



Mission Refocus | Disciple-Making



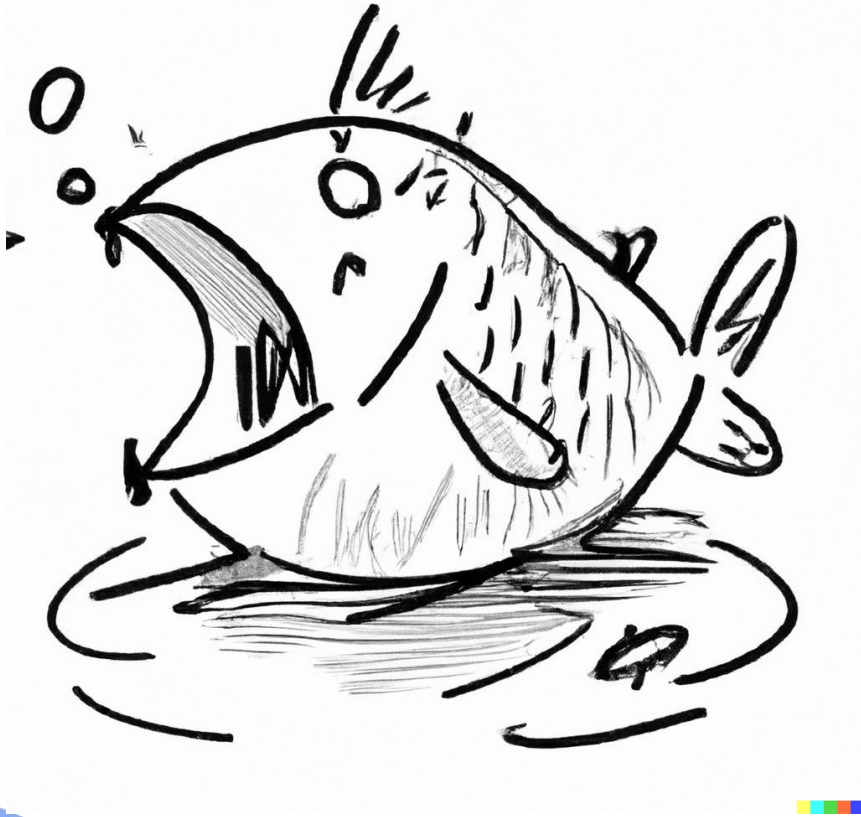
AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH TO DISCIPLESHIP IN FRENCH PACIFIC TERRITORIES

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I: Getting out of the Comfort Zone



A Big Fish in a Small Pond!

Getting out of my Comfort Zone: New Caledonia



A Small Fish in
a Big Pond of
French Baguettes.

New Caledonia: A Mosaic of Cultures with two competing worldviews.

- **Traditional Culture (Melanesians)**

- 341 tribes
- 34 different vernaculars
- **Shame oriented culture**
- Values community**

- **French Secular Culture**

- Multi-ethnic
- **Guilt oriented culture**
- Values individualism**

A Tale of Two Cultures

How selfish!



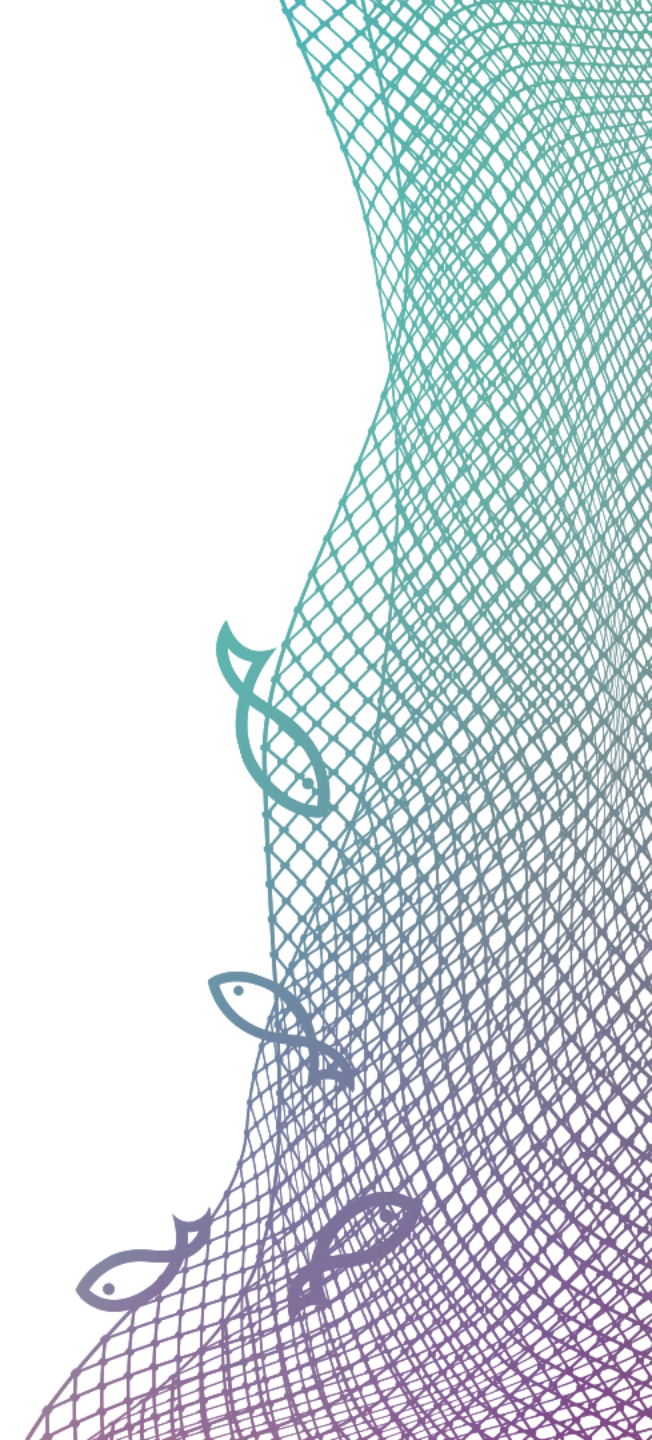
Bad stewardship



Bridging Theological Divides: The Role of Cultural Lenses

- Both groups sincerely believe their theology is correct, largely interpreting each other's behaviors through their individual lenses. Our perceptions of the world, influenced by our emotional and cultural backgrounds, often harbor bias.
- This misunderstanding can be a significant barrier to effective discipleship. The remedy? Embracing humility and seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance — a path illuminated through recognizing and acknowledging these inherent biases (see John 16:13).

Coming to terms with Being a Small Fish



Coming to terms with Being a Small Fish



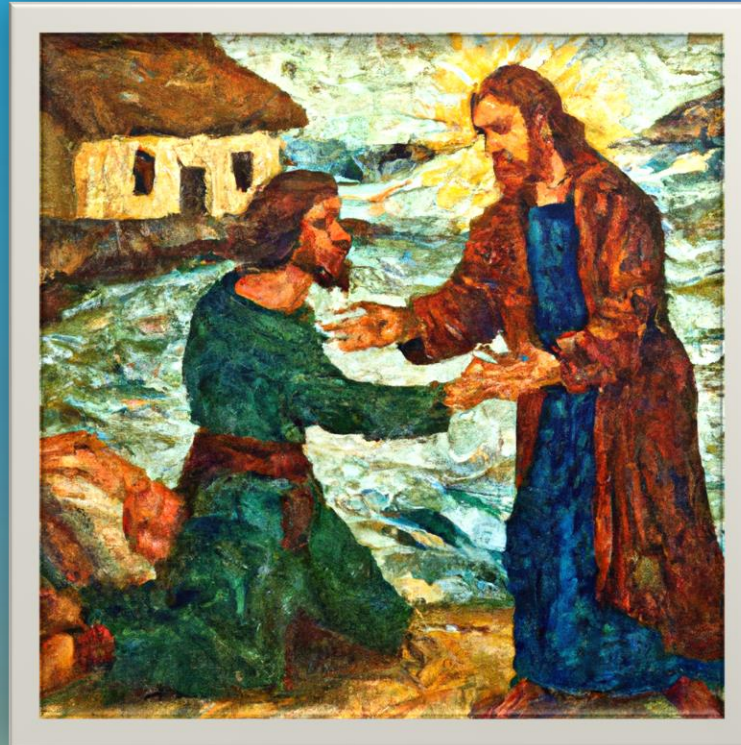
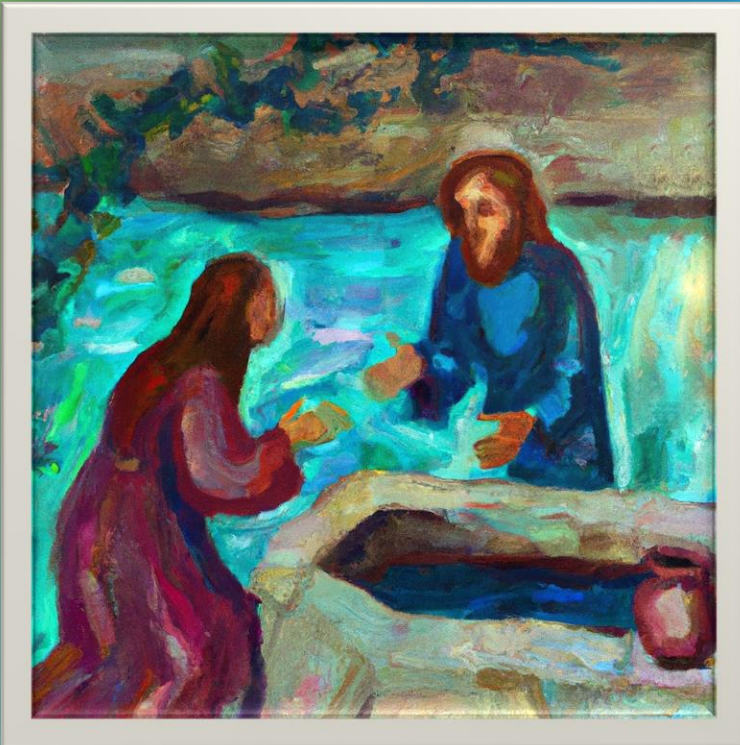
What do we do when we encounter theological and cultural issues not addressed in the church manual?

This experience highlights the challenge of ministering in contexts not fully understood. It raises the question: "are we inadvertently acting as modern cultural imperialists, blind to our own biases? **Are we remaining in our comfort zones by adhering to a standard approach to discipleship? Could 'Mission Refocus' suggest that we need to step out of our comfort zones to disciple more effectively** (see Philippians 2:3-11)?"



INTEGRATIVE DISCIPLESHIP: A RECURRING PARADIGM IN THE GOSPEL

Samaritan Woman (John 4:4-42) / Demon-Possessed man (Mark 5:1-20)



Samaritan Woman (John 4:4-42) / Demon-Possessed man (Mark 5:1-20)

- A) Jesus got out of his comfort zone (Cross-Cultural Mission/Incarnational Model)**
- B) He knew well the problem of both individuals (What is the Issue?)**
- C) Addressed cultural, theological, and spiritual Issues (People-oriented approach)**
- D) They both became “persons of peace” who lead people to Jesus within their social networks. It was not Jesus who went to preach, but he empowered both to do the outreach.**

- “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’” (Ellen G. White, "The Ministry of Healing," p. 143).
- **This integrative method may seem straightforward, yet it involves complex power dynamics and deep encounters at every stage. It necessitates a thorough understanding and genuine love for the people one is reaching out to. Consequently, evaluating the success of outreach efforts through the lens of Christ's method becomes pivotal.**

II: UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

- Failure to understand the issue is failure to address the root of the problem and to formulate effective solutions.



Problems of a Generic Approach

1. **Pastor-Oriented:** High control, administration, teaching, preaching, and evangelism conducted exclusively by pastors.
2. **Restricted Role of Church Elders:** Limited to officiating on Sabbath.
3. **Mega Crusades:** Conducted by Specialists.
4. **Church Members as Spectators:** Critical, rigid, and demanding expectations.



Problems of a Generic Approach

5. Program-Oriented: Focus on structured programs at all levels.
6. Centripetal Model: Bringing people into church—building.
7. Training: A one-day, Eventful Program.
8. Guilt-oriented sermons: Leveraging guilt/fear as primary motivators.



Discipleship Barriers with the Generic Approach

1. Flawed Image of God: Guilt-based theology.
2. High Levels of Conflict: A moralistic landscape with diminished compassion within the church.
3. Church Discipline: Focus on retributive/punitive justice, rather than restorative justice.
4. Limited Involvement of Church members.



Discipleship Barriers with the Generic Approach

- 5. Weak or Absent Indigenous leadership.
- 6. Lack of People-Oriented Strategy: No outreach within existing socio-cultural networks.
- 7. No Contextual Mission Theology: Essential to correct our flawed lenses, communicate the gospel in the frame of reference of the people through redemptive analogies etc.



Discipleship Barriers with the Generic Approach



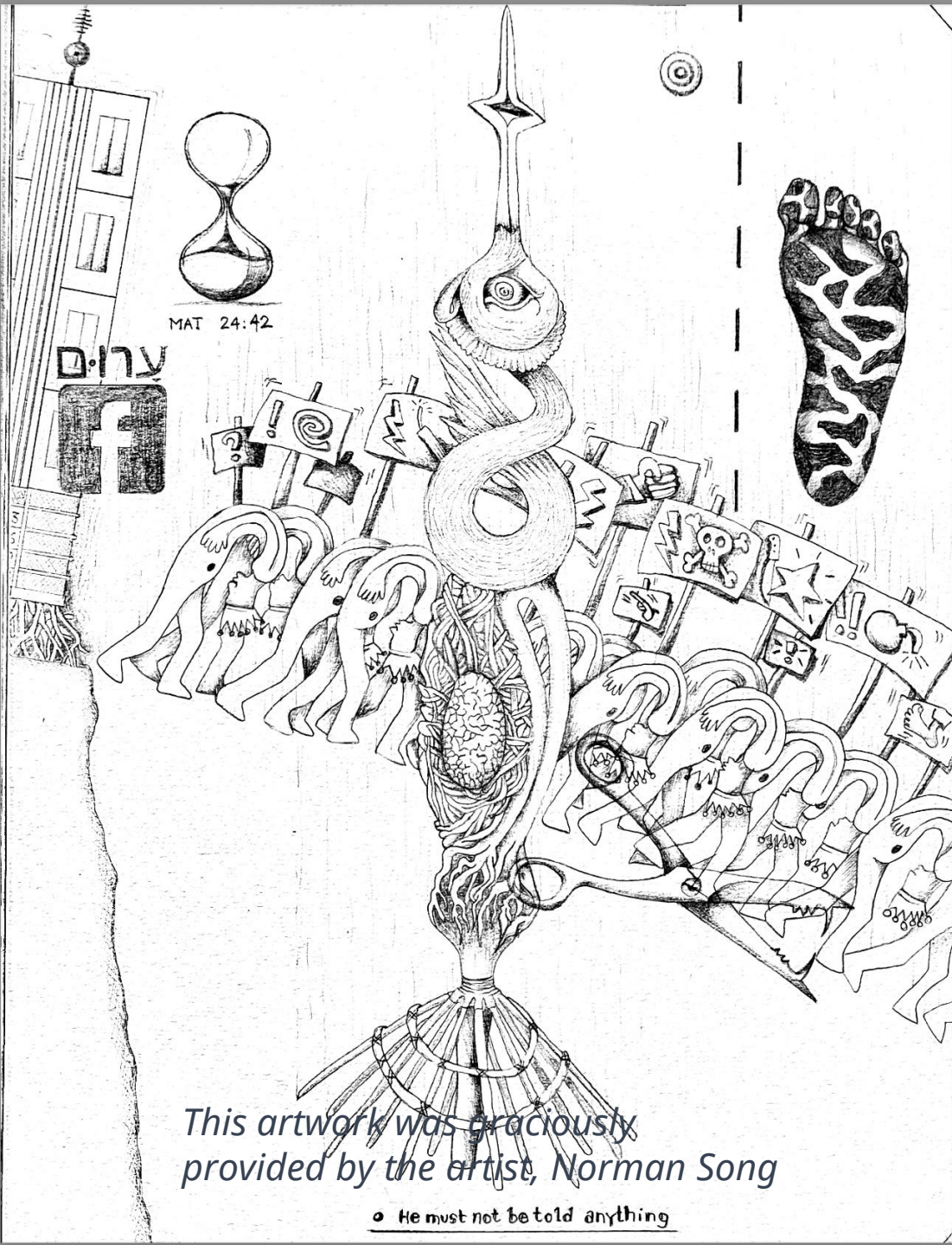
8. Absence of Contextualization: Danger of syncretism and unbiblical practices going underground due to the absence of functional substitutes.





The Church and Gospel Feel Distant, and Danger of Syncretism



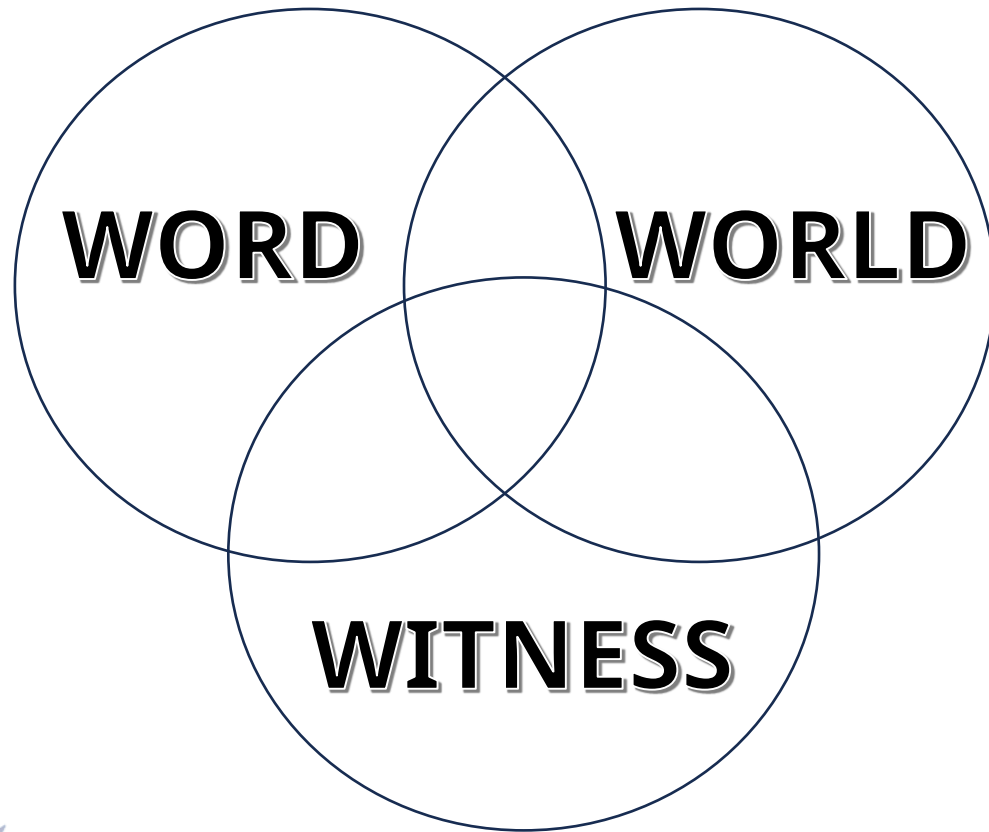


*This artwork was graciously
provided by the artist, Norman Song*

• He must not be told anything

People are Shamed,
Practices go
Underground,
and
Demand for Rights.

IV: INTEGRATIVE DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS



In our mission and discipleship initiatives, we possess the proper tools to investigate the Word, but often find it challenging to understand the world and critique our own lenses.

Revised conceptual framework to investigate the integrating theme.
Note. Adapted from *Mission on the Way: Issues in Mission Theology* (p. 22), by C. Van Engen, 1996, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Timeline for New Caledonia Case Study:



Sabbath Issue in Wallis and Futuna due to dateline change



After two years of meticulous intervention employing the process of Critical Contextualization — a collaborative approach involving local pastors, trained Wallisian leaders, and external guidance — the divisive Sabbath issue (akin to situations in Samoa and Tonga) was finally resolved in 2022.



- Our efforts in the field have been diligently nurtured and advocated for by our leaders at SPD, NZPUC, and NCM. They have gone beyond just fostering a conducive atmosphere for innovation; they have cultivated a culture that welcomes learning and growth from every angle, including from points of perceived weakness.

- In this challenging era, Mission Refocus suggests adopting an integrative approach to ministry and mission. This isn't just a strategy; it's a healing process, encouraging the natural growth of local leaders actively engaging in discipleship.
- However, discipleship isn't just about changing behaviors or belief systems; it digs deeper, reaching into the heart of individuals, transforming worldviews from the core.