for you? Why?
3. Please take a few minutes this week to respond to the personal reflection question just below. You will have a chance to share what you write next week.

### For personal reflection:

Kingdom theologians and development thinkers speak about the *shalom* or peace of God. This is a term that implies relationships that are right, healed and restored on many levels. Bryant Meyers says:

*God's goal is to restore us and God's creation to our original identity and purpose, as children reflecting God's image. and to our original vocation as productive stewards, living together in just and peaceful relationships. The goals of transformation...are the goals for both the community and the development facilitator. (Walking with the Poor, Orbis, 2011 p. 330)*

- In what ways is the *shalom* of healing, transformation and breakthrough coming into my own life?

### For further study...

Chapter One, *Undivided Witness: Jesus followers, community development, and least-reached communities* (Regnum 2020)



# EXPLORING *UNDIVIDED WITNESS*

## Principle Two: Understanding how people enter the kingdom of God shapes how we do ministry

Goals for this Discussion:

1. Our team will better understand that while some can point to a specific point in time when they decided to follow Jesus, for others it is more of a process that happens over time.
2. Our team will recognize that the motivation to enter the kingdom can be different for different people.
3. Our team will have a fresh understanding of the importance of giving people freedom to accept or reject the good news.

### Review

1. Last week we looked at Principle One: Understanding the kingdom of God is fundamental. The personal reflection was to answer: 'In what ways is the shalom of healing, transformation and breakthrough coming into my own life?'
2. Let's take 3-4 minutes to share how we responded to that question.

### How do people enter the kingdom of God (10-15 min)

3. Today we will be looking at Principle Two. The List of Principles will be sent to participants as a separate document.

Principle Two summary: *'Understanding how people enter the kingdom of God shapes how we do ministry.'*

4. How do people enter the kingdom of God? When we look at the New Testament, we see that there is no simple answer. People entered the kingdom in different ways.

A. Let's take Paul, for example. How did Paul come to faith in Jesus?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

B. Some people, like Paul, can point back to a clear point when they received the gift of eternal life.

C. What about Peter? What did his journey to faith in Jesus look like?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

D. When we think about Peter, it is more difficult to pinpoint a specific point or event when, we might say, he had saving faith in Jesus. This is true for many people; their journey is a process of gradual steps of turning.

5. What about you? Do you describe your journey to faith as an event, or was it more of a process over a period of time?

6. The point is that there is no one-size-fits-all timeline for those who enter the kingdom of Heaven. The timing of our journeys is different.

Motivation - what makes us want to enter the kingdom? (10-15 min)

7. In a similar way, our motivation for coming to faith is probably also different.

8. Think about your own faith journey. What attracted you to the gospel? What was good about the good news, for you?

9. In Scripture, we see that people came to Jesus for different reasons. Think about examples from the gospels. What were some of the reasons people came to Jesus?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

10. Many people came to Jesus because they had urgent needs that only He could meet. He met their needs without placing conditions on them. We could say that he gave people the freedom to accept or reject the good news, and time to make a decision.

### Freedom to accept or reject the Good News (5-10 min)

11. I wonder if we always recognize the importance of giving people the freedom to accept or reject the good news. This story is taken from pages 38 – 39 in the book *Undivided Witness*.

*A number of years ago Jawara (name changed) began visiting David's church in Switzerland. Jawara was a Muslim refugee who had recently arrived from West Africa. Many people in the church welcomed him warmly, offering gifts like warm clothing that helped make the adjustment to a cold winter. Within just a few weeks, Jawara told a church member that he had trusted in Jesus and intended to be baptized.*

*And then, suddenly, Jawara disappeared. He stopped coming to church. He didn't respond to people's calls and avoided contact with church members. David later found out that Jawara had settled into the basic comforts of life as an asylum-seeker who had been granted refugee status by the Swiss government.*

*Many people in the church wondered if Jawara had milked the system. Did he put on a spiritual façade to take advantage of their generosity? Perhaps, but David prefers a more charitable explanation.*

*Like many refugees in Switzerland, the basics of life were provided by the government. But he still felt lost in this new country. He was confused, lonely, and often cold. The people from the church had welcomed him and helped him to feel less lonely. They had provided him with things he needed and he felt in their debt. When someone challenged him to follow Jesus, how could he do anything but go along?*

*The people in the church had the money, the power, the advantage; saying 'no' to them would have brought them dishonour. So Jawara said that he would follow Jesus.*

*His heart wasn't really in the decision though, and he knew that his new friends would be disappointed that faith wasn't sincere. His only remedy was to avoid the church entirely.*

A. How free do you think Jawara felt to accept or reject the good news?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

B. Why do you think it is important that people have the freedom to accept or reject the good news?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

### Application (10-15 min)

12. How can a healthy understanding of how people enter the kingdom of God shape how our team does ministry?

13. Please take a few minutes this week to respond to the personal reflection question below. You will have a chance to share what you write next week.

### For personal reflection:

As you were coming to faith in Jesus Christ, what did other people say or do that helped you? What did they do that put up barriers, or perhaps caused you to misunderstand the good news?

What about those you and your team are wanting to come to know Jesus? What thoughts from this discussion affect how you will approach them in the future?

### For further study...

Chapter Two, *Undivided Witness*



# EXPLORING *UNDIVIDED WITNESS*

## Principle Three: The gospel impacts the whole person and whole contexts

Goals for this Discussion:

1. Our team will better understand God's heart for the whole person and people's whole contexts.
2. Our team will better understand how integral mission addresses the whole person and people's whole contexts.

### Review

1. Last week we looked at Principle Two: Understanding how people enter the kingdom of God shapes how we do ministry. The personal reflection was to consider:

As you were coming to faith in Jesus Christ, what did other people say or do that helped you? What did they do that put up barriers, or perhaps caused you to misunderstand the good news?

What about those you and your team are wanting to come to know Jesus? What thoughts from this discussion affect how you will approach them in the future?

2. Let's take 3-4 minutes to share how we responded to that question.

### Whole Person

1. Today we are looking at Principle Three.

Principle Three summary: *'The gospel impacts the whole person and people's whole contexts.'*

2. The core of this principle is that God loves us as his creation; he has created each of us as a WHOLE being.

3. How would you define the 'whole person'?

YOUR ANSWERS:

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓

God has created us with a body and a soul. When we talk about the whole person, we are referring to the fact that each person is made up of more than one element. God cares about both our body and our soul.

4. Where in Scripture do you see specific examples that God cares for the body, the physical part of our person? Try to think of examples from the Old and New Testaments.

YOUR ANSWERS:

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓

5. Where in Scripture do we see that God cares for the soul, the spiritual part of our person?

YOUR ANSWERS:

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓

6. When we say 'The gospel impacts the whole person ...' this is because God cares about the whole person.

## Whole Context

7. Principle Three states that 'the gospel impacts the whole person AND people's whole contexts'. When we say 'context' we are referring not just to places and locations but also to the societal issues that exist in the community where the person lives. For example:

- HIV/AIDS epidemic
- High crime rates
- Poverty
- Dysfunctional families
- Human trafficking

8. Why do you think it is important that the gospel impacts the person's whole context?
- When the gospel impacts the whole context it can open the door for people to realize that God cares.
  - When the gospel impacts the person's context, God's 'kingdom comes' and 'his will is done'

What other reasons?

✓  
✓  
✓

9. Rupen Das, a Canadian theologian and experienced community development worker said:

*'What attracts the majority of the poor is a God who is responsive, understands their suffering and is with them – a God who identifies Himself as Immanuel.'* (Rupen Das)

10. Jesus Christ is Lord of the whole of life and creation, and we, his redeemed, are his witnesses.

## Integral Mission

11. This brings us to the idea of Integral Mission. How would you define the word 'integral'?

YOUR ANSWER:

✓

12. So when we talk about Integral Mission, we are talking about ministry that addresses the whole person and people's whole contexts.

Ecuadorian theologian Rene Padilla says that 'the practice of integral mission goes back to Jesus Himself and to the first century church.'

Jesus recognized the physical needs of humans and he addressed those. He also understood that physical healing would not address the deep spiritual needs that people have.

13. Let's look at what could happen if we don't recognize the importance of both the physical and spiritual.

A. What are the dangers of a ministry that focuses only on the spiritual and ignores the physical needs of people?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

B. What problems could arise if we only focus on meeting people's physical needs, but never preach or teach?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

## Application

14. How are we doing, as a team? In what ways does our ministry affect the whole person and people's whole context?

15. What could we do differently to better follow Jesus' example of Integral Mission?

## For personal reflection:

- What does it mean to me, personally, that God cares for my 'whole' person?
- The fulness of 'who I am' is expressed in community. How is 'who I am' expressed in community? (Team, local community, etc.)

## For further study...

Chapter Three, *Undivided Witness*



# EXPLORING *UNDIVIDED WITNESS*

## Principle Four: A broad vision of glorifying Christ

Goals for this Discussion:

1. Our team will have a better understanding of what it means to glorify Christ.
2. We will consider the ways we glorify God as we engage with and serve least-reached communities and begin to apply what we learn in our ministry.

### Review

1. Last week we looked at the Principle Three: The gospel impacts the whole person and whole contexts. The personal reflection was to consider:

What does it mean to me, personally, that God cares for my “whole” person?

The fulness of “who I am” is expressed in community. How is “who I am” expressed in community? (Team, local community, etc.)

2. Let’s take 3-4 minutes to share how we responded to that question.

### Introduction

3. This week we will be looking at Principle Four.

Principle Four summary: *‘We share a broad vision of glorifying Christ as people come to faith and communities are impacted by the kingdom.’*

4. ‘Glorify’ is a word we hear a lot in in Christian circles. But what does it mean to glorify someone? Let’s find out.

Think about the word as it is used in the Bible. If you can, take a moment to look up the word ‘glorify’ on your phone or computer or a dictionary if you have one nearby.

5. What did you discover?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

6. What insights do these definitions give you of what it means for you, personally, to glorify God?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓  
✓

### Following Jesus' Example

7. Jesus glorified God, not only by the things he did and what he said, but also by who he was. His person and character glorified God as he interacted lovingly with people and in the friendships he developed.

8. Let's step away from thinking about the things we 'do' that bring glory to God and think about the 'being' part of our lives: our heart, our character and our attitude. For example, Jesus was incredibly patient with his disciples. That glorified God because it represented His character in a true way.

9. What are some other attitudes or character qualities we might have, or desire to have, that represent God's heart?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

10. Think about how Jesus responded to people in need. What do the gospels tell us motivated him?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

11. Think about the ways that you, your team, and your church respond to people in need.

A. What are some of the ways they respond?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

B. What do you think your motives are? That is, what do you hope happens as a result?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

C. Would you continue to respond to people in need in these ways even if you knew that few, if any, would become followers of Jesus? Why, or why not? Think about what you have done in the past as well as about who Jesus fed, healed and helped.

D. How do these motives help to glorify God? How do they do the opposite?

## Conclusion

12. Let's think about Jesus.

*'The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.'*  
*Colossians 1:15*

13. Jesus came to represent God, to help people see a true picture of who he is. Now we are the ones who represent him, we reflect God's glory to those around us. As we are being transformed, we reflect Jesus. We don't do it in our own strength, just as the moon doesn't shine, it reflects the sun. In the same way, we reflect Christ as his light shines on us.

*'And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.'* (2 Corinthians 3:18)

14. What has been meaningful for you in this discussion?

### For personal reflection:

How is God's character reflected in the lives of people you know? Could you consider encouraging one (or more) by sharing how you see God's character is reflected in their life?

How is God's glory being seen through my team? Are we helping our community and those we serve see God's character?

### For further study...

Chapter Four, *Undivided Witness*





# EXPLORING *UNDIVIDED WITNESS*

## Principle Five: Prayer, spiritual warfare and change

Goals for this Discussion:

1. Our team will grow in our ability to recognize spiritual warfare.
2. Our team will be confident in the fact that we have nothing to fear.
3. Our team will identify specific tools we will use in response to spiritual warfare.

### Review

1. Last week we looked at Principle Four: A broad vision of glorifying Christ. The personal reflection was to consider:

How is God's character reflected in the lives of people you know? Could you consider encouraging one (or more) by sharing how you see God's character is reflected in their life?

How is God's glory being seen through my team? Are we helping our community and those we serve see God's character?

2. Let's take 3-4 minutes to share how we responded to that question.

### Recognizing Spiritual Warfare

3. This week we will be looking at Principle Five. (Also see the separate document with the list of Ten Principles to read the full statement of this principle.)

Principle Five summary: '*Prayer and spiritual warfare are integral parts of the process of change*'

4. When we think about 'spiritual warfare' it's likely that different things come to our minds, and especially if we are part of an international team. Let's begin with prayer, asking for wisdom and discernment as we enter this important discussion.

## Different aspects of Spiritual Warfare

5. Spiritual warfare and prayer are an integral part of community development. The idea at the heart of spiritual warfare is that we have an enemy who wants to separate us from God. He doesn't care how he does it.

The author of chapter 5 in *Undivided Witness* wrote:

*We might think of serious injuries and accidents as spiritual attacks. Perhaps we think of demonic rituals and curses. Less often, we think of the struggle against corrupted structures of power and the persuasive power of deception that continue to crush people and keep them alienated from God.*

Today we are going to focus on three strategies the enemy uses: blatant witchcraft, corrupted structures of power, and daily life.

Depending upon the size of our study group and Internet reliability for online training, we may divide into three breakout groups for this. If we divide, each group will focus on a different aspect and report back to the whole group.

- A. Group one will look at blatant witchcraft, the first section below.
- B. Group two will look at corrupted structures of power (systemic evil), the second section below.
- C. Group three will look at issues of daily life, the third section below.

We will have ten minutes in our breakout groups. Each group should have someone note two or three key insights and be prepared to share with the rest of the group when we come back together.

Be sure to talk about how change came about in each of these stories.

## Breakout Group One: Blatant Witchcraft

Read the following story together:

*In 2006, when our first workers moved to the Zambian border on the Lake Tanganyika shoreline, they heard of the region's reputation for spiritual darkness: blood sacrifices of both humans and animals were at the core of rituals performed for generations. When I joined them in 2008, I realised that most of the team's work had been, wisely, to build a spiritual foundation.*

*We were struck by the lack of food, clothing, basic health care, and education in these communities. Eventually, our approach did include health, education, and teaching about efficient use of natural resources. But it was vividly apparent that transformative change had to first occur within their spiritual core. In one village, an American built a school and a clinic. He confided to us his frustration that, in spite of such significant investment in the community, the destructive behaviours of the people did not change.*

*How does lasting change come about? Our team had begun with the overarching truth that perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). Realising that our battle is not against flesh and blood (Eph. 6:12), and rather than focusing on those important healthcare and well-being activities, our team prioritised prayer walks and Scripture proclamation. Three days a week, we prayer-walked through the villages from 6 to 7 a.m., reading Scripture verses aloud. This faithful discipline was a tangible, consistent contrast to the practices typical of the community.*

*We observed that the Holy Spirit's active presence was accentuated in these places where the people's faith in the supernatural was already strong. They needed only to shift their belief from expecting that curses would make them sick or hungry to believing that the Creator God wants to heal them. Many were healed and delivered through prayer. People began to see the clear choice between faith in God and the rituals of the witch doctor, as happened in a village where the headman's wife had been a witch doctor but had become a believer, a demonstration of Jesus' power for deliverance.*

*In that village Gloria\*, the wife of a village fisherman, came to Alfred\*, one of our team, because of multiple miscarriages. During each of her previous pregnancies, she dreamed of a knife attacking her and would lose the baby the following day. When she came to Alfred, the woman was pregnant again; she begged him to pray for a healthy baby. One day soon after, Gloria came to Alfred distressed because she had again dreamed of the knife attack. Alfred prayed for Gloria, who later delivered her first healthy baby. Later, Alfred himself had a disturbing dream of a knife attacking him, but he woke up, rebuked the demon in Jesus' name, laughed at the enemy's attempt to scare him, and continued his sleep in peace.*

## Discussion Questions

- A. Where do you see evidence of the blatant witchcraft type of spiritual warfare in this story?
- B. How did the team members enter fully shielded by the armour of God?
- C. How did the team's presence in the community reveal the kingdom of God?

D. What sort of change took place?

## Breakout Group Two: Corrupted Structures of Power

When we talk about systemic evil, we are referring to things like:

- People and power that enable human trafficking
- Laws and powerful people who keep others trapped in poverty and low-wage work
- Companies connected to politicians and government officials to enable them to avoid regulations on pollution
- Police, customs and immigration officials who impose fines or won't do what they should do unless paid a bribe

Read the following story together:

*Hope\* had been brought to Greece from her country when she was very young and forced to enter the sex trade. After meeting Rosie and her team, and talking with her, Hope became convinced it was the wrong way to live and wanted to leave it. However, it was not so simple.*

*Hope had come to Greece without official identifying papers, so all the work she was able to find was illegal and badly paid. Hope ended up working in hotels and kitchens in the tourist season for low wages, trying to avoid employers who assumed they had a right to other 'services' from their pretty dishwashing girl.*

*Although Hope persevered and did manage to get work outside the sex trade, it has marked her psychologically. Even now, a couple of years later, Hope struggles to trust anyone, and prefers jobs where she does not have to be part of a group. She expects to be treated badly. Rosie and her team have talked about forgiveness, but it doesn't make sense to her in her own life. Whilst Hope does believe in God, she has yet to personally experience grace for herself and understand what it could mean for her.*

*God has become a reality in Hope's life, said Rosie. 'But there are many, many more women still working in the brothels and on the streets of Greece. They have the same right to know and learn to trust the God who saves and protects for themselves, and to learn to value themselves as precious, something that is beginning to happen as Rosie's dream becomes reality of establishing a non-profit making company, providing a healthy working alternative to those women at risk in Greece.*

\*Hope's name has been changed to respect her privacy. Story taken from 'Hope for Hope in Greece', from OM Communications.

## Discussion Questions

- A. Where do you see evidence of a corrupted system of power in this story?
- B. In what ways did the team come against the corrupted system of power? How did they engage in spiritual warfare beyond prayer, fasting or worship?
- C. How did the believer's presence in the community reveal the kingdom of God?
- D. What sort of change took place?

## Breakout Group Three: Daily Life

Read the following stories together:

Johanna's Story, from chapter 5 in *Undivided Witness*:

*Spiritual opposition may come in the humdrum of daily life. A colleague in Asia wrote: We feel that spiritual opposition comes in waves, and often in ways we do not expect. We have not had opposition from the religious establishment or local government, who actually welcome our work because they see tangible benefits for the children and families we work with. But I find it comes in subtle ways into our community development team, through discouragement, misunderstanding and conflict, illness, visa issues, and other frustrations, which I feel want to come at us "from within"*

Rebecca's Story

*Rebecca was sitting in front of her computer, trying to focus on preparing workshops she and a team would be leading next week in Africa. She would be traveling soon to the event, but for several days all kinds of distractions kept popping up. She was getting more and more frustrated and annoyed as they kept her from focusing on the preparation. She got up from her computer and stepped into the carpeted hallway. As*

*she did, she heard a loud 'squish' underneath her foot. She looked down and sure enough the hallway was completely flooded. It turns out her septic tank had overflowed, sending dirty waste water into her bathroom, hallway and bedroom. It was in that moment that she realized all of the distractions and frustrations in the previous days weren't just random things. 'God must be planning on doing something big during this training if the enemy is working so hard to distract me!' Once she recognized the enemy's strategy her perspective changed. She started pulling up the wet carpet with a joyful heart and continued preparing convinced that God had bigger plans than she had been imagining.*

## Discussion Questions

- A. From the stories above, what are some specific examples of spiritual opposition in the common events of daily life?
- B. We stated earlier that the enemy uses spiritual warfare to alienate us from God. How could the types of things we just listed separate us from God and from his purpose for our lives?
- C. How have you experienced spiritual warfare in the common events of daily life?
- D. What sort of change took place?

## Report from Discussion Groups

- 6. Let's hear back from each of the groups. Each group will share about the type of spiritual warfare they looked at and one or two highlights from the discussion, including evidence of change that took place.



## There is nothing to fear

7. The second thing we want to focus on is the truth that there is nothing to fear. Holly Steward writes in *Undivided Witness*:

*'In my experience in Zambia, the first sign of a community in bondage to the enemy is fear; elsewhere it might be seen in hopelessness, greed, violence, or self centredness.'*

In our team's context, what might be some of the signs of a community in bondage to the enemy?

What might be signs of change, that the bondage is being broken?

Holly Steward continues in her chapter in *Undivided Witness*:

*Many of our team members were Zambians with limited skills and education. In one village on Lake Tanganyika, we discovered that the headman—who was also the witch doctor—saw something more in them. 'The Spirit that is with you is more powerful than the ones that we have in us,' he told them. 'Our charms and rituals do not work anymore now that the Spirit in you is in our village.'*

8. Scripture tells us that 'perfect love casts out fear' (1 John 4:18). What is your response to the idea of perfect love casting out fear, in the context of spiritual warfare?
9. Holly also wrote: *'Thanks to Jesus, we are on the winning side of this battle that has already been won! As mysterious or unsettling as spiritual attacks may be, we are "more than conquerors" (Rom 8:37), not only protected but effective warriors from whom evil must flee.'*

## What Tools or Approaches can we Use?

10. Being effective involves more than recognizing spiritual warfare and not being afraid. God has given us specific tools that we can use as we engage in spiritual warfare. Three key practices are:
- A. Proclaiming God's word: Scripture has a profound impact in the spiritual atmosphere because God's word is powerful. It is alive and active, sharper than a double-edged sword (Heb. 4:12). What is the truth that our team will proclaim? How will we do it?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

- B. Rejoicing: Where was rejoicing a part of spiritual warfare in Scripture? How could it be part of what you and your team intentionally do?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

- C. Repenting: How might repenting be a part of the way you engage in spiritual warfare? (See Daniel 9:4-6.)

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

## Conclusion

11. How can we draw together what we have learned about spiritual warfare?

Walter Wink (in *Naming the Powers*) said that:

*We must develop a fine-tuned sensitivity to what the ancients called 'the war in heaven.' ... The unique calling of the church in social change lies in making clear the dual nature of our task. We wrestle on two planes, the earthly and the heavenly.*

If we want to see change, to see truly *vibrant* communities, and in particular communities of Jesus followers, how will this take place?

How, and with what tools (or approaches or weapons) should we engage in spiritual warfare so that change can take place?

*'The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.'*  
*Colossians 1:15*

For personal reflection:

What has been important for you in today's discussion on spiritual warfare? Has it been more reflection on things you already know and have experienced, or have you learned something new? With God's how might you put these ideas into practice?

For further study...

Chapter Five, *Undivided Witness*

# EXPLORING *UNDIVIDED WITNESS*

## Principle Six: Caring for creation as worship, witness, and obedience

Goals for this Discussion:

1. Our team will have a deeper understanding of what it means to care for creation and why it is important as an act of worship and obedience and as a witness to those around us.
2. Our team will think of caring for creation as a value that flavours who we are and how we live, and not merely as an activity or programme we add on to other things.

### Review

1. Last week we looked at Principle Five: 'Prayer and spiritual warfare are integral parts of the process of change'
2. The personal reflection was to consider what you had already known and what you learned about spiritual warfare. Were there things you might want to put into practice, with God's help?

Let's take 3-4 minutes to share how we responded to those questions.

### Introduction

3. This week we will be looking at Principle Six. (The full list of principles was sent to you before in a separate document.)

Principle Six summary: '*Caring for creation is an expression of worship, witness and obedience.*'

4. What do we see around us and in our community that shows the wonders our Creator placed in the setting where we live?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

5. What do we see that shows damage to the world God created?

YOUR ANSWERS:

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓

6. What comes to mind when you hear the words 'caring for creation'?

YOUR ANSWERS:

- ✓
- ✓

7. In what ways is caring for creation an act of worship to God?

YOUR ANSWERS:

- ✓
- ✓

8. What does it communicate to those around us, when Christians appear unconcerned about caring for the earth?

YOUR ANSWERS:

- ✓
- ✓

9. How can caring for creation be a witness to those around us?

YOUR ANSWERS:

- ✓
- ✓

10. This principle says that caring for creation is also an act of obedience. Where in Scripture are we instructed to care for creation?

YOUR ANSWERS:

- ✓
- ✓

## Looking at Scripture

11. What does Scripture have to say about caring for creation? Let's listen to a short interview with Dr Robert Sluka, a marine biologist working with A Rocha, a global Christian agency with a focus on caring for creation. Bob and his family lived for several years in South Asia and he now helps in countries around the world.

NOTE: if the interview video is unavailable, please go to the Scripture passages and questions at the end of this unit, then return to question 11 when you have completed that section.

THE VIDEO IS AVAILABLE BY FOLLOWING THIS LINK:

<https://vimeo.com/605038367/82bee419db>

12. What did Dr Sluka say about his own experience that you found interesting?

Did he say anything about Jesus and about creation that was new to you?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

Dr Sluka talked about a little crab, and that a crab in all its 'crabyness' is part of the global worship of God. What does that mean? How does creation praise God?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

How do the ideas Dr Sluka presented challenge you, or encourage you, as you think about caring for creation?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓



## In what ways can we....

13. We began our discussion today by looking at the wonders the Creator has placed around us. Then we looked at damage that has been done to creation.

What could a truly vibrant community of Jesus followers do to preserve the beauty and repair the damage?

How can caring for creation contribute to the formation of vibrant communities of Jesus followers?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

## Conclusion....

14. What difference would it make if we think of caring for creation as a value that affects how we live and what we do (like integrity, kindness, or respecting other people) rather than thinking of it as an activity or programme we carry out?

15. What is one step that we, as a team, will take to better care for creation?

## For personal reflection:

Think about a least-reached community you are serving or praying for. As they learn about and begin to turn to Jesus, how might they learn that caring for creation is part of being a follower of Jesus?

## For further study...

Chapter Six, Undivided Witness

Or view the twelve short video clips on caring for creation from the Lausanne Global Classroom at: <https://www.lausanne.org/lausanne-global-classroom/creation-care-episode>

## For those who could not view the video with Dr Robert Sluka

Reflect on the following passages:

Colossians 1:15-20

*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

One insight from this passage is that there are three key relationships Jesus has with creation, not so much a role (like being the firstborn) but something he actively did, is doing, or will do. Can you spot those three roles?

Revelation 5:9-13

All of creation before God's throne. How does creation worship God?

*9 And they sang a new song, saying:*

*"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. 10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign[a] on the earth."*

*11 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. 12 In a loud voice they were saying:*

*"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!"*

*13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:*

*"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honour and glory and power, for ever and ever!"*

Take a close look at this passage. Who offers praise to God and to the Lamb?

Are these new ideas for you about Jesus and creation?

How might they make a difference, challenge you or encourage you, as you think about caring for creation?

Now return to Question 11 above



# EXPLORING *UNDIVIDED WITNESS*

## **Principle Seven: A vision for vibrant communities of Jesus followers and the renewal of individuals and communities**

Goals for this Discussion:

1. People in my team will recognise the importance of listening to others, especially followers of Jesus among the community we serve.
2. People in my team will see the importance of having a clear vision for the formation of vibrant communities of Jesus followers.
3. People in my team will see the relationships between timing, intentionality, and demonstrating and explaining the good news.

### Review

1. Last week we looked at Principle Six: 'Caring for creation is an expression of worship, witness and obedience.'
2. The personal reflection was to think about a least-reached community you are serving or praying for. As they learn about and begin to turn to Jesus, how might they learn that caring for creation is part of being a follower of Jesus?

Let's take 3-4 minutes to share how we responded to those questions.

### Introduction

1. This week we will be looking at Principle Seven.

Principle Seven summary: '*True transformation requires a vision for vibrant communities of Jesus followers and the renewal of individuals and communities.*'

2. How would you define the word 'renewal'?

3. Let's consider a story to illustrate what 'a vision for renewal and a vibrant community of Jesus followers' looks like.

*In the early 2000s, two Christian mission organisations started work in a remote part of a country in Asia. Their work focused on community health and development and non-formal education. Team members, Christians and non-Christians, worked alongside each other and community members and over several years saw significant improvements in the health of women and children, water and sanitation, food security, literacy, and a range of other indicators. Contact was made with a church in a different region of the country and a pastor was sent to plant the first church in the area.*

*Christian staff supported him, his family, and the fledgling fellowship in a variety of ways. Significant opposition was experienced locally by church members and, sadly, the church split within a few years over a dispute between two leaders; staff members continued to support both churches. Nearly twenty years later, there are over ten churches in this area with upwards of 200 members. Significant developmental improvements have continued in the area through the work of the government and a number of NGOs. A number of churches are also serving their wider communities in a variety of ways.*

As Mark Galpin notes in *Undivided Witness*, this story illustrates the challenges and opportunities between community development and church planting among least-reached communities.

What were the challenges the mission organisations faced?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

4. There are different levels of renewal (or transformation) that happen in a community. For us, as followers of Jesus, there are different levels of freedom to proclaim, at different times.

In which areas do you want people in your community to experience renewal, or freedom?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

## Always Be Prepared

5. Principle Seven points to the need for a vision, and for being intentional. That includes being prepared. Let's take a look at what Peter says about this.

*Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. (NLT)*

6. What does it mean to 'be ready' to explain? How does it fit with our idea of 'demonstrating and explaining' the good news in an undivided way?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

7. How do we recognize opportunities to explain the hope we have? How do we know if we should share or not?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

8. Have you sometimes sensed you had the opportunity to 'explain the hope in you' but you did not have confidence?

How can we build this confidence so that we are ready when the right time comes? What are some specific things you can do to 'build your toolkit' so that you are ready to explain?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓



9. What does it mean to 'do this in a gentle and respectful way' in your context?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

## Being thoughtful of Timing

10. We want to make the most of every opportunity, to be intentional and to be prepared. However, there is also the reality that there are times when 'explaining' the good news can do more harm than good. When might this be true?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

11. How do you balance what feels like opportunity in the moment versus long term thinking?

In his chapter on 'ethical evangelism' in *Undivided Witness*, Mark Galpin refers to a different response—at least in timing—to the story he told before, quoted at the beginning of our discussion.

*In the immediate aftermath of the Nepal earthquakes of 2015, many Christian organisations came to the country to provide relief. At a meeting of Christian relief agencies I attended, one organisational representative shared that their efforts were going well but they were, as he put it, 'finding it a challenge to integrate evangelism with our relief distributions'.*

*Being one of the few in the room with more than a few weeks' experience in Nepal, I responded very strongly, making it clear that in no circumstances should they be trying to integrate evangelism with their relief. Why did I feel so strongly about this? I was very aware that in Nepal it is a very common accusation levelled at Christian agencies that they are 'proselytising' and coercing people to become Christians. Post-earthquake, the government was watching very closely for this. Any hint of proselytism would have damaged the reputation not just of the organisation directly involved but potentially of all other Christians. It would have brought a negative impact on the perception of the gospel itself, and most likely have resulted in the banning of all Christian involvement in relief and reconstruction efforts, reducing the aid and support that was so desperately needed.*

*The local church in Nepal had taken a very clear stance that this was a time to meet people's immediate physical needs, and not to engage in proclamation. In doing this, they were confident that they were, in this situation, appropriately bearing witness to the love Christ has for all people of whatever faith. The time for proclamation would come; this was the time for demonstration.*

*The organisation mentioned had no understanding of the context. Their approach was driven by a need to feel that they were doing 'integral mission' themselves in this situation. This stemmed from a restricted and limited understanding of God's Kingdom. As such, they did more harm than good.*

- According to this story, what was right and what was wrong with the view of the outside organization? Until the time of the meeting, who had they listened to?
- What was the view of the Nepali church? What was their vision? Why was their view important?
- What does this story tell us about the combination of a) intentionality and vision with b) a long-term view and sensitivity to timing?
- What does this story suggest about the way 'demonstration' and 'explanation' of the good news fit together?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓  
✓  
✓

## Conclusion

12. The last part of 1 Peter 3:16 tells us to 'Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ'

Why is it important for us to live a good life among the people in our community?  
What happens if we don't?

13. What is one thing that stands out to you from today's discussion? What have you learned that you think you and your team can put into practice?

**For personal reflection:**

In this unit we have talked about the importance of having a clear vision and of being intentional if we desire to see change take place. Is this true about your team and you? In what ways could you improve?

How are you seeing vibrant communities of Jesus followers contributing to change in the community where you live or serve?

**For further study...**

Chapter Seven and Reflection on Ethical Evangelism, Undivided Witness



# EXPLORING *UNDIVIDED WITNESS*

## **Principle Eight: Community development workers are committed to professional excellence**

Goals for this Discussion:

1. Our team will have a better understanding of how work can be an expression of worship.
2. We will also have a better understanding of what professional excellence means and why it is important as we serve our communities.

### Review

1. Last week we looked at Principle Seven: 'True transformation requires a vision for vibrant communities of Jesus followers and the renewal of individuals and communities.'

The personal reflection was to consider whether this sort of vision and intentionality are true of your team and you. In what ways could you improve?

How are you seeing vibrant communities of Jesus followers contributing to change in the community where you live or serve?

Let's take 3-4 minutes to share how we responded to that question.

### What is Professional Excellence?

2. This week we will be looking at Principle Eight.

Principle Eight summary: '*Community development workers are committed to professional excellence.*'

3. Let's start by understanding what we mean by professional excellence. How would you define the term 'profession'?

YOUR ANSWER:

✓

4. The next term we want to look at is the term 'excellence'. How do you understand the idea of excellence?

YOUR ANSWER:

✓

5. People are often surprised by excellence because excellence goes beyond the bare minimum of what is required.

A. Let's think about the story in the Bible of Ruth. Things might have turned out very differently if Ruth and Boaz had just done the bare minimum that was required by society or by the law.

B. In what ways did Ruth go beyond what was expected?

C. What about Boaz? In what ways did he go beyond what was required?

D. What was the result of their going above and beyond?

6. We could say that Ruth and Boaz's actions were acts of worship because they brought glory to God. Their actions demonstrated his faithful caretaking love. Our work can also be an act of worship. In what ways do you see the work that you do as an act of worship?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓

✓

✓

7. Work was a gift from God, given to Adam and Eve before the Fall. The work we do is not just a 'necessary evil' resulting from sin.
- Scripture tells us that whatever we do, we should work at it with all out heart, as working for the Lord. (Col. 3:23)
  - Scripture also tells us that we are a royal priesthood. (1 Peter 2:9) This refers to our whole life, and not to just specific activities done in a religious setting.

8. Let's think about the work that we do. In our work, there are often standards that are set for us (by government, professional organisations, association, organisations, alliances, people who give accreditation, etc). For example, in a lot of countries you need to keep up your registration as a nurse or physical therapist. You may be fully qualified, but you still need local registration.

What are the professional standards that have been set for us and people in similar work in our community? It might even be standards set by your own team or field leadership.

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

9. For us, as Jesus followers, there are other standards that are based on biblical values. For example, we are told in Scripture to be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry (James 1:9). What could be some other standards that are set based on Biblical values?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

10. We have many stakeholders.

*Stakeholders are people who have an interest in a project or activity. They may be affected (for good or bad) by the outcome of the project. Stakeholders include the community served, outsiders helping with the project, local government, donors, and others. 'Key stakeholders' are those who will be most affected by the project or who have made the greatest investment in it.*

The community we serve is often the forgotten stakeholder. We want to value them. They are created in God's image. So many people come into a community and just 'tell' them what they need but we want to listen to them. God has already given the ability to do good into them and to do it with excellence; we want to help draw out the excellence that is in them. All of this points to our desire and need to develop a relationship with them. When that happens, rather than something imposed from the outside the community (not outsiders) will be the true owners and leaders of what is happening.



11. Think about projects we are involved in (or know about or might get involved in).  
Who are the stakeholders?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

In our specific situation, what should our key stakeholders in the community expect from us as relate with them?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

12. Gabriel Markus tells an important story about the community we serve as a stakeholder.

*As mentioned earlier in our training, I coordinated a large construction project in Sri Lanka after the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami had left thousands homeless. One morning I received an urgent call from a worker in a European partner agency: the man was out of breath, pleading with me to come quickly because someone was chasing him and threatening to kill him with a shovel.*

*I quickly got in my car, drove to the site, and was able to calm things down. The European man didn't know what he had done wrong, why the man was so angry—but he felt that the Sri Lankan man simply did not appreciate their hard work. I turned to the Sri Lankan and, speaking in his language, asked about this. 'We are grateful,' he said, 'but they just don't listen.'*

*It turned out that the Europeans had a good floor plan for the houses—but it missed one key element. For the Hindu Tamil villagers, it was vitally important that their house door face east to receive the blessing of the rising sun (no matter where the nearby street lay). The Europeans' failure to listen had almost led to the construction of houses that would not be appreciated (and possibly the loss of one NGO worker's life).*

This story captures the vital importance of listening to the community we serve and finding out what is important to them. Beyond this important practice, in our specific situation, what should our key stakeholders both in the community as well as others (like donors and government officials) expect from us as relate with them?

## Reflection / Conclusion

13. So we see that there are expectations that are set for us by our team, by outside authorities, from the community and from others including God himself.

Think about your own role. This can be about any work you do, not just community development. As you go about your work, what is the difference between doing the bare minimum of what is expected and serving with excellence?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

14. What difference does it make to our witness when we are committed to professional excellence?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

15. What idea stands out for you from today's discussion? Why?

### For personal reflection:

In the settings where I serve, or hope to serve, are there areas where I need to improve my professional training? How can I develop those skills? Since I cannot do everything myself, in what areas do I (or my team) need to receive help and advice from those with professional skills?

### For further study...

Chapter Eight, Undivided Witness

# EXPLORING *UNDIVIDED WITNESS*

## Principle Nine: Shared principles of excellence

Goals for this Discussion:

1. People in my team will see how excellent Community Development and VCJF Principles complement each other.
2. People in my team will see how Community Development blends in practice with efforts to see vibrant communities of Jesus followers being formed and growing.

### Review

1. Last week we looked at Principle Eight: Community development workers are committed to professional excellence. The personal reflection was to consider areas where I need to improve my professional training. How can I develop those skills? Since I cannot do everything myself, in what areas do I (or my team) need to receive help and advice from those with professional skills?
2. Let's take 3-4 minutes to share how we responded to that question.

### Introduction

1. This week we will be looking at Principle Nine.

Principle Nine summary: *'There are many shared principles of excellence between community development and forming vibrant communities of Jesus followers.'*

2. Let's hear the experience of Andrea one Christmas in Central Asia and see what we can learn about ourselves.

*One Christmas Eve in a small city in Central Asia, Andrea cooked food from her home country that she thought would not be too strange for her local friends: grilled chicken, boiled rice and vegetables.*

*As was the local custom, she spread the tablecloth on the floor and proudly presented the food to her local friends. They diligently moved the food around on their plates; some ate the chicken but few touched the rest.*

*Losing her patience Andrea asked, “Why don’t you eat this? It has the same ingredients as a chicken pilau!” Astonished, her friends looked at Andrea and said, “Yes, but if you knew that, then why did you cook everything separately when it is so much tastier blended together?”*

- What does this make you think of in terms of your own life? Is your life more like a stew, everything cooked together, or is it like a meal with everything cooked in separate bits?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

- What is good about being like a stew? Being ‘cooked’ in separate bits?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

3. As you think back on our discussions, what does this story make you think about in terms of ‘undivided witness’, ‘demonstrating and explaining the good news’, community development, and vibrant communities of Jesus followers?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

## Comparing Principles

4. OM has created a list of ‘Ten VCJF Principles to Help Shape our Ministry’. These principles have a lot of overlap with excellent principles for community development.

VCJF Principle	Principle Applied to Transformational Community Development
Prayer and fasting	We care for widows and orphans, described as true fasting in Isaiah, and as we engage in transformational development, we need to be aware of the spiritual worldview and powers in the community. (See Chapter 5)

Collaboration	We collaborate with the community and all stakeholders. Development should always be an inclusive process.
Prepared to suffer	We live among those who suffer and mourn with the mourning, even if this creates a risk for us. We seek a theological perspective on suffering together.
Do what is easily reproducible	Our development projects are based on local assets and appropriate technology that is reproducible and scalable.
Our wide sowing is relevant, contextual and seeks to elicit a next step	We insert relevant and contextually appropriate spiritual truth in a wide network built through our community involvement.
We are in and engaged with the least reached communities	The least reached are often also least reached in development, education and economics. Especially in the poorest areas of the world, living in a community as development worker gives us an authentic presence.
Form and utilise teams appropriately	Community development is teamwork and already often multi-cultural and interagency teamwork.
Focus on groups	We practise community formation and model healthy communities of peer support and peer learning in our projects.
Make disciples, not converts	Community development always views the participant as agent of change, people who hold the potential to change and transform their communities and societies.
Local leadership and ownership	Community development is temporary assistance. We model, assist, lead and from the beginning develop community leaders. As Christian development organisations, we model and teach servant and shepherd leadership to all levels of society.

5. As you look at this list, how does comparing the two sets of principles show that we are 'undivided' in our witness.

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

6. Let's take a look at some of these principles in more detail. The author of Chapter 9 in *Undivided Witness* wrote the following, drawing on transformational development expert Bryant Myers:

One of the most important principles in community development is the active participation of the community in finding solutions and setting the agenda and direction for any development process. Bryant Myers reminds us in his book *Walking with the Poor* (page 218) that if we want to share our story we first need to listen to their story. Bryant Myers then states:

*'...we face a challenge. How do we merge these stories so that they enhance each other, and everyone learns and grows? The key is becoming community to each other...Building community is what good neighbours do.'*

- Where do you see active participation of the community fitting in your community development or similar work? How do we listen to their story and become community?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓

- How or where do you see this in the formation of new churches or vibrant communities of Jesus followers?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓

7. Another key principle in community development is reproducibility and scalability. Will your intervention be picked up by the local community and reproduced locally? Is it simple enough, using locally available resources? Can someone reproduce what you are modelling?

- How does this apply to the kind of work you do?
- What about your approach in helping people grow in faith, discipleship?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

8. One of our OM colleagues is a licensed physical therapist with specialty in helping those with disabilities. She wrote:

*A backbone of community development is the idea that health, rehabilitation, education, and self-help groups (SHGs) are located in direct proximity to the people in need of such services. In this, we speak of primary health vs. larger polyclinics in the closest city, village schools established even in remote or nomadic settings, inclusive education for children with disabilities rather than boarding and special education options, and access to legal and peer support through local women's self-help groups rather than isolation.*

- How does this apply in your setting to the services and ways you want to help a community find solutions for their needs?
- How does it apply to forming vibrant communities of Jesus followers?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

9. After discussing the value of broad “seed-sowing” through media etc., the physical therapist also wrote:

*Secular development work often focuses on practical, technical and knowledge solutions. However, in most cultures the underlying question in relation to the development need is often relational and spiritual. As Christians, we can answer those underlying spiritual questions of ‘Who sinned: this man or his parents?’ (John 9:2). Sharing development and worldview-relevant good news in community groups and networks helps to identify those who are earnestly seeking God and truth. By sowing relevantly into a wide network of women, farmers, and parents along with the continued watering of these seeds through engagement with the group, those ready for the next step of regularly reading God’s Word emerge. Interacting with God’s word brings a change of worldview and, for some, a change in allegiance and Lordship. These changes lead to changed behaviour and lasting transformation in the whole community as a result of obedience to God’s word.*

- How does this apply to you? Are you ‘sowing’ helpful ideas and information that contributes to needs being met and change in the community?
- Is sowing relevantly into a wide network leading to some becoming followers of Jesus and vibrant communities of Jesus followers being formed?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

10. Writing from Central Asia and the context of international non-governmental organisations focused on community development she says:

*Why is it that those engaged with international development efforts already model some values that the church and those involved in mission among the least reached should deeply believe in and readily adopt? These include being diverse and international, giving room to local believers to grow, and, as they gain experience, space and opportunity to serve internationally. If mission organisations and churches can become more diverse and empowering—seeing those we disciple as fellow workers in the harvest and as future leaders of communities and organisations—we will have come a long way.*



- Does this apply to your kind of work? Can you speak sensitively with the group about situations where people are being empowered to grow into roles and responsibility? If appropriate (and thoughtful about those involved) are there situations where this is not happening?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

- Are we clinging to power, or enabling others to develop their skills and grow in leadership? What positive comments or examples can you give of how you have been helped?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

#### 11. The Micah Declaration states:

*If we ignore the world we betray the word of God, which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the word of God we have nothing to bring to the world. Justice and justification by faith, worship and political action, the spiritual and the material, personal change and structural change belong together. As in the life of Jesus, being, doing and saying are at the heart of our integral task.*

- As we think of the various principles of good community development listed above, do you see them as fitting together well with the way we go about witness?
- Are these good examples of the demonstration and explanation of the good news fitting together seamlessly?
- Where do you see overlaps in what you do as excellent community development workers (or a similar role) and what you do (or should be done) in terms of seeing new, vibrant communities of Jesus followers formed?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

## Putting it into practice

12. Let's make this practical by thinking through how we might apply these ideas.

- What can we do differently?
- How will we implement the change?
- Who on our team will be responsible for what part?
- When will these changes take effect?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

## Conclusion

13. Let's conclude by reading this story, an experience of one of our colleagues.

*A few months ago I visited a refugee family in a Middle Eastern city, together with a team of our organisation consisting of a Western paediatrician and a Middle Eastern pharmacist. Both spoke Arabic and English well and deeply loved the people they were serving. We visited a family living in utter poverty: the woman was facing difficulties in her marriage and four of her six children had a disability or stigmatising features like albinism. While I observed, the team listened and comforted, gave quality medical advice and referral, and helped the illiterate woman to read medical papers. They shared a lot of smiles and the two sang a few songs with the children and gave exercises for the girl suspected to have cerebral palsy. Toward the end of our visit, a neighbour came over. My Arab colleague told a story of Jesus, answered more questions, and prayed a blessing on the family. Then we left.*

*Seldom have I seen all that I have written above lived out in such a small space and time—integral mission lived out and visible in a sixty-minute visit, a banquet of flavours and tastes well blended and pleasing to man and God.*

*Let us keep together what belongs together; things are tastier when thoroughly blended!*

### For personal reflection:

This week we have considered the similarity in principles for excellent community development and for the formation of vibrant communities of Jesus followers.

Did any of these principles stand out to you? Which ones? Why?

Do you think that God wants you to implement them or make some changes? If yes, write down a few thoughts about what you are sensing. Who can you share these ideas with and then pray with them for God's way to move ahead?

### For further study...

Chapter Nine, Undivided Witness



# EXPLORING *UNDIVIDED WITNESS*

## Principle Ten: The least reached are so for a reason

Goals for this Discussion:

1. Our team will have our thinking stretched as we think of who are the least reached.
2. People on my team will have a better understanding of why people are least reached.
3. Our team will have fresh awareness of the barriers to reaching the least reached.
4. People on my team will have a better understanding of how we ourselves have much to learn from the least reached, how God can use them to change us.

### Review

1. Last week we looked at Principle Nine. The personal reflection was to consider which principles stood out for you, the principles for excellence in community development that overlap with principles for the formation of vibrant communities of Jesus followers.
  - Which principle/s stood out for you? Why?
  - Do you think that God wants you to implement them or make some changes? (Closed question – how can we phrase it as an open question instead?)
2. Let's take 3-4 minutes to share how we responded to these questions.

### Introduction

3. This week we will be looking at Principle Ten.

Principle Ten summary: *'The least-reached are so for a reason.'*

### Part One: Who are the Least Reached?

4. What does the phrase 'least reached' suggest to you?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

5. In OM, we defined 'least reached' in terms of communities where
- No one is sharing about Jesus.
  - No local community of Jesus followers is sharing his teachings.
  - Barriers like language and culture separate people from local Jesus followers.
6. Many times, when we use terms like 'unreached' and 'unevangelised' we use big numbers, 'per cent evangelical population' and other statistics.

But in OM, when we defined 'least reached' we wanted to talk about it as an idea that that needs to be compared: 'this community is less reached than that community'. We did not want the term to be defined by statistics and numbers counted by some outside group, or artificially set up along lines of ethnic groups or tribes.

- What affect does a statistical 'big numbers' approach have on our way of thinking about the least reached?
- How does God want us to think about the least reached?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

7. With that in mind,
- Who are the least reached?
  - Are they close to you, or far away?
  - While we might think of people like 'Arabs in North Africa' or 'Buddhists in Tibet' as least-reached, who might be the least-reached communities close to you, possibly hidden from the view of Christians in your area?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

## Part Two - "for a reason"

8. What are the barriers that cause a community to be least reached? What makes some of these people even harder to reach?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓

9. Rosemary Hack told the story of a person she named Sally.

*I will always remember when I first met Sally\*. Sally is a Malay Muslim; in her country there are severe punishments for both witness and conversion to Christ. However, Sally has further barriers separating her from society: she is transgender and living with HIV. Running and hiding from authorities, it is hard for her to access medical services, or call on police protection; she must avoid the police since being transgender is illegal, and transgender people are frequently subject to harsh beatings by those who should protect them. Who is going to bring the good news of Christ to Sally, stand with her and advocate for her basic rights as a human being created in the image of God?*

After telling this story, she said: 'Entering Sally's world would probably make most of us deeply uncomfortable.'

- Do you agree?
- How do those who are least reached make us uncomfortable? Why?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓

10. So, as we think of the least reached and the barriers that separate or hide them, whose barriers are they? Could it be that some of these barriers are my own barriers?

- What are some barriers that are really mine, not theirs?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

11. Where do you think Jesus would be today? Why?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓

## Part Three - So What?

12. Sometimes we get the idea that we have all the answers, that we have nothing to learn—at least not from the 'least-reached community' we want to serve. A colleague from South Africa found this attitude challenged as she visited a refugee camp.

*Every time I drove to the refugee camp, I would see an old lady sitting beside the highway. This went on for weeks until I finally listened to the prompting of the Spirit who said: 'Do you see her? I see her. Stop for her.'*

*One day I did, and it was a paradigm-shifting experience. I encountered her as Jesus to me—very humbling, sharing our humanity and honouring her for who she was. I didn't verbally share the gospel with her, but I believe I definitely demonstrated the gospel to her. I truly encountered Jesus in her, the least of these. Maybe the least reached are more reached than we think, and we need to be touched in fresh ways by Jesus in them.*

- What did this woman learn from the elderly lady? What does her final sentence mean, that we are touched by Jesus through them?
- Have you experienced something like this? Do you *need* to experience something like this?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

13. Rose tells a story of change, a story of a bottom-up approach of people in need helping others in need.

*In the mountainous Nepal, people living with HIV are highly stigmatised and subject to discrimination. While the country is experiencing dynamic church growth in several regions, people living with HIV are left behind, marginalised and stigmatised even by the church—and by themselves, believing that their ordeal reflects how God feels about them.*

*Initially, most HIV services were only available in Kathmandu. People living with HIV came to the city for treatment or died in their villages. Many ended up in this large sprawling city with no one to help navigate the hospital system and no accommodation if they were outpatients.*

*A few followers of Jesus, mostly Nepalis living with HIV, sacrificed their own time and comfort, providing a place to stay and helping new patients at the hospital. They started outposts in rural communities many hours of very uncomfortable, dangerous travel away.*



*Revealing Christ and helping this Nepali community went hand in hand. Those living with HIV who contact the ministry know that they are loved, that someone understands and will help them despite their shame and exclusion from society. At monthly support group meetings Hindus, Muslims, and Christians eat, pray, and worship God together.*

*These gatherings of people from different faiths and people groups is unusual; the fact that they are openly sharing their struggles and requesting prayer adds to the uniqueness of the situation. They have two things in common: HIV and the ministry of those helping them. Many are not yet believers but are on a journey to Christ. The elderly mother of one client recently was baptised and started to follow Jesus. Her son was asked if he was a believer; his answer, 'Not yet!' came with a smile and the implication that it is only a matter of time.*

Let's think about this story of a least-reached community becoming, to some extent, reached by the good news.

- What was the problem, and how was it overcome? Who took the steps to change things? Was it easy for them?
- What was it that drew together people of Hindu, Muslim, and even Christian background?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

## Part Four - Conclusion

14. Rose concludes her chapter by writing:

*The least reached are often hidden, separated not just from us but also from their own society by hostile environments, danger, disease, gender, stigma, poverty, and complex webs of sin. They are hidden at times by our own blindness, or simply our failure to observe with Spirit-enabled perception. When we make the extra intentional effort to find, come alongside, understand, and serve them we may find ourselves in places where we are not expected, in the words of Bryant Myers [in a conversation with David Greenlee], a 'pleasant surprise' that may open hearts and minds to the service and love Christ compels us to offer.*

- Have you ever had the kind of pleasant surprise that Bryant Myers mentions? Please tell the group about that experience.

15. Today we have looked at WHO the 'least reached' are and WHY they might be 'least reached'.

- How does this connect to what we have covered in previous discussions?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

16. What difference does today's conversation make? Is there anything we want to do differently? If so, what?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓

### For personal reflection:

When did the gospel come to your community, your people, or village, or tribe? That might have been long ago if you are from a place like Greece; or 200 years ago for some in Africa; or very recent for others.

How did the gospel come to your community or people? How did it come to you? That is, how did your community stop being 'least reached'?

How does your own story, your community's story, encourage you as you consider helping other communities become followers of Jesus instead of being 'least reached'?

### For further study...

Chapter Ten, Undivided Witness

# EXPLORING *UNDIVIDED WITNESS*

## Looking Back and What We have Learned

Goals for this Discussion:

1. We will review together the Principles we have discussed and point to highlights of what we have learned.
2. We will identify some specific steps we can take to put what we have learned into action.
3. We will share ideas of how the training can be improved for others who will take it in the future.

### Review

1. Last week we looked at Principle Ten: 'The least reached are so for a reason.' The personal reflection was to answer: When did the gospel come to your community, your people, or village, or tribe? How did the gospel come to your community or people? How did it come to you? That is, how did your community stop being 'least reached'?  
How does your own story, your community's story, encourage you as you consider helping other communities become followers of Jesus instead of being 'least reached'?
2. Let's take 3-4 minutes to share how we responded to that question.

### Looking Back at the Principles

3. We have considered Ten Principles for Undivided Witness, principles that are related to Jesus followers and community development among the least reached. Did any of these principles stand out to you as being especially important? Can we separate the principles—or do they need to be kept together? What happens if we try to take them apart?
  - Principle One summary: 'Understanding the kingdom of God is fundamental'
  - Principle Two summary: 'Understanding how people enter the kingdom of God shapes how we do ministry.'

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- Principle Three summary: 'The gospel impacts the whole person and people's whole contexts.'
- Principle Four summary: 'We share a broad vision of glorifying Christ as people come to faith and communities are impacted by the kingdom.'
- Principle Five summary: 'Prayer and spiritual warfare are integral parts of the process of change'
- Principle Six summary: 'Caring for creation is an expression of worship, witness and obedience.'
- Principle Seven summary: 'True transformation requires a vision for vibrant communities of Jesus followers and the renewal of individuals and communities.'
- Principle Eight summary: 'Community development workers are committed to professional excellence.'
- Principle Nine summary: 'There are many shared principles of excellence between community development and forming vibrant communities of Jesus followers.'
- Principle Ten summary: 'The least-reached are so for a reason.'

## Whole People, Undivided Witness

4. In his Epilogue to the book *Undivided Witness*, Dr. Paul Bendor-Samuel relates a story from his experience in North Africa, an experience that gave the title for the book.

Those invited by God to participate in integral ministry on the margins of gospel witness find it a place of deep personal learning and growth: a journey of discipleship. That was certainly what my wife and I experienced during the twelve years we spent working in North Africa in the interface between community development and growth of communities of Jesus followers. A story comes to mind from those days:

*I was called to travel from the capital to a remote province where one of our teams had been working for about five years. In the previous two years, a small group of Jesus followers had grown from the witness of one man whose life had been transformed. Caught with his hand in the finances where he worked, he was staggered when his boss, one of our team, forgave him and gave him an opportunity to change. His response was to request a copy of 'our book'. Who was this Jesus that could make a person behave so differently from what most bosses would do? It was the beginning of a transforming process, an encounter with Christ that changed him, his wife, and his family, and then began to ripple out to others in the community. After some months, the police decided enough was enough and the group was shut down.*

*This was not the end of the matter. The Regional Director of Health, my closest personal friend in the country, was scandalised, incensed. 'What inducements did you give to persuade him to change his religion? You have corrupted out culture.' Very quickly the Ministry of Health withdrew from all our projects, leaving the future of the organisation hanging in the balance. So it was that I found myself driving to a meeting with the provincial governor, with no idea what I would say. I walked into his large office and was graciously received. 'Your Excellency', I started, 'you have known that we are Christians, supported by churches. We have always given our very best professionally, seeking to serve with integrity. The motivation that drives the excellence of our professional work flows from our experience of the love of God. This same motivation means that when someone asks us about our faith, we have to share about that love we have freely received. We respect that this is your country and you have the right to invite us to stay or ask us to leave. However, we are whole people and you cannot split us in two. You cannot have professional excellence without a willingness to share what makes us who we are.' Very graciously, His Excellency shook my hand and asked us to stay.*

Dr. Bendor-Samuel then states that we are 'whole people, or not at all' because we bring a gloriously whole gospel.

Thinking back on our discussions through this training program, what does it mean to be 'whole people'? What does *Undivided Witness* mean to you?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

How does this tie together with the ideas of *Demonstration* and *Explanation* of the gospel?

YOUR ANSWERS:

✓  
✓  
✓

## Making it Personal

- Please think about these questions for your own learning and share them with your group and the leaders of this training programme.

- What difference has the study made for you?
- What facts and information have you learned?
- What unanswered questions do you have?
- Are there skills you think you should develop?
- What application do you think God wants you to make? Your team?
- How will you go about making those applications?

Thank you for taking part!

Thank you so much for taking part in this training program. We put a lot of work into developing the units—and thank you that you put a lot of work into going through the study!

We would very much enjoy hearing from you about how this course has made a difference for you, and how you are putting it into practice. We also welcome your suggestions to improve the material.

Finally, please consider reading the book *Undivided Witness*, published by Regnum in 2020 and edited by David Greenlee, Mark Galpin, and Paul Bendor-Samuel. It is available through Regnum publishers in the UK and through various online bookstores as a print book and in eBook formats (See <https://www.regnumbooks.net/>, [www.kobo.com](http://www.kobo.com); Amazon, and others)

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