



“...make disciples, teaching them to obey all things...” Matthew 28:20

In the Spring newsletter we commented on the great commission and the command to “go” looks like from an STS perspective. Returning to the same theme we would like to pick up the element of teaching being an essential part of the discipleship making process, and what that looks like from a STS perspective. When we look back at our own school days (love or loath them) they were the place of learning and the place where we have been, or should have been, taught skills that would impact on our life and future. Learning, however, was not solely something to feed the brain, but also had a practical outworking and helped “skill” us for the years ahead and so it continues into all of our lives.

When it comes to disciple-making, Jesus has given us a framework, of all the things that he taught his disciples and just as it was an on-going transformation of their lives, true discipleship is something that will impact in such a way that it also marks us out of disciples. It is that practical distinctiveness that marks us out from the crowd. As James, in his letter, underscores, our

faith is seen in the way our life demonstrates it, especially in our interaction with others.

For STS the inductive bible study format is the key teaching/disciple-making format. It is the essential building block and when it comes to teaching, we are not just teaching people what Jesus said, but teaching skills to allow individuals to study and interact with the text itself. We want those who study with us to become independent rather than dependent, and to have the skills and the confidence to study scripture for themselves without being afraid of it. Equipping people in this way, is something that is both life affirming and freedom giving, allowing individuals to explore their relationship with God as they interact directly with Scripture,

and not solely dependent on the mediation and interpretation of their pastor.

Yet this is often not the starting point for those who come to us. It is the safe space of the monthly workshop programme which can allow individuals to explore what we do in a way which asks for no commitment or any level of involvement beyond what individuals want to offer. Here, people can listen, ask, reflect and think about the biblical material being examined and then, if so desired, follow up at a later time.

In all of this, we are mindful that if teaching and discipleship are to be effective, it is essential that we deliver material in a format and at a level that can be grasped and understood by those listening. Effective communication has to



come at a level and in a format that will be understood by those present. All of what we offer therefore has a time for questions, and also a time for those participating to explore the practical application of the material. Helping people work out, in practical terms, what it means to be a disciple of Jesus is a central and key part to both the workshops and weekly study groups.

The frequency of the study groups also allows relationships to build, friendships to be formed, and life to be shared. Here individuals can open up with confidence and a sense of confidentiality and find support. To help facilitate this, we aim to have no less than 3 and no more than 6 per group, and let each develop at their own pace, but with an overall longer-term objective of having the participants facilitate the group themselves as they build confidence and develop their own skills.

To help the discipleship process, and to meet demand from those attending in 2018 a pilot biblical and theological course over a 12-week period from July to September was programmed where

a wider range of themes on Scripture and biblical themes were explored. Keeping the balance between what may be seen as “head knowledge” and teaching that is practical, we maintained an interactive approach and also, used the study groups in the autumn to further flesh out some of the things taught and how they impact on our day to day living as followers of Jesus.

This year we are seeking to run a further 12 week course, based on the Pauline letters, and with some adjustments from last year aim to help participants explore the life and thought of Paul, as well as looking for practical appli-

cation along the way. We are also conscious of those who may come along and not have been through the skills based study groups and will be seeking to incorporate some lessons on how to read and explore Scripture to try and engage with those to whom this process may be new.

In addition, in putting this together, we have been aware of the need to diversify our teaching staff and draw on others in. As part of that we have begun to explore how we may do this for 2020, when we are tentatively planning a course on some themes from the Old Testament.



On the radio with Miguel Yanka in Ingenerio Jacobacci

Notice – postponement of the Information event on the 29th June

Owing to events beyond our direct control, the event that was scheduled to take place in the Agape Centre, Belfast on the morning of the 29th June 2019 has had to be postponed. This event will now run in the autumn of 2019 at the same venue. We regret any inconvenience caused, but hope to meet as many of you as possible later in the year and have the chance to discuss some of the events that will have taken place over the July-September period.

Javier Bazan

Learning can be both exciting and challenging, but when we think of learning, we usually have in mind some structured approach – the mid-week study, the Sunday service, a homegroup study programme – but one of the big challenges for people in San Martin, is availability. When you don't always have a set schedule from week to week and work commitments easily change, being able to attend any fixed programme can have some challenges. While STS has to operate with a fixed programme, we have also found that it is necessary to teach and disciple in one to one situations, when the "programme" doesn't fit. One of the people who has attended the STS workshops and Study Groups for a few years, until timetable changes made it difficult is Javier Bazan.

Javier works as a building contractor but is also the assistant pastor of the "Jesus is King" Baptist church in San Martin. Taking on this role in the pastoral team has brought a range of responsibilities within the typically small (20 something) congregation, as well as bringing the challenge of balancing work, the responsibilities that come with family life and time with his two children. Yet, having taken on the role in his congregation Javier has found that his time with STS has been formative and continues to be.

Speaking about what he thought about his involvement with STS he states "it was very useful for me, it encouraged me and gave me a confidence to advance in the things of the Lord, in being able to stand up and speak in front of people and talk about God."

He continues, "Today we [the congregation] are in a place where the church does not have men to help out with the result that the pastor has asked me to give the address at the Thursday night prayer meeting and also to prepare in advance to speak on Sunday. At the moment, I am at the church every day of the week, either preparing or just helping out with routine maintenance. All of these things I see as the hand of the Lord."

Although because of conflicting timetables, Javier no longer has the opportunity to come to the STS events, he still maintains regular contact and often calls into the office to talk things over. Resources for pastors are few and often they are placed in situations where they need practical advice and somewhere to go to outside of their own congregation. In speaking with Javier we have been looking for ways to continue to support him in his new role, to be a resource for him to turn to. Recently he has expressed the need to develop his counselling skills to help deal with some of the issues that he is faced with in his pastoral responsibilities. He recognises that there are times when he is not prepared to respond to some of the situations he is faced with, but his regular contact with Pablo in the STS office has been a means of support and encouragement. When asked about this, he commented "This way I would have someone to ask for advice at the level such as asking the pastor, or... knowing what Bible readings can be used in a special situation. I am happy to have people like you who help me with regard to the things



of God." Here is discipleship, here is where STS, outside of the structures of the week, can reach into the life and ministry of someone and have a positive impact.

These are the ongoing situations that people like Javier find themselves in. Life changes, responsibilities change, and in all of this STS seeks to be flexible. Teaching and discipleship is not just something that only takes place in the more structured workshop or study group, but is an on-going process also conveyed through more informal connections. We see the importance, that even if contact is less regular than it once was, the need for ongoing support and encouragement remains. For individuals like Javier, whose commitments to work, church and family, place heavy demands on time and availability, we need to be able to provide the support that he needs when he needs it. In this way STS continues the work of discipleship until those who have been taught and encouraged by STS have the skills and abilities to continue on for themselves.



Prayer focus...

We would especially ask for your prayers over the summer for the work of STS in some major areas.

1. The forthcoming course which will run from July through to September and look at the person and teaching of Paul. Events will take place on a weekly basis with workshops lasting 2 ½ hours and comprising of both a teaching block and a time for discussion to explore the practical outworking of what has been taught. Good preparation for these events is essential.

a. Please remember both Pablo and Colin who will be using the incoming weeks to put together the material needed. Continued prayer for their health, protection, and clarity of mind and thought is essential as they also balance out other commitments as well as take on the added workload of preparation.

b. Pray also for those who will come. That the Lord will bring those with a desire to learn and that this will be increased as the weeks go on. Pray for their ability to grasp what is being taught and to have the confidence to engage with Scripture in a way that is both exciting, challenging, and transformative. The programme for the summer is as follows:

2. The colporteur work which we began exploring in April/May with weekend trips to Maquinchao has continued but

will now take a break because of the winter snows. These have both to be provided Bibles & books as well as present workshops and have been well received. After the most recent trip at the beginning of June Pablo commented on this trip...

"Since Wednesday afternoon the forecast was correct, and rain and then snow started to make road conditions difficult. Added to that were patches of open sky and freezing conditions casting an invisible blanket of ice on pavement roads. Dirt roads had very deep mud and snow to the sides. On Friday I made it to the first destination, Comallo in Rio Negro. Friday afternoon I met with two of the pastors and sold a few Bibles and got more info about the Pastors Fellowship of that city that is not working very well. I spent the night there and made an appointment to continue talking with Pastor Colaso, who seems to be very active and interested in what we can offer to the churches there. He also provided contact information for the secretary of the Ingeniero Jacobacci pastors fellowship that encompasses congregations on that city, Maquinchao, and Los Menucos. On Saturday morning I drove from Comallo to Ingeniero Jacobacci, Miguel Yanka was a contact from the first trip, who happens to be the treasurer of the city's pastors fellowship. I made it through difficult driving

conditions and reached the city in time to be interviewed at his radio show. He provided me with the contact for the president and secretary of the pastor's fellowship and also a contact in Pilcaniyeu, a city where we had no contacts... yet! I continued to Maquinchao where I held a workshop on adolescents at the congregation where we had had the previous one. The attendance was larger than before, they were engaged and interested. After the workshop there was an interesting debate about how to start working to prepare a receptive environment for their young and outsiders."

Please pray for the range of contacts that are opening up across these towns, that we will be able to maintain the links, that their hunger to learn will increase and that the Lord will open the way to develop a work there over the incoming year.

3. Finance is always a concern for mission organisations, yet the Lord has been gracious to us. This is something to be thankful for, yet we acknowledge our continued dependence for the remainder of the year. Please pray that we will receive the necessary funding and also have opportunities to promote the work of STS through different connections and contacts in congregations over the incoming months.