



URL : <http://jurnal.sttsati.ac.id>

e-ISSN : 2599-3100

Edition : Volume 8, Nomor 2, Juli 2025 (*Special Issue*)

Page : 290 - 317

The Fall of Artemis:¹

The Secret Recipe of St. Paul's Slow Disciple-Making in Ancient Ephesus

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ABSTRACT

The present article explores St. Paul's approximately three-year ministry in Ephesus as a profound case study in transformative disciple-making, which we suggest a term : "*slow disciple-making*" method. Focusing on Acts chapter 19, it argues that Paul's remarkable breakthrough in undermining the worship of Artemis, culminating in the uprising led by Demetrius, stemmed from a deliberate "slow disciple-making" approach. This method encompassed intensive coaching, deep Bible engagement, and a process of re-conscientization, which systematically challenged and transformed the prevailing pagan worldview. The paper further connects Paul's exemplary work to the subsequent dramatic destruction of idols, including the statue of Artemis, as narrated in the apocryphal Acts of John (chapters 38-45), portraying it as a culmination of the spiritual groundwork laid by Paul. This article contends that this long-term disciple-making was a blueprint that St Paul also intended to replicate in Rome and was a methodology profoundly exemplified by Jesus Christ Himself.

Keywords:

St Paul's letter to Ephesians, The Holy Spirit, Acts of the Apostles, slow disciple-making, ancient Ephesus

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini membahas pelayanan St. Paulus selama sekitar tiga tahun di Efesus sebagai studi kasus mendalam dalam pemuridan yang transformatif, yang kami sarankan dengan istilah: metode

¹ Note: According to F. Sommer, there is continuous discussion in many areas of ancient studies over the goddess Orthia, whose name is confirmed by many variations in inscriptions mostly at her sanctuary in Sparta and who was once mistaken for Artemis. In modern time nowadays, Artemis Orthia is used as symbol for lesbianism or more generally, LGBTQI+ movement. See for instance: F. Sommer. Artemis Orthia: eine linguistisch-mythologische Genealogie, *Zurich Open Repository and Archive*, 2022. See also. R. MARIE LÉGER. ARTEMIS AND HER CULT. PhD dissertation submitted to College of Arts and Law University of Birmingham April 2015.

"pemuridan secara perlahan". Dengan berfokus pada Kisah Para Rasul bab 19, artikel ini berpendapat bahwa keberhasilan Paulus dalam melemahkan penyembahan Artemis, yang berpuncak pada pemberontakan yang dipimpin oleh Demetrius, berasal dari pendekatan "pemuridan yang perlahan" yang disengaja. Metode ini mencakup pembinaan intensif, keterlibatan Alkitab yang mendalam, dan proses penyadaran kembali, yang secara sistematis menantang dan mengubah pandangan dunia pagan yang berlaku. Artikel ini selanjutnya menghubungkan pekerjaan teladan Paulus dengan penghancuran berhala yang dramatis berikutnya, termasuk patung Artemis, sebagaimana diceritakan dalam Kisah Para Rasul apokrif (bab 38-45), yang menggambarkannya sebagai puncak dari dasar spiritual yang diletakkan oleh Paulus. Artikel ini berpendapat bahwa pemuridan jangka panjang ini merupakan cetak biru yang juga ingin ditiru oleh Santo Paulus di Roma dan merupakan metodologi yang dicontohkan secara mendalam oleh Yesus Kristus Sendiri.

Kata Kunci:
Surat Rasul Paulus kepada jemaat Efesus, Roh Kudus, Kisah Para Rasul, kota Efesus.

Abstract (in Tamil)¹

இந்தக் கட்டுரை, எபேசுவில் புனித பவுலின் ஏறத்தாழ மூன்று ஆண்டுகால ஊழியத்தை, உருமாற்றும் சீடராக்கும் ஒரு ஆழமான வழக்கு ஆய்வாக ஆராய்கிறது, இதை நாங்கள் "மெதுவாக சீடராக்கும்" முறை என்ற வார்த்தையில் பரிந்துரைக்கிறோம். அப்போஸ்தலர் 19 ஆம் அத்தியாயத்தை மையமாகக் கொண்டு, டெமெட்ரியஸ் தலைமையிலான எழுச்சியில் உச்சத்தை அடைந்த ஆர்ட்டெமிஸ் வழிபாட்டைக் குறைமதிப்பிற்கு உட்படுத்துவதில் பவுலின் வெற்றி, வேண்டுமென்றே "மெதுவாக சீடராக்கும்" அணுகுமுறையிலிருந்து உருவானது என்று வாதிடுகிறது. இந்த முறை தீவிர பயிற்சி, ஆழமான பைபிள் ஈடுபாடு மற்றும் மறு-மனசாட்சி செயல்முறையை உள்ளடக்கியது, இது நடைமுறையில் உள்ள புறமத உலகக் கண்ணோட்டத்தை முறையாக சவால் செய்து மாற்றியது. இந்த ஆய்வுக் கட்டுரை பவுலின் முன்மாதிரியான வேலையை, யோவானின் அப்போக்ரிபல் நடபடிகளில் (அத்தியாயங்கள் 38-45) விவரிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளபடி, ஆர்ட்டெமிஸ் சிலை உட்பட சிலைகளின் அடுத்தடுத்த வியத்தகு அழிவுடன் மேலும் இணைக்கிறது, இது பவுல் வகுத்த ஆன்மீக அடித்தளத்தின் உச்சக்கட்டமாக சித்தரிக்கிறது. இந்த நீண்டகால சீடராக்கும் செயல்முறை, புனித பவுல் ரோமில் நகலெடுக்க விரும்பிய ஒரு வரைபடமாகும், மேலும் இது இயேசு கிறிஸ்துவால் ஆழமாக எடுத்துக்காட்டும் ஒரு வழிமுறையாகும் என்று இந்தக் கட்டுரை வாதிடுகிறது.

Abstract (in Traditional Chinese)²

本文探討了聖保羅在以弗所約三年的傳教經歷，作為轉化式門徒培養的一個深刻案例研究，我們建議使用一個術語：「緩慢的門徒培養」方法。本文聚焦於《使徒行傳》第 19 章，認為保羅成功破壞了對阿耳忒彌斯的崇拜，並最終引發了由德米特里領導的起義，這源自於他刻意採取的「緩慢培育門徒」的方法。這種方法包括強化輔導、深入研讀聖經和重新意識的過程，有系統地挑戰和改變了當時盛行的異教世界觀。本文進一步將保羅的模範工作與隨後對偶像（包括阿耳忒彌斯雕像）的戲劇性破壞聯繫起來，正如偽經《約翰行傳》（第 38-45 章）所述，將其描繪為保羅奠定的精神基礎的頂峰。本文認為，這種長期的門徒培育是聖保羅也打算在羅馬複製的藍圖，也是耶穌基督自己深刻體現的方法。

Introduction

It is known that in many congregations almost everywhere from big metropolitans to small towns, there are problems associated to crisis in discipleship; and many pastors and God's servants find it quite difficult to disciple either youth, young people to adults (cf. Hull, 2006; Mowry, 2018, Viola).

Therefore, in the present article we will discuss what kind of lessons for disciple-making practices from St. Paul. While in our previous article, this writer discusses more on branching effect which can be observed in the Earliest Jesus movement of (mostly Jerusalem) Christianity, partly based on Dreyer (cf. Christianto, 2024; Dreyer, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 68(1), 2012), in this report we will discuss on further phase of Earliest Christianity especially on St. Paul's ministry in ancient city of Ephesus (Hammond, 2000; Wiersbe, 2023).

² Translated with assistance of Google translator.

This article posits that Paul's remarkable breakthrough in dismantling the deeply rooted belief in Artemis, culminating in the infamous uprising led by Demetrius, was not the result of a sudden, direct assault, but rather a deliberate and application of what can be termed "*slow disciple-making*." (cf. Chole, 2018; Christianto, 2025; Hammond, 2002, 2006; Mowry, 2018; Scazzero, 2020).

The ancient city of Ephesus, a vibrant metropolis and a prominent centre of Roman power in Asia Minor, was inextricably linked to the worship of Artemis. Her magnificent temple, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, drew pilgrims and revenue, making the city a stronghold of pagan devotion. Yet, into this deeply entrenched religious and economic system stepped an unlikely figure: Saul of Tarsus, later known as St. Paul. His approximately three-year ministry in Ephesus, as meticulously chronicled in the nineteenth chapter of the Book of Acts, serves as a profound case study in transformative evangelism and disciple-making.

His method, characterized by intensive coaching, profound Bible engagement, and a process of re-conscientization, laid the groundwork for spiritual transformation that eventually saw the very statues of the gods, including Artemis, shattered into pieces, as narrated in the apocryphal Acts of John (chapters 38-45).

Thus, Paul's ministry, meticulously chronicled in Acts, became the living embodiment of the universal call to believe in Jesus, demonstrating how the Spirit-empowered message could traverse continents and cultures to unite all in Christ (Kydd, 1984; Lang, 2002; Mendez, 2000; Menzies, 1994). Moreover, his approach

was not an isolated method but a blueprint Paul sought to replicate in Rome perhaps until he deceased and, indeed, a methodology profoundly exemplified by Jesus Christ Himself.

Methodology

This biblical studies article employs a multi-faceted methodological approach to analyze St. Paul's ministry in Ephesus and its broader implications for disciple-making (cf. Bauckham, 1981; Bauckham, 2002; Carson & Moo, 1993; Hammond, 2000; Wiersbe, 2023).

1. Exegetical Analysis of Acts 19-20: The primary method involves a close exegetical reading of Acts chapters 19 and 20, focusing on the historical, cultural, and theological contexts of Paul's three-year ministry in Ephesus. Attention is paid to Luke's narrative choices, specific vocabulary, and the sequence of events (e.g., synagogue ministry, Hall of Tyrannus, Paul's departure, and his address to the Ephesian elders). This analysis aims to extract insights into Paul's practices of teaching, community building, and non-compromising evangelism.
2. Engagement with Apocryphal Literature: The study incorporates relevant sections from the apocryphal Acts of John (chapters 38-45) to explore the narrative concerning St. John's later ministry in Ephesus and the reported destruction of idols, including Artemis. While acknowledging the non-canonical status of this text, it is utilized to demonstrate the long-term

historical and theological resonance of Paul's initial impact and the eventual decline of pagan worship in the city, providing a legendary yet illustrative culmination of the spiritual transformation.

3. Theological Reflection and Conceptualization: The article engages in theological reflection to conceptualize Paul's approach as "*slow disciple-making*." This involves identifying and articulating the core components of this method—coaching, Bible engagement, and re-conscientization—based on the textual evidence from Acts and Pauline epistles (e.g., Romans, for his Roman ambition).
4. Comparative Analysis: A comparative analysis is conducted between Paul's disciple-making strategy and that of Jesus Christ, particularly His intensive training of the twelve disciples. This comparison aims to demonstrate the continuity of this relational, in-depth approach across foundational figures in early Christianity, highlighting its enduring principles.
5. Socio-Economic and Cultural Contextualization: The study integrates insights into the socio-economic and cultural landscape of ancient Ephesus, particularly concerning the cult of Artemis and its economic ramifications. This contextualization helps to understand the formidable challenges Paul faced and the profound nature of the transformation he initiated.

Through these methods, the article seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of Paul's impact in Ephesus and to derive transferable principles for contemporary disciple-making.

Results

St. Paul's ministry as testified by the Book of Acts

Paul's ministry, as meticulously documented in the Book of Acts, serves as a powerful testament to the universal scope of the gospel message. Both Paul and Luke, the author of the Third Gospel and Acts, shared a profound conviction that the good news of Jesus Christ was destined for all nations, transcending geographical and cultural boundaries (Regev, 2023). That vision is vividly portrayed through Paul's missionary journeys, which began their significant outward thrust from Antioch. From this vibrant hub, Paul's tireless efforts propelled the gospel westward, establishing a strong presence in Ephesus, a pivotal city in Minor Asia, and radiating throughout the surrounding regions.

The narrative of Acts underscores that the accessibility of the Holy Spirit was not contingent on physical location, echoing Paul's theological emphasis that in Christ, distinctions of origin or status dissolve (Galatians 3:28). This fundamental belief empowered believers everywhere, regardless of their physical whereabouts, to experience the transformative power of the Spirit (e.g., Horton 1994, Menzies 1991).

Paul's journey culminated in Rome, the heart of the Roman Empire, symbolizing the ultimate fulfilment of the gospel's global reach. His arrival in the imperial capital, even under house arrest, solidified the message that the gospel was not confined to a specific land or people, but was truly universal, intended to permeate every corner of the known world. Thus, Paul's ministry, meticulously chronicled in Acts, became the living embodiment of the universal call to believe in Jesus, demonstrating how the Spirit-empowered message could traverse continents and cultures to unite all in Christ.



Figure 1. Illustration of St. Paul's journey (source : internet, *public domain*)

While in our previous article, this writer discusses more on branching effect which can be observed in the Earliest Jesus movement of (mostly Jerusalem) Christianity, partly based on Dreyer (cf. Christiano, 2024; Dreyer, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 68(1), 2012), in this report we will discuss on further phase of Earliest Christianity especially on St. Paul's ministry in ancient city of Ephesus (Hammond, 2000; Wiersbe, 2023).

Where was Ephesus: A Hub of Artemis Worship

Ephesus was more than just a city; it was a religious epicentrum. Located on the Aegean coast of Asia Minor, it boasted strategic importance as a major port and commercial hub. However, its true identity was defined by the presence of the Temple of Artemis, or as the Greeks knew her, Diana. This colossal structure, four times the size of the Parthenon, was an architectural marvel and a testament to the city's devotion.

The cult of Artemis was not merely a spiritual practice; it was the lifeblood of Ephesian society and economy. Thousands of priests, priestesses, temple servants, and artisans, including Demetrius, depended on its existence. The temple served as a bank, a sanctuary, and a central point for festivals and processions that drew pilgrims from across the Roman world.

The goddess herself, often depicted with symbolized fertility and abundance. Her image, believed to have fallen from the sky (Acts 19:35), was held in immense reverence. This worship was deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric, permeating every aspect of daily life, from household altars to public celebrations. To challenge Artemis was to challenge the very identity and prosperity of Ephesus. This was the formidable spiritual and socio-economic fortress that Paul, a tentmaker from Cilicia, sought to penetrate with the simple, yet revolutionary, message of Jesus Christ.

St. Paul's Three-Year Ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19)

Paul's arrival in Ephesus marked a pivotal moment in the expansion of the early church. His ministry there was distinguished by its longevity and depth, a stark contrast to some of his more transient visits to other cities. Acts 19 provides a detailed account, revealing the methodical nature of his work.

Paul's ministry began, as was his custom, in the Jewish synagogue. For three months, he "*spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God*" (Acts 19:8). This initial phase, while yielding some converts, eventually met with resistance from those who became "hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude." This rejection, though disheartening, prompted a strategic shift that proved crucial for his long-term impact.

Paul then withdrew with his disciples and moved to the "school of Tyrannus" (Acts 19:9). This transition was more than a change of venue; it marked a deliberate pivot to a more focused and sustained period of teaching. For "two years," Paul engaged in daily discourse, ensuring that "all who dwelt in Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:10). This long duration, combined with the continuous nature of his teaching ("daily"), underscores the commitment to in-depth instruction rather than fleeting encounters. The Hall of Tyrannus became a spiritual academy, where foundational truths were laid, doctrines were expounded, and disciples were meticulously trained.

The Power of the Word and Special Miracles

Luke emphasizes the extraordinary nature of Paul's ministry in Ephesus: "Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them" (Acts 19:11-12). These "special miracles" were not merely displays of power but divine affirmations of Paul's message, validating the truth of the Gospel in a city steeped in superstition and magic.

The incident with the seven sons of Sceva (Acts 19:13-17) further amplified the power of Christ over demonic forces. Their failed attempt to exorcise a demon by invoking "Jesus, whom Paul preaches" resulted in public humiliation, leading to a profound impact: "Then fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was

magnified. Also many of those who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. And a number of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed" (Acts 19:17-20). This public renunciation of magic, involving significant financial sacrifice, speaks volumes about the depth of conviction wrought by Paul's ministry. It demonstrated a tangible shift in allegiance from pagan practices to Christ.

The long duration and the miraculous signs were crucial components of Paul's slow disciple-making. They built credibility, fostered trust, and provided tangible evidence of the superior power of the living God over the impotent idols of Ephesus.

Demetrius and His Economic Interests: Economic Opposition to Spiritual Transformation

The remarkable breakthrough of Paul's ministry in Ephesus was not without its consequences, particularly for those whose livelihoods were intertwined with the worship of Artemis. This growing tension culminated in the dramatic confrontation orchestrated by Demetrius, a silversmith.

Demetrius was no ordinary artisan. He was a prominent silversmith who made "silver shrines of Artemis" (Acts 19:24). These were likely miniature replicas of the temple

or statues of the goddess, sold as souvenirs and objects of devotion to the countless pilgrims visiting Ephesus. His trade was highly lucrative, and he represented a significant segment of the city's economy that profited directly from the Artemis cult.

When Paul's preaching began to significantly erode the worship of Artemis, it directly threatened Demetrius's financial well-being and that of his fellow craftsmen.

"You see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods" (Acts 19:26). This statement reveals the widespread impact of Paul's *"slow disciple-making"* — it wasn't just a few individuals in Ephesus, but "many people" throughout the region of Asia Minor who were abandoning idol worship.

The Motivation Behind the Uproar

Demetrius's primary motivation was economic, though he cleverly cloaked it in religious zeal. He appealed to the self-interest of his colleagues, highlighting two major threats: "Not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and her magnificence may be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship" (Acts 19:27). This was a masterful manipulation, blending genuine concern for their craft with a calculated appeal to civic and religious pride. He ignited their fear of financial ruin

and insulted their cherished goddess, thereby transforming an economic grievance into a popular religious outcry.

Demetrius's instigation successfully stirred up the city. "Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, '*Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!*'" (Acts 19:28). This spontaneous outburst escalated into a full-blown mass movement. The mob, seizing two of Paul's companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, rushed into the great theatre of Ephesus, capable of holding thousands of spectators. For two hours, the crowd chanted in unison, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" (Acts 19:34).

This spectacle was more than just a public disturbance; it was a dramatic clash of worldviews. On one side stood the entrenched paganism, backed by economic power and popular tradition. On the other, the nascent Christian movement, built on the transformative power of the Gospel and challenging the very foundations of Ephesian society. The city clerk, a shrewd politician, eventually managed to disperse the crowd by appealing to law and order and the undisputed reverence for Artemis, while subtly deflecting the direct confrontation with Paul.

St. Paul's Departure

Following the tumultuous events, Paul, seeing the volatility of the situation and perhaps discerning God's timing, decided to leave Ephesus. "After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to himself, embraced them, and departed to go to

Macedonia" (Acts 20:1). This departure was not a retreat in defeat, but a clever move. He had sown deep seeds, established a strong church, and seen a significant shift in the spiritual landscape. His departure allowed the young church in Ephesus to mature, demonstrating its resilience and the enduring power of the Gospel without his immediate presence. The uproar itself was proof of the profound impact he had made; otherwise Demetrius would not have risen if Artemis worship.

Discussion

The Continuing Narrative: St. John in Ephesus (Acts of John 38-45)

While Acts 19 concludes with Paul's departure, the story of Ephesus's spiritual transformation continues, notably through the later ministry of St. John. The Acts of John that we refer here, is an apocryphal work dating from the 2nd century AD, which, despite not being canonical scripture, offers a fascinating narrative that aligns with the long-term impact of Paul's work.

The Acts of John is one of several apocryphal "Acts" that describe the post-Pentecost ministries of various apostles. While not accepted by several groups of Biblical scholars, these texts often reflect early Christian traditions and beliefs, albeit with legendary embellishments. In this regards, Lalleman wrote, which can be paraphrased as follows:

“Treating the five Acts of Andrew, John, Paul, Peter, and Thomas as a sort of corpus has long been the norm. A certain Lucius, who is most likely merely a legendary figure, was mentioned

as the collection's creator. This corpus of Acts was typically referred to be "Gnostic," however other academics considered it to be the result of a Jewish version of Christianity." (Lalleman, 2002).

Other than Lalleman, Barker wrote as follows:

"The position of the Acts of John in relation to other Johannine works is reevaluated in this article. Even though the Apocalypse, the Gospel, and the three epistles were ultimately accepted as canonical, Revelation is usually treated independently in modern research. Considering materiality of manuscripts and patristic testimony, I argue that not only the Apocalypse but also the Acts of John should be (re)incorporated alongside the Gospel and Epistles." (Barker, *Brill*, 2021)

In this regards, Chapters 38-45 of the *Acts of John* in particular describe John's arrival in Ephesus and a remarkable confrontation with its idols.

St. John's Arrival and the collapse of Idols

According to the Acts of John, St. John arrived in Ephesus and was confronted by the city's pervasive idolatry. He was led into the very temple of Artemis, a place still teeming with pagan devotion. In the narrative, John, filled with the Holy Spirit, addresses the idols directly, challenging their power and exposing their emptiness. He proclaimed the one true God and demands that the idols acknowledge His supremacy.

The climax of this account is the dramatic destruction of the idols. Acts of John 38-45 describes John praying fervently, and in response, the idols—including the great statue of Artemis—are shattered into fragments. The text recounts, "*And when John said this, the altar of Artemis was split into many pieces, and all the things that*

were laid on it fell down, and the altar itself was shattered, and the whole temple began to shake." This seismic event is accompanied by the conversion of many onlookers who witness the uselessness of their gods and the power of the Christian God.

Connecting to Paul's Work: A Culmination

While this dramatic event occurs under John's ministry, it is crucial to see it not as an isolated incident but as a culmination of the spiritual groundwork laid by Paul. Paul's three years of intense teaching, re-conscientization, and demonstration of God's power (e.g., the defeat of magic, the conversion of many away from idol worship) had significantly weakened the spiritual hold of Artemis on the city. The riot instigated by Demetrius was evidence of this erosion. Paul's long-term investment had prepared the soil. By the time John arrived, the spiritual atmosphere was ripe for such a public and decisive overthrow of idolatry. Paul had tirelessly preached that "gods made with hands are not gods" (Acts 19:26). John's actions provided the ultimate visual proof of this truth, metaphorically and literally shattering the false deities that Paul had challenged. The "fall of Demetrius" through economic disruption and Paul's message set the stage for the physical "fall" of Artemis's statue, signifying the ultimate triumph of the Gospel.

St. Paul's "Secret Recipe": Slow Disciple-Making

The protracted nature of Paul's ministry in Ephesus, yielding such profound results, reveals a sophisticated methodology that transcends superficial evangelism. This "secret recipe" can be understood as "slow disciple-making," a process involving intensive coaching, deep Bible engagement, and thorough re-conscientization.

a. Coaching: Personal Engagement and Mentoring

Paul was not merely a preacher; he was a coach and a mentor. His daily engagement in the Hall of Tyrannus implies not just lectures, but interactive teaching, answering questions, and addressing individual concerns. He "reasoned and persuaded," indicating a dialectical approach. His commitment to individuals is evident in Acts 20, where he later recalls to the Ephesian elders, "I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). This "from house to house" ministry highlights personal pastoral care and instruction, moving beyond the public forum to intimate, formative settings.

Furthermore, Paul's deep connection with the Ephesian elders, whom he met with at Miletus (Acts 20:17-38), demonstrates his investment in raising up local leaders. He spent significant time warning, encouraging, and imparting wisdom to them, even recalling that "for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31). This level of personal, emotional investment is characteristic of a coach who is deeply invested in the growth and well-being of his disciples. He

wasn't just making converts; he was developing leaders who could perpetuate the work after his departure.

b. Bible Engagement: The Centrality of the Word of God

The "Word of the Lord" was the central instrument of Paul's ministry. Acts 19:10 explicitly states that "all who dwelt in Asia... heard the word of the Lord Jesus," and Acts 19:20 concludes, "So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed." Paul's daily teaching in the Hall of Tyrannus was fundamentally about expounding Scripture and the truth of the Gospel. This wasn't a superficial sharing of information but an in-depth immersion in the divine revelation.

In a world saturated with myths and polytheistic narratives, Paul meticulously presented the monotheistic truth of God, the person and work of Jesus Christ, and the implications of His resurrection. This consistent and prolonged exposure to the Word of God was essential for dismantling deeply ingrained pagan worldviews. It provided a new framework for understanding reality, morality, and salvation. The "Word of God" was the foundation for re-conscientization, offering a coherent alternative to the prevailing spiritual darkness.

c. Re-conscientization: Challenging Worldviews and Paradigms

"Re-conscientization" is the process of critically examining one's worldview, challenging ingrained assumptions, and developing a new, informed awareness of reality. Paul's ministry in Ephesus was a powerful exercise in re-conscientization. He

was not merely asking people to add Jesus to their pantheon of gods; he was demanding a radical paradigm shift.

- **Idolatry vs. Monotheism:** Paul directly confronted the concept of "gods made with hands" (Acts 19:26). He challenged the very premise of idolatry, asserting the exclusive claim of the one true God. This was a direct assault on the theological foundations of Ephesian society, compelling individuals to re-evaluate their most fundamental beliefs about divinity.
- **Ethics and Morality:** The conversions leading to the burning of magic books (Acts 19:19) illustrate a profound ethical re-orientation. The practice of magic was pervasive, yet through Paul's teaching, converts recognized its incompatibility with the Christian faith, leading to costly repentance. This demonstrated a re-conscientization of their moral compass, aligning it with the values of the Kingdom of God.
- **Social and Economic Norms:** The uprising of Demetrius is the clearest evidence of re-conscientization impacting social and economic structures. As people genuinely embraced Christ, they abandoned practices that were once normative and economically vital. This meant turning away from buying silver shrines, which directly impacted the livelihoods of the artisans. Their new consciousness, rooted in faith, prioritized spiritual truth over economic gain.

This slow, deliberate process allowed individuals to grapple with the profound implications of the Gospel, leading to deep, lasting change rather than superficial

commitments. It enabled them to dismantle old belief systems and construct new ones founded on Christ.

The Roman Ministry: Replicating the Method

Paul's mind was to be extended beyond Ephesus. His desired to preach the Gospel in Rome (Acts 19:21; Rom. 1:13; 15:22-29) was not merely an aspiration to visit the capital of the Roman Empire; it was a carefully considered plan to replicate his proven method of "slow disciple-making" in the heart of the world's most powerful city.

Paul understood the strategic importance of Rome. As the imperial capital, it was a hub of political power, cultural influence, and intellectual discourse. Establishing a strong, deeply rooted Christian community in Rome would have unparalleled ripple effects throughout the empire. It was not enough to simply plant a church; Paul aimed to build a robust, self-sustaining movement that could withstand persecution and spread the Gospel organically.

His letter to the Romans, written before his arrival, reveals his desire to impart a spiritual gift to them and be mutually encouraged by their faith (Rom. 1:11-12). This speaks to his intention to engage in coaching and fostering deep spiritual growth among the believers already there. His lengthy theological exposition in the letter itself is a testament to his commitment to profound Bible engagement, laying down

foundational doctrines before he even set foot in the city. He sought to consolidate their understanding of the Gospel, preparing them for the intense re-conscientization required to live as Christians in a pagan, imperial context.

While his arrival in Rome was ultimately as a prisoner (Acts 28), Paul's commitment to this method remained. Even under house arrest, he continued to preach "the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him" (Acts 28:31). This continued, consistent teaching, even in confinement, underscores his belief in the power of sustained engagement with the Word to effect deep transformation, mirroring his approach in Ephesus. His ambition was to root the Gospel deeply within Roman society, preparing it for the long game of spiritual and cultural transformation.

The Master Teacher: Learning from Jesus Christ

Paul's "secret recipe" of slow disciple-making was not an innovation but a profound emulation of his Master, Jesus Christ. Jesus's ministry, particularly his engagement with the twelve disciples, epitomizes this long-term, intensive approach.

a. Intensive Training and Personal Instruction

Jesus did not merely preach to the multitudes; He invested the majority of His time, energy, and teaching in a small group of twelve men. For approximately three years, these disciples lived with Him, traveled with Him, and observed His every action. He taught them privately, explaining parables that the crowds did not understand

(Mark 4:34). He gave them personal instructions on prayer, fasting, and ministry (Luke 11:1-4; Matt. 10:5-42). This intensive, almost constant, "coaching" allowed for deep personal growth, addressing their misunderstandings, challenging their biases, and nurturing their faith. He corrected them, encouraged them, and prepared them for the formidable task of carrying on His mission.

b. Practical Experience and Spiritual Formation

Jesus's disciple-making was highly experiential. He sent them out on missions, giving them authority to preach and heal (Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6). When they returned, He debriefed them, celebrating their successes and teaching them from their failures. This practical application of their learning was crucial for their formation. It was not just theoretical instruction but hands-on training in the realities of ministry.

Furthermore, Jesus systematically worked on their spiritual formation. He confronted their pride, their lack of faith, their rivalries, and their misconceptions about the Kingdom of God. The repeated failures and resurrections of Peter, for instance, highlight Jesus's patient, restorative "coaching" that gradually shaped him into the leader he would become. This was a process of re-conscientization, challenging their culturally conditioned expectations of a political Messiah and reorienting them towards a spiritual kingdom.

c. The Contrast with Immediate Conversions

The method of Jesus, like that of Paul, stands in stark contrast to approaches that prioritize immediate, large-scale conversions without sustained follow-up and deep integration into the life of faith. While Jesus did perform miracles that drew crowds and led to immediate responses, His primary focus for perpetuating His mission was the slow, deliberate formation of a core group who would then carry His message to the world. He understood that superficial belief would not withstand the trials to come. The transformation He sought was not merely intellectual assent but a radical change of heart, mind, and life, which requires time, intentionality, and deep engagement.

Concluding remark

The "*fall of Demetrius*" was not merely an economic uprising; it was a testament to the profound spiritual transformation to the city brought by St. Paul's ministry in Ephesus. The decline of Artemis worship and the subsequent dramatic destruction of her statues, as recounted in the Acts of John, were the direct and indirect consequences of a meticulously executed strategy: *slow disciple-making*. Paul's three years in Ephesus were characterized by unwavering commitment to personal coaching, relentless Bible engagement, and a powerful process of re-conscientization. He wasn't interested in superficial conversions but in deeply rooted spiritual metamorphosis that challenged every aspect of the Ephesian worldview.

This method, learned from the ultimate Master Teacher, Jesus Christ, who patiently and intimately formed His twelve disciples over years, underscores a timeless principle for effective spiritual growth. In an age often driven by metrics of immediate impact and rapid growth, the Ephesian narrative serves as a potent reminder that true, lasting transformation often requires time, dedication, and an unhurried investment in individuals.

Over the past few years, the above lessons were summarized by this writer from examination of several sources including the New Testament, and he tries to emulate these lessons in day-to-day practices. Nonetheless, these secret recipes for dismantling spiritual strongholds and establishing robust communities of faith can be found not in swift campaigns, but in the patient, thorough, and loving work of making disciples, one transformed heart at a time. As the Acts of John testifies, the echoes of "*Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!*" eventually faded, replaced by the enduring truth of the Gospel, because a devoted apostle understood the power of the slow, persistent work of the Spirit through the Word.

Acknowledgement. Discussions with Pdt. Dr. Isak Suria are gratefully appreciated. Nonetheless, conclusions made here are ours.

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