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When it comes to evangelism, outreach, and living on mission there are always better ways to accomplish what Matthew 28 asks us to do as Christ followers.

Section 1: Reading - based on the FIVE pre-course books sent out to you (see again below) discuss 4-6 key overall insights gained from these texts (FYI that is 4-6 total, not per text). Make an effort to think deeply and analytically when giving these few insights that would help to inform future evangelistic initiatives for your context. These texts are not outright “evangelism” texts, so you will want to look deeper at things like thought constructs, principles, communication methods, etc.

I am one of the youths who grew up in the church setting, was part of a youth group, church choir, Musician in the worship team. I was also a member of (EE) Evangelism Explosive where we were trained on how to approach others with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I was part of the whole Christian Educational system of the church. One thing I realized deeply into my heart while I was reading the book: Organizational Culture and Leadership, I realize culture is and is going to be a big part of all we do in ministry. Even if we don't acknowledge its existence, it will be there because it is what forms a nation, an ethnicity group and in general it is part of every nation's DNA. In a country it might happen there is a macroculture and inside that culture we might also find some microculture as well.

For us to be effective evangelistic leaders in our ministry, we must have knowledge in the culture where we will be intervening or doing ministry. Without knowing the culture where we are serving, we might end up hurting the people we are called to serve. This is something I never heard someone mention to us when I was taking the Evangelism class when I was in Haiti. After my readings, I realize even in Haiti we have other cultures as well depending on the community where we are located. We as Evangelistic leaders need to think on strategies that could help us attend our goals in ministry. We need to look at the different backgrounds due to different ethnicities that we encounter in our ministry and how we can be effective by using the different gifts we have due to the multicultural background that exists in our ministry setting. We must also open our ears to listen, to learn and to build intentional relationships with those we are in service to and on behalf. We must value diversity in our ministry and intentionally invite people of different backgrounds to partake in all aspects of the ministry. I love this quote from Schein: Being human is both a physical property and a cultural construction (SCHEIN, 2017;96). By looking closely to this quote, we can arrive to understand how important it is for us as leaders to look closely at the cultural background of the people we are in service toward. Without the cultural background of the people, we might surely miss the opportunity that we are entrusted with by being in service to others.

As I continue to look closely at the readings, these sets of questions come to my mind: Is it possible to do Mission without the knowledge of the cultural background of

the people and the community where we are in service? Is it possible to have success in the Evangelistic world without having the knowledge on the culture of those we sowing the Gospel into? As culture is seen as the DNA of a nation, I realize without knowing truly the people we are evangelizing, it might be very difficult to get good results on the work we are trying to accomplish.

I was taking an Evangelism class when I was getting my Master , one of my professors mentioned: It is better for us as pastors or believers or followers of Jesus Christ to share the Gospel with those we have a relationship with, those we know than going to a stranger. Those we know will accept to listen better than those we have no relationship with. I can understand because of the cultural background of the ones we know make it easier for us to approach them. After reading my first book for class I realize: culture is the DNA of all nations, we as leaders of any company or organization group, we must value and look to understand and have knowledge on the different cultural backgrounds of the people we encounter in life while we are leading them toward serving Jesus Christ.

Schein, E. H. (2017). *Organizational culture and leadership* (Vol. 5). John Wiley & Sons.

The second insight I get from the texts is: I never realize how many people are hurt by these religions who proclaim they are toward God's kingdom. This came to play in my mind specially after I read the book: Understanding and Reaching the Religiously Unaffiliated. I know a bunch of denominations in the US and around the world who are fletching for young people to get inside their denominations as someone who's fletching for fishes in a river. The reality is a lot of these churches are getting closed because of the wrong motif they have beyond their minds and the young people notice their intentions, they are running away.

As Christian leaders we have a lot of work to do in this secular world. The good thing is that I am glad to learn some of these None's have no problems with Jesus but with the religious sector which I can understand. We all hear and know how much damage some of the religious leaders have caused in the past and even today people are still hurt by some inadequate religious leaders in the world.

We all know how people in the past used the gospel for their own power and gain. We as new Christian leaders who are operating in this new era need to be very careful of the way and the intention of our Evangelistic approach while we are trying to share the Gospel in our day, and we must be intentional about the group we need to reach and we are trying to reach for Jesus.

In resume my second insight is as follows: as Christian leaders in an Evangelistic journey into this cosmos, we must learn these 3 important principles mentioned by James Emery White:

- 1) We must learn the language of the people we are in service to. We must educate ourselves in knowing how to speak their languages in a way that we can communicate properly and to which they can relate to our history and eventually respond to our invitation.
- 2) Study their culture: We must be sensitized to that culture and be able to be operated effectively within it.
- 3) We must translate the Gospel: We must translate the Gospel into its own cultural context so that it can be heard, understood, and appropriated.

My 3rd insight I got from the readings is: It is very important for us Christian leaders to understand and know our strength, weakness and to know who we truly are, what is our passion and what is our mission and purpose while we are walking our lives on this earth.

Because it is very important for us to get distracted with what is going on around the world but when we know our passion and our calling specially to the one who created us, we can keep our focus because we know why we are still alive. We must also develop a code of discipline on how we want to live our lives which will guide us in every step of our decision making.

My 4th insight is: People are scared of change because as human beings we love knowing what will happen, we love to have control around us, and we love having our own freedom of controlling situations. But oftentimes we realize we have no control at all. When we get to that point of life, if we don't embrace the changes that are happening where we have no control we feel sometimes destroyed. Through the readings I realize we as Christian leaders must learn how to embrace and move on through change. Changeology should be a part of our code of living because society, culture, and people always go through life changing processes.

We must also learn that through the process of changeology there might be something to learn that could help us grow in our leadership capacity. And also, maybe this can be a moment of development for our being and God might want to teach something special in all of this process. Change is never easy to accept but we need to embrace, control what we can control and let go what we have no control over. When we do so we get more mature and we are ready to navigate whatever situation that might happen while we are serving Jesus in this world.

White, James Emery. *The Rise of the Nones: Understanding and reaching the religiously unaffiliated*. Baker Books, 2014.

We are living in an unstable world where things are changing dramatically without us having control on when things could get back to normal if we will ever be able to go back to what we call our normality.

In the midst of all this, we must learn how to serve those we are in service toward and we must learn how to still lead effectively. Through the readings we can see that we have a lot of work that needs to be done and the world is in need of wonderful, great and responsible evangelistic leaders.

Whatever circumstance and situation we might encounter in this world, we must learn how to operate effectively for the sake of the people we serve. Because the world needs us, and we still have a lot of work to do.

Because we know, we embrace change in life and try to adapt to it, whenever there is a shift in this world we also as Evangelistic leaders must develop diverse strategies to move on with our organization or ministry areas through the challenges and the changes that we might face. Whenever there is a hard time, there is an opportunity for us to mentor, serve, guide and work with people that are placed under our leadership capacity.

Section 2: Evangelism Interview:

The church I choose to learn from is a church in Chicago, called: Storehouse church located in the city of Chicago which consider for me as one of the diverse churches that I have ever visited. This church was built by a group of young people in the Chicago area in the year of 2005. The church grows extraordinarily and has been serving people from Mexico, Haiti, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Africa-Congo, Cuba and other places around the world.

The church has not only been serving people in the area of Chicago but also has had a huge impact around the world. When talking with pastor Mark Mcklendon who is the outreach director for storehouse church, I could feel in his voice how passionate he is about the way that God has used them in these past years and what God continues to do in the coming years.

He even mentioned that they can't wait to see their next journey in service toward God's people around the world. Despite all of this going on in the world due to Covid-19, Storehouse church is still serving the community and the neighborhood and its surrounding areas. The church is still being a blessing for other churches around the world and in the Chicago area.

When we look over their strategies to mission, I realize that Storehouse is a church which leads mission in every aspect of their ministry. They are intentionally a missional church and they proclaim this vision on all aspects of the ministry. Either by connecting and developing a close relationship with the neighbor where they are located. To make sure the church develops a close relationship with the community, the church is engaged in a number of activities which attract the community. These activities are as followed:

- Storehouse church holds every year a High school and an Elementary graduation ceremony for the students in the community where they are.

- Storehouse church also holds a one on one grocery give away drive through so that they can connect and develop relationships with the community.

- Storehouse church facility has been used for job fairs where different companies come and start hiring people and have one on one conversations with the leadership team.

- Storehouse church members and the leadership team have also held an outreach program for homeless where they serve toiletries, food and have opportunity to pray for the homeless but also with the homeless.

- The members of the church and the leadership team develop a youth soccer tournament in the community where young people can come play in their gym soccer and Basketball. Mark mentioned to me this outreach ministry is the most effective one among all the different outreach activities that they have done in the history of Storehouse church.

One other way the church leaders motivate the members toward mission is by making our statement clear to everyone, so that the church members can know well what their focus is as a faith community. The leaders also make sure they communicate effectively back and forth so that the people can be well informed of what is going on in the whole aspect of the church. This happens all the time until people begin to embrace it as their own statements.

To equip the church members and its leaders, Storehouse church of Chicago has put in place a leadership program where its members engage in a class session

during a two years process. The church also creates a pattern of small groups where the whole church always studies together or engages in a topic of discussion.

By learning the way Storehouse church functions, the members learn their churches values and get behind the idea of being a missional church. The church members are well engaged in their church and embrace their responsibilities and even make life changes necessary to keep the focus of the church when needed. Storehouse church of Chicago learns all of these by doing, acting and living a life fully committed to the Savior of the world: Jesus Christ.

For me this is an example of what every church should do where they are located and also to teach the church members what it means to call ourselves Christ followers. Mark never mentioned to me that being a missional church or a leader is an easy task, but it is part of the church DNA. Being a leader is never easy but when God calls us, He equips us and things begin to change in our world, in our family, in our community and around the world. Being obedient and responding to God's call should be our priority in life.

Section 3: Creative interview: Insight through the creative interview into coherent statements about what could possibly inform my Evangelism efforts and initiatives:

I was very fortunate to have this great opportunity to interview 3 artists that I encountered while playing music in Chicago. One of them is a good friend of mine whom we have known since I was a young boy growing up. The other two are just artists I developed a close relationship with over the years. One of the common realities that the different artists refer to was: Inspiration and how sometimes artists get inspired in the musical field without knowing how this had happened. This is something that happens naturally in the life of an artist. It just happened through an invisible source of power that occupied their mindset and spirit.

They also mentioned how through any circumstance they will get a lesson or make a point of happiness or sadness even if a car drives by them they can get something beautiful out of it.

Artist life is not stagnant but flexible with time and circumstance. As artists they are always thinking, working hard on strategies and skills to give their best performances to their audiences. An artist's life is not based on one circumstance but any experience they expose to while they walk their lives on this earth. It is intrigued to learn how they live to value their public fanatics who inspire them in their daily lives.

While I have been in conversation with these artists, the set of questions that came to my mind are: who inspires us as Evangelistic Christian leaders while we are trying to Evangelize the families or the community where we are trying to reach for Jesus Christ? Is it truly about Jesus? Does Jesus, prayer, the Holy Spirit of God are invited through the whole process or we are trying to do it on our own? What motivates us to be Evangelistic leaders in this desperate and broken world? Is there a good or bad way of doing Evangelization?

For my Evangelistic vision, I realize through these interviews that Jesus should be the centerpiece of our Evangelistic strategies and the love of Jesus for Neighbors and communities should be what truly motivate us to reach out the world for God's kingdom. As musical inspiration is not stagnant, we also live in a world which is changing daily. I realize: Evangelistic leaders should be adapting to any circumstance in a sense that nothing should stop us reaching the world for Jesus. We must be strategized to be Christ witness of what God is doing in the world and through the world and how we can take the opportunity to testify the goodness of the Lord in our family or our community, including our country.

Through this pandemic of Covid-19, the artistic world uses their skills to empower a lot of communities with their musical skills and leadership. It has also amazed me how we as Christian leaders use social media to reach out not only our community but the whole world. This is what I am speaking about, where nothing can stop us or hold us doing what we are called to do which I believe: We are called to share the Gospel with our friends and families, our communities and around the world.

Should we have some excuses of why we don't or can't do what we are supposed to do? What we need to do is for us to be creative and let the Holy Spirit of God flow into our ideas and strategies through prayers and supplication. As I learned through the interviews that artists never stop working, we as Evangelistic Christian leaders, we should never stop thinking, creating strategies, praying and dreaming big for God's kingdom.

Through the interview, the different artists I had a chance to speak with mentioned to me how the church should be more real, more compassionate in the world toward all God's children. What are we doing toward injustice that is happening every day in our community or society? Do we share our concerns with the church, or we just stay silent? For many years or for long times people of faith have used the church to abuse human beings, for their own agendas. If we really want to win trust back in the church leadership, we must work toward these sets of issues. The artists also mentioned to me they believe in Jesus but not in the earthly leadership of the church.

After listening carefully to these artists, these sets of questions came to my mind: What is the church doing with the injustice issues that are happening around the world? Are these issues regarding us at all: the leadership of the church? What does Jesus say and would do in our place? If we speak up could we make a difference at all? Why not speak loudly until our country leaders hear our voices? There are a lot of hurting people around the world which give us an awesome opportunity to share God's love and grace in this desperate world.

If we can accomplish all we want through our own strength, how would we be able to experience God's power at work? That's why it is important for us as Evangelistic leaders to dream big and without hesitation. The world needs us, as any artist we have a lot of work which needs to be done for the sake of God's kingdom.

Section 5: Video: After watching the TED talks, this is some patterns of communication I learned that reinforce my communication, my preaching to those outside of faith:

One of the things I realize when I watch the TED talks is: it is very easy for us as Evangelistic leaders to forget the reason why we are communicating with the non-believers, the reason why we are preaching or the reason why we are trying to minister others. I even have an opportunity to question our own motives behind all we do in ministry. Aren't we scared of people outside of faith more than we bring them into the faith when we have an opportunity to share the Gospel?

I love the idea when Dr. Sanders mentioned in our two hours of conversation, asking strategies when encountering new friends and asking them to share with him their history. It opens a very easy sense of communication and helps the person we are chatting with to feel comfortable. One valuable point I learned through the TED talks is that, in the midst of all that we do, we must remember people's interests are our centerpiece of all we do. Because we love God's creation, because we love our neighbors, we want all humankind to know the Jesus we serve, who love us unconditionally and we want them to experience the same out of our love for God and our love for them as God's children.

Now the question becomes: if all we do is out of our love for God's children who don't know Him yet, should our communication discourage them, scare them or drive them far away from God by the way we address the people through the message of hope we are trying to send? I realize also, leaders should always strategize, think through when we speak because our words matter to the people who know us and trust us. As Evangelistic leaders we find ourselves sometimes in a powerful place even without knowing, we can either have a positive or negative impact in the lives of the people who God's place under our leadership.

Our approach matters, our strategies matter, the impact of our voices matter, we must be very careful on the way we address others because as we are sharing the message of hope to others, we must remember our call as to participate in the flourishing of all humankind. For me this is the reason why I do all that I do in our ministry areas: To bring hope of Christ and encouragement to the people of God.

We must also understand how we might not be able to evangelize everyone and all nations or the whole world but 1 person at a time. We should use an authentic and holistic approach due the cultural context where we are evangelizing. We should also not be scared to have conversations with others because someone's life can be changed just with a conversation. Even if it is a tough conversation, we should not let fear hold us back.

Through the TED talks, I also learn how we must address conflicts when arise. This is always a difficult one for me because I don't like conflict at all. While I was listening to the TED talks, I realized also as Evangelistic leaders, we will have conflicts in our lives even when we don't like it. Knowing the importance of addressing conflict was a good point for me. As we continue to serve God and His people we must learn when we need to be quiet and when we must speak

because our words as leaders have great weights. We also must always remember to put people first. Not only remember but we must act intentionally in our ministry in a way where all aspects of our ministry can reflect around putting humankind first, putting people first.

These numbers of TED talk were very good to hear because oftentimes we forget why we do all we do in our ministry context. If we put God's people first in every aspect of our ministry, we should thrive in our ministry context. Caring for people, loving God's people and sharing the goodness of our God should be the priority of all we do in our ministry context. It was an awesome opportunity to learn through the TED talks. The way they address the audience regarding organizational structure in leadership was on point and outstanding. These talks were good for my soul and my leadership role as I am as well in the leadership position of my own non-profit that I founded 10 years ago. It is always good to learn new strategies.

Section 4: Recovery and Life change: After participating in learning about Celebrate Recovery, see if there is any of the 12 steps terminology regarding life-change that could be used within the conversation about faith and life-change within or outside our church context. Give cause for the church to update some of its terminology:

It is an awesome privilege that I have through this class to encounter with Celebrate Recovery ministry and learn what the group is about. I was thrilled also to learn what the group is about and continues to offer in the communities where this ministry exists, especially to those suffering through addiction, depression, alcoholic issues.

Because of this class, I got connected with some wonderful families in the Chicago areas including some Celebrate Recovery ministry leaders who even minister to people internationally and got really good knowledge of the 12 steps program the leaders are using which is impacting so many lives for Jesus Christ. After learning how the program works, for me I can see this group offer ministerial services to the people that we the church is trying to reach. I can say that Celebrate Recovery ministry is doing the work of the church and for it is the church.

Among all the wonderful things that are happening through Celebrate Recovery ministry, one of the observation I made and realize first of all was : when people are in celebrate recovery ministry, the leaders make sure that the people voices are heard, people listen and feel safe when members speak because there is a pledge that people promise what happened in the group must stay inside the group which was amazing and members must respect each other voice and insight. I can see and understand the result of people being in a safe environment. In Celebrate recovery ministry, by what I arrive to understand, the leaders of this group make this a priority in the ministry setting.

The second big lesson I learned in the group is that nobody will be judged, condemned a member of the group while being a part of this ministry. I can see the environment was created to make people feel very safe and comfortable to

share their struggles, burdens and obstacles they encounter as they walk their lives on this earth every day. The participants also recognize they need help and the ministry of Celebrate Recovery walks with them sight by sight as they journey in the recovery process. What a wonderful ministry, how impactful it is in and for the church? Due to one of the members testimony who is a follower of Jesus and experience depression and anxiety, even when this individual is a regular attendee without this ministry, he doesn't know what could happen to him. Due to different testimonies, we learn: Celebrate Recovery is a ministry of life giving in the community or country where the group is in ministry.

Within the 12 steps terminology that can be used within our conversation when speaking about faith and life-change within or outside our church context, the message we see nest in the commitment of the Celebrate Recovery is : The members are wonderful as they believe they are powerless of getting themselves out of their struggles themselves, the members vows to make a commitment to turn their wills to God which in my understanding repentance, Admit to God, to others and to another human beings of the exact nature of their wrong and recognize they need God's will which is for me accountability. The members listen well to the group leaders and you can see clearly who the leaders are when visiting the group.

Throughout all the 12 steps of the Celebrate Recovery, the message I see behind the scene is a message of hope, repentance of sins, recognize God's power within us as God's children, Accountability with someone we as followers of Christ can trust and take responsibility of our own action, and in the end encourage the members to be responsible, engage with God through prayers and scriptural meditation. For me this is what I see the church has not been doing and teaching well. Celebrate Recovery ministry is covering this gap for the church.

Through this ministry, a lot of people have come to know Christ as their true love, Lord and Savior and a great number of people find back their purposes in life, and also people are finding hope and encouragement.

The cultural church setting I grew up in is very different from this culture that Celebrate Recovering is preaching. It was more in a culture where we as Christians we are better than the ones who are not in a church building. Is it truly the reality? What is the church for? As I said prior, I truly believe that we are called to participate in the flourishing of all human beings. What is the church doing?

I personally believe , This conversation that Celebrate Recovery is having with the people that are being part of the program should also happening in our church ministry setting and should be intentional include in our Christian Educational program of the ministry where every members should learn and know the importance of repentance, recognize God's power who lives within us, how we must engage in the word of God and stay connected with God at all times through prayer and supplication. Also recognize that we are all broken, and we need a Savior to redeem us.

The 12 steps of the Celebrate Recovery ministry strategy can be used in my ministry context in the church when chatting with someone about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I will use these 12 step programs to teach the church that I am part of the leadership team to recognize how we are all sinners; we all fall short and we need a Savior which is Jesus for us to be saved and all churches who are willing to do can use this kind of language as well. This same message of hope and encouragement can be used also to share Jesus with those who have not established a close relationship with Him yet and also re-strategize our Evangelistic vision to be more effective for the people we are trying to reach out.

For me Celebrate Recovery is a church ministry and this ministry is doing an excellent job ministering God's people who need God desperately. This also helps me understand how people are hurting, people are in need for Jesus and people are looking for true love. As Celebrate Recovery is the ministry of the church, we as Evangelistic leaders can use this same language of hope and encouragement to reach out to others for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All the 12 steps of Celebrate Recovery can be effective in the ministry of the church and can also be used by effective leaders of the church.