

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A PASTOR'S APPROACH TO DISCIPLESHIP AND ITS EFFECT ON THE LOCAL
CHURCH: A THREE-STEP APPROACH TO BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP

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By
Daniel Allen Smith

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THESIS PROJECT APPROVAL SHEET

GRADE

MENTOR

Dr. Charlie Davidson
Director, Doctor of Ministry

READER

Dr. David Hirschman
Acting Dean, Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary

ABSTRACT

A PASTOR'S APPROACH TO DISCIPLESHIP AND ITS EFFECT ON THE LOCAL CHURCH: A THREE-STEP APPROACH TO BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP

Daniel A Smith

Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014

Mentor: Dr. Charles N. Davidson

The current condition of the local church is in need for revitalization. The process of discipleship within the church has been viewed as an underlining issue for the local church. The purpose of this project is to determine the ways in which the pastor influences discipleship in the local church; in the areas of formation, transformation, and application. The pastor's practice of ministry is reviewed by looking at both the pastor's and members' perspective concerning the pastor's approach to discipleship. The pastor's approach to discipleship is observed in three areas; which are formation, transformation, and application. Through careful observation a three-step approach to biblical discipleship will be developed, in order to stop the decline in American churches.

Abstract Length: 117 Words

DEDICATION

Above all I dedicate this Thesis Project to my Lord, Jesus Christ,
for saving my soul and placing within me the passion to study his Word.

I dedicate this Thesis Project to my greatest supporter my wife, Leslie.

I also dedicate this Thesis Project to my three children Samuel, Madison, and Haylie Jo.

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INTRODUCTION

The Doctor of Ministry Thesis Project is the capstone of the Doctor of Ministry degree. The author of this thesis project has selected to research the topic of discipleship within the church. The specific topic of research is “The Pastor’s Approach To Discipleship And Its Effect On The Local Church: A Three Step Approach To Biblical Discipleship.”

The author will address this thesis project by looking at the topic of discipleship within five different chapters. These five chapters are: the introduction, the different historical views of discipleship, the church in the 21st century, a biblical approach to healthy discipleship, and the conclusion: a three step approach to biblical discipleship. It is within this first chapter that the following five elements will be addressed: the statement of the problem, the statement of scope and limitations, the summary of literature review, the biblical/theological basis, and the methodology. Within these five elements the first chapter will describe the entire project for the reader to understand. Thus, this journey into “The Pastor’s Approach To Discipleship And Its Effect On The Local Church: A Three Step Approach To Biblical Discipleship” will begin.

The Statement Of The Problem

The church today in America is faced with the issue of decline and stagnated growth. Rainer states that 80 percent of the churches in America are in decline.¹ The root of this problem can be found in the different approaches to discipleship that leaders (pastors) are taking both corporately and personally. The pastor is the key figure to the discipleship process within the local church. The purpose of this thesis project is to answer this question: “What is the effect of the pastor’s approach to discipleship on the local church?”

¹ Thom Rainer. *Breakout Churches: Discover How To Make The Leap* {Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005}: 45.

In order to determine the effect of the pastor's approach to discipleship there is one element of discipleship that must be addressed. This thesis project will address the issue of understanding discipleship biblically. By addressing the biblical understanding of discipleship, the pastor's approach to discipleship will be reviewed and the effects analyzed. A biblical understanding of discipleship can be understood by looking at three components of discipleship. By looking at these three components or elements of discipleship, it is important to mention the balanced approach that must exist within the believer's life and within the church. If no equal approach to these three elements exists, a church will become unhealthy and unproductive.

First, discipleship is formation. It is important to view discipleship as formation, because of the fact that formation is the way something is sized, arranged or organized. In the believer's life it is vital that the growth, development, and structure become visible. Through the spiritual disciplines, this process of formation is accomplished, for God's people are individuals changed by formation.² It is through continual formation that a true biblical disciple is formed and maintained.

Second, discipleship is transformation. It is vital for the believer to understand biblical discipleship as a continual process of inward transformation. The term "transformation" is defined as a change in form, appearance, or use. A synonym for transformation is the term "metamorphosis" which means a change of physical form, structure, or substance especially by supernatural means. It is important to understand biblical discipleship in the theological understanding of "sanctification," for within this doctrinal teaching an inward transformation takes place within the believer's life. This inward transformation is the continual work of grace in the believer's life, for God desires for the believer to experience an inner righteousness that

² Donald Whitney. *Spiritual Disciplines For The Christian Life*. {Colorado Springs, CO: NavPrss, 1991}: 17.

only he can continually give to the individual.³ It is only when continual transformation takes place that a true Disciple of Christ is developed and maintained.

Third, discipleship is application. It is at this point in the discipleship process that everything comes together, for application is taking place. Application is an act of putting to use. Some synonyms for application are exercise, practice, and use. When a believer continues to develop in the areas of formation and transformation, there must be an avenue through which the believer can practice their faith. It is at this point that strategies for practicing the Christian faith must be implemented. Application of the Word of God will lead to a true biblical disciple.

The biblical understanding of discipleship defines it as, “the formation, transformation, and application of the Word of God within the believer’s life.” When the understanding of biblical discipleship is addressed and implemented within the church, it is the author’s opinion that the decline of American churches will be addressed. It is the Word of God within the church that will change the sad statistics listed above.

The Statement Of Limitations

The scope of this thesis project is to determine the ways in which the pastor influences discipleship in the local church: in the areas of formation, transformation, and application. By looking at these three areas of discipleship, it is not the author’s goal to define discipleship outside of these areas listed. However, within this thesis project the three areas of discipleship will be defined, analyzed, and developed in order to clarify the understanding of biblical discipleship.

The research within this thesis project will be limited to Church of God pastors and their congregations within the state of Mississippi. The reason for this limitation is due to the author’s

³ Richard Foster. *Celebration Of Discipline: The Path To Spiritual Growth*. {New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1998}: 6.

denominational affiliation and the state to which he ministers. Based on this limitation the result will look specifically at churches that average fifty to three hundred in attendance. The majority of churches surveyed will only have one staff member (the pastor).

The pastor's practice of ministry will be reviewed in regards to three fundamental components of discipleship, which are formation, transformation, and application. By looking at these components, a three-step approach to biblical discipleship will be developed in order to stop the decline in American churches. This thesis project doesn't address all the issues that lead to the decline in American churches. However, it does address a vital issue in American churches. This project doesn't serve as a fix-it-all project, but it does serve as a biblical approach to discipleship within the lives of the church leaders and local congregations.

The Biblical And Theological Basis

The basis for this Thesis Project is found in three components of discipleship, which are formation, transformation, and application. As the pastor's approach to discipleship and its effect is studied throughout this project the biblical and theological basis will be the concept of discipleship.

Biblical Meaning of Discipleship

Discipleship is the process of developing or making a disciple. The first time disciple is mentioned in the Bible is found in Isaiah 8:16, which speaks of God's disciples. The Hebrew term "*limmud*" is translated "disciples," which means accustomed to; a disciple, one who is taught, a follower.⁴ Based on the first mention of the term disciple, it is clear that a disciple is two things. First, he/she is taught by someone or something. Second, he/she is a follower of their teacher.

⁴ William Mounce. *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary Of Old & New Testament Words*. {Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006}: 964.

When speaking of discipleship in the New Testament, it is important to look at the first time that the term is mentioned in the Greek New Testament. Matthew 5:1 is where the disciples came to Jesus and were taught the Sermon on the Mount. The Greek term “*mathetes*” means disciple, student, and follower; a committed learner and follower.⁵ This is the first mention of the term “disciples” in the New Testament and it also implies the two prior points addressed in Isaiah 8:16. The first call to discipleship is found in Matthew 4:19, which states, “And he saith unto them [Simon Peter and Andrew], Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”⁶ It is here that discipleship moves beyond learning and following, to the actual practice of that which is taught. France states, “Jesus calls his disciples...to take an active part as fishers of men.”⁷ Based on these three passages a disciple is someone taught by a teacher, who follows their teacher, and actively practices what they are taught.

The Biblical Right To Be A Disciple

In chapter ten of Matthew, Jesus Christ, the disciple-maker, called to the twelve disciples and “he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases.”⁸ It is in this passage that Christ gives “authority” to the twelve disciples to make disciples and minister to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel.”⁹ This “authority” speaks of the right or power to delegate authority, responsibility, and duty to

⁵ William Mounce. *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary Of Old & New Testament Words.*, 183.

⁶ Matthew 4:19, KJV.

⁷ R. T. France. *Matthew*. The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. {Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985}: 104

⁸ Matthew 10:1b, KJV.

⁹ Matthew 10:6, KJV.

someone else. The term “*exousia*” means “it is lawful.”¹⁰ In the context of this Passage the twelve followers of Jesus had the right to act in the authority of Christ.

The idea of acting in the authority of Christ is spoken of in Matthew 10:6-8 which states, “But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give.”¹¹ This is the authority, responsibility, and duty of the disciple of Christ; not only for the twelve in the New Testament era, but for the disciple of Christ today. The authority of Christ was delegated to the twelve disciples in Matthew 10, then was spoken of again in several passages including Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-18, Luke 24:46-49, John 20:19-23, and Acts 1:7-8. It is God’s will for every believer to walk and live in this same authority.

The Biblical Command To Go

The developing process of a disciple is the key instruction of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20. It is here that the believer is instructed to make disciples or to actively engage in discipleship. What is discipleship? What does discipleship involve? To answer these questions the Bible gives a clear definition concerning discipleship. Biblical discipleship is the formation, transformation, and application of the Word of God in the believer’s life.

Discipleship Is Formation

Formation is the process of sizing, arranging, or organizing something. In the discipleship process, formation is the development or structuring of the child of God. Formation in the life of the believer is nothing but God’s grace. The source of biblical formation is God. In John 1:1-4 it

¹⁰ John MacArthur. *Matthew 8-15. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary.*{Chicago, IL: Moody Publisher, 1987}: 127.

¹¹ Matthew 10:6-8, KJV.

states, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.”¹² It is the Word of God that brings structure to the believer’s life. This structure is found in three acts of God’s grace.

The first act of God’s grace is the Word of God. The Word of God is Jesus Christ. It is the Word that must be read, preached, and lived by the believer. The second act of God’s grace is justifying grace. Justifying grace is the act of God in forgiving and declaring sinful man righteous, through the atoning work of Christ, which is received through faith alone.¹³ This act of grace gives structure to the believer’s life, for the atoning work of Christ is the foundation on which all spiritual development must be built upon.

Third, is the sealing grace of God. Sealing grace is the working of the Holy Spirit who walks beside the believer and lives within the believer throughout their spiritual journey, which can be found in 2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:13, and Ephesians 4:30.¹⁴ The coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 is the fulfillment of Christ’s promise of the Comforter in John 14-16. Thus, the sealing grace of God is the process of being taught and directed by the Holy Spirit. Though God’s grace, the Holy Spirit builds upon the foundation, Jesus Christ. This is the theological basis of biblical formation.

¹² John 1:1-4, KJV.

¹³ Elmer Towns. *Theology for Today*. {Belmont, CA: Wadsworth & Thomson, 2002}: 457.

¹⁴ French L. Arrington. *Christian Doctrine: A Pentecostal Perspective*. Vol. 3. {Cleveland, TN: Pathweay Press, 1994}: 44.

Discipleship Is Transformation

The process of transformation is a supernatural change of form within the life of the believer. This transformational process is known as sanctification. The theological basis for this second component of discipleship is found in the meaning of sanctification. Sanctification is the grace of God which progressively or continually restores the believer's heart and life to that of the image of Christ, which is taught in Romans 8:29. Sanctification is the work of God's grace within the believer's life from justification (salvation) to glorification (death or the rapture of the church). ¹⁵The believer is to continually be set apart from the world unto God. The prayer of Christ, in John 17:6-19, is that the followers of Christ be sanctified. The process of transformation takes place through the Word of God and by the Holy Spirit. Sanctification or transformation is not an automatic grace given to the believer. It is like justification; it must be received in faith. Faith is the practice of God's Word and surrender of self to the Holy Spirit's guidance. It is this process that the pastor and church must practice in order to become true Disciples of Christ.

Discipleship Is Application

The term application simply carries the meaning of practice or use. The believer is to be a practitioner of the Word of God. This is where the Great Commission, Matthew 28:18-20, comes into play, for the believer must "go." In the Word of God the believer, is told to love God and neighbor, which is the practice of God's Word found in John 13:34-45. Also in the Word of God, the believer is told to occupy till he comes in Luke 19:13. This simply means that the believer must practice what has been taught in the Word of God until the Lord returns. Application is different from the prior two elements of discipleship, for in both of the prior elements it is God's grace that gives formation and transformation. However, in this third

¹⁵ Elmer Towns. *Theology for Today.*, 473.

element the believer must take action. James states, “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”¹⁶

The Biblical Responsibility of Discipleship

Discipleship is formation, transformation, and application. The term disciple simply means that an individual has become like their mentor or leader. It should be the believer’s desire to follow after Christ. It should be the pastor’s desire to follow after Christ and model a Christ-like example. The reason the pastor should model this example before his family, church, and community is based on the call to the Disciples in Matthew 10, the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20, and the responsibility of the pastor to equip the saints in Ephesians 4:11-16. The words of Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16 place the responsibility of discipleship on the pastor for he states,

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.¹⁷

It is the pastor’s responsibility to make disciples of Christ, who can also make disciples of Christ in their home, work place, and other locations outside of the church. In Matthew 10 the authority is given to the believer to make disciples of Christ. Weber gives seven steps in delegating authority or making disciples. These steps are: talk about the task, do the task while the learner observes, let the learner help you do the task, help the learner do the task, let the

¹⁶ James 2:17, KJV.

¹⁷ Ephesians 4:11-16, KJV.

learner do the task while you observe, let the learner do the task on his own, under your supervision and guidance, and the learner becomes a trainer, repeating the steps with someone else.¹⁸ It is the believer's responsibility to follow these steps in the discipleship process, but the pastor must lead the congregation by example. It was the example of Christ that led to the Apostles' ministries, which changed the world. Disciples are taught by someone and they follow their teacher. It is the pastor's responsibility to be taught by Christ and to follow Christ. It is also the pastor's responsibility to approach discipleship with a biblical understanding. This means that discipleship is the formation, transformation, and application of the Word of God within the believer's life.

The Statement Of Methodology

This Thesis Project will address the issue of the pastor's approach to discipleship and its effect. In order to engage this issue the author will look at five different chapters. These chapters will address discipleship, the pastor's approach to discipleship, the effects of discipleship on the church, and the biblical approach to discipleship. The chapters addressed in this project are: Introduction: The Effects Of A Pastor's Approach To Discipleship Are Uncertain, Chapter 1: Different Historical Views Of Discipleship, Chapter 2: The Church In the 21st Century, Chapter 3: A Biblical Approach To Healthy Discipleship, and the Conclusion: A Three Step Approach To Biblical Discipleship. Through these five sections the biblical understanding of discipleship will be the overall concern. The author will seek to find if the pastor is approaching discipleship from a biblical understanding. In order to have a clear understanding of this project, it is important to address each chapter separately.

¹⁸ Stuart K. Weber. *Matthew*. Holman New Testament Commentary. {Nashville, TN: Braodman & Holman, 2000}: 138.

Introduction: The Effects Of A Pastor's Approach To Discipleship Are Uncertain.

The introduction to this thesis project is the overview of the entire project. The introduction gives five key elements to the project: statement of the problem, scope and limitation of the project, biblical and theological basis for the project, statement of methodology, and review of literature. By addressing these five elements the reader will have an overall understanding of this particular Thesis Project, "The Pastor's Approach To Discipleship And Its Effect On The Local Church: A Three Step Approach To Biblical Discipleship."

Different Historical Views Of Discipleship

The first chapter of this thesis project will speak of the different historical views of discipleship by looking at two separate sources. The first source to establish the New Testament view of discipleship will be observed by looking at the ministries and lives of Christ, the Disciples, and the Apostle Paul. By observing these New Testament examples of discipleship, a biblical approach to discipleship will be observed. In an interview between Professor Willard and Pastor Zander the question was raised, "Why don't Christians look more like Christ?" Their answer was that Christian formation, inward transformation, and the practice or application of the Word of God must be addressed to produce Christians that look like Christ.¹⁹ It is through this careful observation that the understanding of discipleship as formation, transformation, and application will be established.

The second source that will establish the historical views of discipleship will be the different views of discipleship throughout church history. Through a careful study of Christian

¹⁹ Dallas Willard and Dieter Zander. "The apprentices: what is spiritual formation? And how does a church do it? A professor and pastor discuss the new language of making disciples." *Leadership* Summer 2005. Vol. 26, No. 3: 20-25.
http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA137912138&v=2.1&u=vic_liberty&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w (accessed April 8, 2013).

documents, church fathers, historical documents, and church programs different historical views of discipleship will be addressed. This historical view will look at discipleship within five different time periods, which are the early church, the early church fathers, the Roman Catholic Church, the church after the Reformation, and the church in the 20th century. By looking at these historical views of discipleship from the New Testament and throughout church history, the clarity of the issues within discipleship can be addressed within this thesis project.

The Church In the 21st Century

Within the second chapter the author will focus on the 21st Century Church. It is within this chapter that the pastor's approach to discipleship and its effect will be observed by looking at three elements. First, the decline of the church within the 21st century will be observed. Based on research, the church is in constant decline within this era of church history. In a study in Ireland the church showed a constant decline from 1993 to the present. This study showed that church attendance went from 85 percent to 56 percent in 2005.²⁰ With studies like this and the previous mentioned figures by Rainer, the church in both America and Europe are in decline. Though there are many factors that lead to such a decline, this project will seek to look at the pastor's approach to discipleship and its effect on the overall decline of the 21st Century Church.

Second, the need to observe the leadership (pastor) within churches is important to the discipleship approaches within the 21st Century Church. There are four areas of leadership that this thesis project will focus upon within this section. The first is the role of leadership, which speaks of the key elements of a successful leader. The second is the environment of leadership needed for discipleship. The third is the pastor as a shepherd or under-shepherd, who takes care and guides the people. The final element is the elements of the pastor as a servant-leader, who

²⁰ Jochen Hirschle. "From religious to consumption-related routine activities? Analyzing Ireland's economic boom and the decline in church attendance." *Journal For The Scientific Study Of Religion* 49, no. 4 (December 1, 2010): 673-687. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed May 8, 2013).

teaches by example and service. Through a careful observation of the 21st Century Church, the need for biblical leadership will be addressed.

Third, the different types of discipleship within the 21st Century Church must be listed and discussed. It is within this section that the author will seek to address the many methods, approaches, and techniques that have been used within the 21st century to make Disciples of Christ. This fact is supported by the following quote: “Methods are many principles are few, methods may change but principles never do.”²¹ Within this section, the biblical principles will be the focus of concern for each discipleship method listed. By addressing the 21st Century Church, the issues concerning discipleship approaches and the pastor will be clearly analyzed within the next chapter of this project.

A Biblical Approach To Healthy Discipleship

The fourth chapter of this thesis project serves as the chapter of findings for this overall project. The findings of this chapter are based on three sources: pastoral surveys, congregational surveys, and the first quarter of the Mississippi Messenger from each year ranging from 2008 to 2013. All contact information for the participants have been provided by the Church of God State Executive Office in Jackson, Mississippi, which has granted permission for this study (Appendix A).

First, the researcher surveyed ten Church of God pastors in the state of Mississippi. This specific group of clergy was selected based on the researcher’s denominational affiliation. The ten pastors selected for this survey were contacted by mail concerning the research for this project. Each pastor signed a permission form (Appendix B) in order to participate in the project and agreed to provide ten congregational members to participate in the project. The first survey

²¹ Elmer Towns, Ed Stetzer, and Warren Bird. *Eleven Innovations In The Local Church: How Today’s Leaders Can Learn, Discern, and Move Into The Future*. {Ventura, CA: Regel, 2007}: 15.

was conducted during the months of September to December 2013. The Pastoral Survey (Appendix C) was used to conduct this first survey of ten Church of God pastors in the state of Mississippi, in regards to their approach to discipleship concerning the three components of formation, transformation, and application. The method of delivery for the survey was by mail. The surveys were mailed directly to the pastors, and they mailed them back to the researcher in the self-addressed stamped envelope that was provided with the survey.

Second, the researcher surveyed ten congregational members from each of the ten churches participating in the project. The participants for the Congregational Survey (Appendix D) were selected by their pastor. The ten pastors that agreed to participate in this research were responsible for recruiting ten members to participate in the project. The pastor will have all ten participants to meet at the church to conduct the survey all at one time. The second survey was conducted during the months of September to December 2013. The Congregational Survey was used to address their pastor's approach to discipleship and its effect from the congregation's perspective. This survey was addressed to each church separately, in order to compare the congregation's perspective to their pastor's perspective separately from other churches. After each church was analyzed separately, the researcher analyzed the churches together as a whole. These surveys were delivered by mail to the pastor in a package. The pastor then conducted a meeting at the church, which included all ten participants. The participants completed the survey and sealed the survey within an envelope, which was provided by the researcher, before returning it to the pastor. Once all the surveys were returned, the pastor sealed them in an eleven by thirteen storage envelope. The self-addressed stamped storage envelope was then mailed to the researcher.

Third, the researcher used the archives of the Church of God State Executive Office to obtain the attendance record of each of the ten churches participating in the project. The attendance record for the last six years was reviewed for each church. Based on the attendance record, the Congregational Survey, the Pastoral Survey, and the biblical understanding of discipleship, the successful biblical approach to discipleship was determined.

This chapter addresses the three components of biblical discipleship by looking at each pastor's approaches to discipleship in the area of formation, transformation, and application. This chapter also looks at the successful approaches to biblical discipleship based on the criteria listed above. This step of the process seeks to focus on the positive effects of each pastor's approach to discipleship.

Conclusion: A Three Step Approach To Biblical Discipleship

The fifth chapter of this thesis project is a summary of the entire project. Within this chapter, the author looks at the three approaches to biblical discipleship and summarizes each step by looking at the approaches to formation, transformation, and application. When looking at each of these three components the pastor will be given questions to answer concerning his approach to discipleship. By giving this summary the reader can obtain an overview of the project from the beginning to the end.

The Review Of Literature

The literature that is presently available regarding discipleship is vast in understanding. However, this particular review of literature will focus on the pastor's approach to discipleship and its effect on the local church. This review of literature has been divided into sections based on the contents of this project. The following is a review of literature.

Discipleship In The New Testament

Throughout the New Testament there are passages that teach or instruct the believer to practice the call to discipleship. The call to discipleship is one that every believer is to pursue within their walk with God. The following passages will speak of different perspectives and issues within discipleship.

Matthew 28:18-20 is the first passage that is listed within this section, for it is the most famous passage dealing with discipleship. It is referred to as the Great Commission. This passage states,

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.²²

It is here that the calling or mandate is given to all believers to become a Disciple of Christ. This mandate is given in similar manner in other New Testament books including Mark 16:15-18, Luke 24:46-49, John 20:19-23, and Acts 1:4-8. Philips states, “The unbelieving may challenge our right to take the gospel to others lands, but we have every right. We have a mandate that transcends that of any human political, religious, or economic power. We are commissioned to go, and go we must, for Satan holds the nations in darkness.”²³ It is the right of the believer to share the gospel and make disciples for Christ.

In Mark 4 there are a few parables that Jesus teaches to his followers. Within these parables the over-arching theme is growth. There must be growth within the life of a true Disciple of Christ. From the seed that falls on good ground to the grain of mustard seed, the idea

²² Matthew 28:18-20, KJV.

²³ John Philips. *Matthew*. Exploring The Gospels. {Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux, 1999}: 547-48.

of growth is key to the development of the believer. This fourth chapter is the “parable of parables,” for it includes four parables in one. This parable speaks of the preaching of the Word of God and how it is received or rejected. To those that receive the Word of God and obey its teachings, there is spiritual growth.²⁴ God’s plan for the believer is to produce spiritual growth.

Luke 4:18-19 is a passage that the author calls the “Great Mission.” It is within this passage that Jesus stands before the people of his home town, Nazareth, and reads from Isaiah 61:1-2 when he states,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.²⁵

It is here that the believer is given the mission that Jesus commissioned his Disciples to follow in Matt. 28:18-20. The Great Commission is a mandate to be fulfilled by every believer, in order that the Great Mission of God would be fulfilled in the world. MacArthur states this about the Great Mission of God, for the “Message,” Jesus Christ “would preach the gospel to the poor,...will proclaim spiritual release to the captives,...provide recovery of spiritual sight to the blind,... [and]came to set free those who are spiritually oppressed.”²⁶ This is the same message that will change hearts and make disciples of men and women today.

In John 15:8 Jesus told his Disciples this, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”²⁷ When Jesus was speaking of the concept of the “True Vine” he addressed the issue of being true disciples. The disciple of Christ is the individual that

²⁴ Simon J. Kistemaker. *The Parables: Understanding The Stories Jesus Told*. {Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1980}: 40.

²⁵ Luke 4:18-19, KJV.

²⁶ John MacArthur. *Luke 1-5*. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary. {Chicago, IL: Moody Publishing, 2009}: 270-72.

²⁷ John 15:8, KJV.

will abide in Christ. Thus, the true disciple loves God, testifies of God, and follows God according to the teachings of the entire fifteenth chapter of John's Gospel. The fruit that is spoken of in this passage refers to the character that is produced in the believer's life, by the inward transformation, which is spoken of in Galatians 5:22-23, "The Fruit of the Spirit." The characteristics of the fruit are: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. A true disciple of Christ will have an inward transformation that produces these Christ-like characteristics within their life.

In Acts 26:14-19 the Apostle Paul is standing before King Agrippa and testifying to his conversion and calling. In this passage Paul address the purpose for his calling to be a Disciple of Christ. He was called, "To open their [Gentiles] eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and form the power of Satan unto God, that they many receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."²⁸ It is the Disciple's calling to share the gospel message of Christ to the world, for God desires to forgive men and women of their sins and to set them apart unto himself. The type of message that Paul preached was one of repentance, which is "a fundamental change of the whole life—that was to be confirmed by works corresponding to repentance."²⁹ It is this type of message and faith that speaks of a true disciple of Christ.

In John 13:34-35 a "new commandment" is spoken of by Christ. This commandment is simply this, "That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."³⁰ Love is the key to

²⁸ Acts 26:18, KJV.

²⁹ French Arrington. *The Acts Of The Apostles: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. {Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988}: 250.

³⁰ John 13:34-35, KJV.

the Christian life. This concept is addressed throughout the New Testament, but 1 Corinthians 13 stands as the “Love Chapter” in the New Testament. Within this chapter the Apostle Paul teaches that without love, the believer is nothing. Based on this point, the disciple of Christ must display the love of Christ, or else he/she is nothing.

In Ephesians 4:11-16 the ministerial gifts are listed. Of these gifts, one is the gift of a pastor-teacher. However, all four of these gifts are given to the church, “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”³¹ This passage speaks to the leadership of the church and calls them to be the disciple makers. Also passages like, Romans 14:19, Romans 15:14, and Colossians 3:16, call the believers to edify, teach, and build up one another in the faith.

In Ephesians 5:21, the child of God is called to submit to one another. In Acts 6:1-7, the office of the deacon was established to serve the widows and orphans. In Galatians 5:13-15, the believer is called to serve one another. As a Disciple of Christ the believer must be a servant first of all. The believers, whether they are a servant or master, are to be submissive to one another. The servant is to be submissive to the authority of the master, but at the same time the master is to be submissive to the needs of the servant.³² It is a servant-leader that will look like Christ in his/her approach to discipleship, for they will truly act like Christ.

The Decline Of The Church

In the book *Radically Unchurched*, the alarming issue of the decline within churches is addressed. Reid states that there are about 80 percent of American churches that are in decline

³¹ Ephesians 4:12-13, KJV.

³² Max Anders. *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, & Colossians*. Holman New Testament Commentary. {Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1999}: 173.

and that of the other 20 percent of churches there is limited growth of new converts.³³ These statistics show the need for true biblical discipleship within the church today. A lack of biblical discipleship within the church has produced a lack of evangelism and outreach among the churches in America.

The Leadership (Pastor) Within Churches

In the concept of discipleship, it is the pastor's responsibility to make discipleship a priority within the church. Bill Hull, in his book *The Disciple Making Pastor*, addresses the issue of making a space for discipleship within the church. He gives three key steps to achieving this goal. First, the pastor must preach the concept of discipleship, which is the formation component of discipleship. Second, the pastor must write down the concepts of discipleship for all to understand within the church. This is also the component of formation. Third, the pastor must model the lifestyle of a true disciple, which is the application component of discipleship.³⁴ It is clear from this resource that discipleship is formation and application, but there is yet one more component of discipleship. The third component of discipleship is the inward working of the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God. This third process of discipleship is transformation. Thus, it is obvious that the pastor is the key individual in the process of discipleship within the local church. He must make discipleship the priority in his personal life and in the ministry of the church. If the pastor's approach to discipleship is not a priority in these two areas it will negatively affect the church.

³³ Alvin Reid. *Radically Unchurched: Who They Are & How To Reach Them*. {Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2002}: 23.

³⁴ Bill Hull. *The Disciple Making Pastor: The Key To Building Healthy Christians In Today's Church*. {Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 1988} 117-120.

In the area of pastoral leadership, there is one book that demonstrates the steps to producing disciples for Christ; this book is *The Five Levels Of Leadership*. Maxwell, in this book, describes the five levels in which a leader must continually practice. These five levels are position, permission, production, people development, and pinnacle. These levels are also described by using the following five terms; rights, relationships, results, reproduction, and respect.³⁵ As a pastor it is important to maintain each level that is discussed above if he is to become a disciple of Christ that makes disciples. The goal for a pastor is to become a disciple, who can make disciples, who can make other disciples. This goal is accomplished by achieving and maintaining these five levels of leadership.

Another book that addresses the issue of leadership is the book, *Good To Great*. In this book the concept of a great leader is addressed. Collins states, “The good-to-great leaders never wanted to become larger-than-life heroes. They never aspired to be put on a pedestal or become unreachable icons. They were seemingly ordinary people quietly producing extraordinary results.”³⁶ This concept of leadership displays the type of leader that produces true biblical disciples for Christ. For a true disciple maker never wants to be placed in the spot-light, but desires to accomplish the task before him or her, which is the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:18-20.

The vital issue with leaders (pastors) within the church today is the issue of being both emotionally and spiritually healthy. In the book, *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, Peter Scazzero dedicates an entire chapter to the leaders. The title of this chapter is, “As Go The

³⁵ John Maxwell. *The Five Levels Of Leadership: Proven Steps To Maximize Your Potential*. {New York, NY: Center Street, 2011}: 6.

³⁶ Jim Collins. *Good To Great: Why Some Companies Make The Leap...And Others Don't*. {New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2001}: 28.

Leader, So Goes The Church.” Within this chapter the following quote is made: “The root issues were inside me. But I couldn’t—or wouldn’t—admit that yet.”³⁷ The key issue with discipleship within the church today has to do with the leaders of the church. The pastor is the key individual to producing biblical disciples within the local church. If the pastor has an issue within himself, the process of disciple making become corrupted. It is for this reason that the author will look to an article that he has written, “Recapturing Vision Within The Local Church.” Within this article the pastor is encouraged to recapture a vision for the church by engaging God in prayer.³⁸ The key to a healthy church is a healthy pastor. The leader must be both emotionally and spiritually healthy to lead others toward true biblical discipleship.

The Types Of Discipleship Within Churches

The issue of discipleship must be addressed by looking at the types or methods used to make disciples throughout the church. A few resources can be reviewed to observe the different methods. One such book is *Eleven Innovations In The Local Church*. This book seeks to look at eleven different methods or approaches to ministry, which seeks to make disciples of believers. The thought of change is addressed within the church, for churches are afraid to move away from the traditions that have become established. The whole concept of this book addresses the need to change the approach to ministry, in order for the church to influence the culture once again in America.³⁹

³⁷ Peter Scazzero and Warren Bird. *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship that Actually Changes Lives*. {Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010} 29.

³⁸ Daniel Smith. “Recapturing Vision Within The Local Church: Engaging God In Prayer.” *Engage: A Journal For Church of God Leaders*. Vol.9, No. 2 (Spring 2013), 6-8.

³⁹ Elmer Towns, Ed Stetzer, and Warren Bird. *Eleven Innovations In The Local Church: How Today’s Leaders Can Learn, Discern, and Move Into The Future.*, 14.

Another book that addresses the issue of different methods is *Breaking The Missional Code*. This book speaks of the need for both evangelism and discipleship; however, the two cannot be separated within the church. It is the church's need to produce outreach and spiritual growth, for without both operating together the church fails to take the Great Commission seriously.⁴⁰ It is necessary to take an approach to discipleship that will promote evangelism within the church.

There are many books that could be observed within this section of the research, but *Simple Church* presents a message that the entire Church needs to hear. The message is simple. The message is to return to the original plan that God established for discipleship within the body of Christ. Rainer and Geiger state the following concerning the plan of sanctification in the discipleship process:

While God never changes, He has chosen to work through a divine process. For example, God chose to create the universe in a sequential and orderly process. He also designed His creation's maturation, including man, to occur in process. Spiritual growth (sanctification) is the process of a believer being transformed into the image of Christ. Simple churches have chosen to align themselves with the way God works. They have chosen to partner with the discipleship process revealed in Scripture.⁴¹

It is only when the church returns to God's plan for discipleship that the believers will become true biblical disciples. True biblical discipleship takes submission to God and time.

Formation Of God's Word

In the article, "Five Steps To Becoming A Leader Of Influence," the concept of learning is addressed. If a leader desires to be influential within the church, especially in the area of making disciples, the study of God's Word must be a priority. The study of God's Word is

⁴⁰ Ed Stetzer and David Putman. *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community*. {Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2006}: 68.

⁴¹ Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger. *Simple Church: Returning To God's Process For Making Disciples*. {Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2006}: 15-16.

stressed by Paul to Timothy in Second Timothy 2:15.⁴² In the study of the Word of God, a structure and development begins to take place, which leads to Christ-like living. It is this Christ-like living that determines if an individual is a true biblical disciple of Christ.

Transformation Of Man's Life

Transformation is the key to the believer becoming a true dsiciple of Christ. Moody wrote in his book, *Secret Power*, "He [God] would have us growing in all these graces, and the only true, happy, Christian life is to be growing, constantly growing, in the love and favor of God, growing in all those delightful graces of the Spirit...Love is the badge that Christ gave His disciples" in John 13:35.⁴³ According to this thought, God desires for the believer to constantly grow. This is the truth concerning discipleship, for the believer must constantly grow in maturity. The closer the believer becomes to being Christ-like, the more of God's love will be displayed in the believer's life. Discipleship is the inward transformation that produces God's love in the individual's character.

To continue this thought of inward transformation, A. W. Tozer speaks of the process of transformation in his book, *The Pursuit Of God*. Within this book he speaks of the ongoing thirst that man has for God. He describes this thirst as a pursuit or journey that man must make toward God. The following quote from Tozer will help to gain insight into this journey that each individual believer must take in order to become the true disciple of Christ:

Being made in His image we have within us the capacity to know Him. In our sins we lack only the power. The moment the Spirit has quickened us to life in regeneration our whole being senses its kinship to God and leaps up in joyous recognition. That is the heavenly birth without which we cannot see the kingdom of God. It is, however, not an

⁴² Ray Hurt. "Five Steps To Becoming A Leader Of Influence." Engage A Journal For Church Of God Leaders. Vol. 8, No. 3 (Summer 2012), 10.

⁴³ D.L. Moody. *Secret Power: Infuse Your Life With The Strength And Authority Of The Holy Spirit*. {New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1997}: 41-43.

end but an inception, for now begins the glorious pursuit, the heart's happy exploration of the infinite riches of the Godhead.⁴⁴

It is this pursuit of God that speaks of the continual inward transformation that leads to true discipleship. True discipleship is not fully granted at conversion, but it simply begins. It is the pastor's responsibility to encourage and promote this continual pursuit of God, which continually transforms the pastor's and believer's lives.

Application Of God's Word

When looking at the concept of practicing the Word of God, Dallas Willard gives great advice for the believer to follow in his book, *The Spirit Of The Disciplines*. He states, "We can become like Christ by doing one thing—by following him[Christ] in the overall style he chose for himself."⁴⁵ This statement clearly teaches that the application of the Word of God is critical to the discipleship process. True biblical discipleship must look to Christ as the example in which to follow. A believer can only be a disciple of Christ if he/she becomes a follower first.

Now that the framework for this entire thesis project has been presented, it is time to explore the different historical views of discipleship, the church in the 21st Century, a biblical approach to healthy discipleship, and a three step approach to biblical discipleship. This journey will begin by looking at the different historical views of discipleship in the first chapter.

⁴⁴ A. W. Tozer. *The Pursuit Of God: The Human Thirst For the Divine*. {Camp Hill, PA: Wing Spread, 2006}: 14.

⁴⁵ Dallas Willard. *The Spirit Of The Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. {New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1988}: ix.

Chapter One

Different Historical Views Of Discipleship

A disciple is someone taught by a teacher, who follows their teacher, and actively practices what they are taught. The process of biblical discipleship is the formation, transformation, and application of the Word of God in the believer's life. Throughout this chapter the author will seek to look at the different historical views of discipleship. The author will look at two main areas of concerns: discipleship in the New Testament, and discipleship throughout church history. By studying these two areas of concern the author will seek to analyze the historical views through the lens of the two working definitions listed above. To begin this journey, it is time to look to the origination of biblical discipleship, the New Testament.

Discipleship In the New Testament

The journey has begun. The birth place for biblical discipleship is none other than the New Testament. In the New Testament the understanding of a disciple is truly addressed. A disciple is a follower of Jesus. Pentecost defines a disciple in these words, "a true disciple is one who has a love for the person of Christ, confidence in the word of Christ, and is completely committed to Christ in service and obedience."⁴⁶ This clearly means that the individual follows Jesus because of his/her love for and confidence in Christ. Another working definition of a disciple is that a disciple is someone who is following Christ, being changed by Christ, and committed to the mission of Christ.⁴⁷ This definition of a disciple shows the three steps of discipleship, which are formation, transformation and application. Throughout this section of the

⁴⁶ J. Dwight Pentecost. *Design For Discipleship: Discovering God's Blueprint for the Christian Life*. {Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1996}: 16.

⁴⁷ Jim Putman, Bobby Harrington, & Robert Coleman. *Disciple Shift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples*. {Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013}: 51.

study, the historical views from Scripture will be studied by looking at Jesus the Disciple-Maker, the Disciples, and the Apostle Paul. It is through this study that biblical discipleship will be addressed.

Jesus The Disciple-Maker

The first question that must be answered concerning “Jesus the Disciple-Maker,” is “Who is this Jesus?” Before people are willing to follow someone, they desire to know that individual. Without knowing someone, it is hard to know two things. First, it is hard to know the character of the individual. Second, it is hard to know how to follow the individual. It is within this section that this concern will be addressed. The following will give the reader some clarity concerning who Jesus is both in character and as a disciple-maker.

The Son of God

Matthew’s account of Jesus states that he is “Emmanuel,” which means that God is with us as taught in Matthew 1:23. This New Testament passage refers to the Old Testament prophecies of Isaiah, which was over seven hundred years old at the time of Jesus’ birth. Jesus’ miraculous birth, which is found Matthew 1:18-25, Matthew 2:1-25, Luke 1:26-38, and Luke 2:1-20, fulfills the prophecies concerning the promised Messiah, found in Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 7:14, Jeremiah 31:15, Hosea 11:1, and Micah 5:2. Through the fulfillment of these prophecies the meaning of Emmanuel is truly understood, for Jesus, the Son of God, became man. This same meaning is implied by John as he writes concerning the incarnation of Christ in John 1:14, for “the Word [Jesus Christ] was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”⁴⁸ The term incarnation simply means,

The act whereby the eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, without ceasing to be what he is, God the Son, took into union with himself what he before that

⁴⁸ John 1:14, KJV.

act did not possess, a human nature, “and so [He] was and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever” (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 21).⁴⁹

Based on these two passages the disciple-maker is Jesus, the Son of God, who lives among his creation as a man, but still fully God.

The command to make disciples is given to the believer in The Great Commission, in Matthew 28:18-20. This command is grounded in the authority of discipleship, which is that Jesus is the Son of God. Based on the deity of Jesus, the authority is given to make disciples. Thus, to become a disciple of Jesus means that one is following the Son of God. This is all the authority that is needed to make disciples of Christ.

The Savior of The World

To understand the Disciple-Maker, the title “Jesus Christ” must be defined. The first term to define is Christ, *Christou*. The meaning of this term is defined by the understanding of “Emmanuel,” God with us, for Christ means the “Anointed One” or “Promised One.”⁵⁰ The second term to define is Jesus. The meaning of this name is “Savior; He will save.” The Greek term for Jesus is *Iesoun*, which is the same name as the Hebrew term *yasha*, or Joshua. The Hebrew term *yasha*, means “Jehovah is salvation. He is the Savior. The idea is that of deliverance, of being saved from terrible disaster that leads to perishing as seen in John 3:16, Romans 8:3, Galatians 1:4, Hebrews 2:14-18, and Hebrews 7:25.⁵¹ With this Old Testament understanding of the term Messiah or Christ and the prophecies concerning Him, the Jewish

⁴⁹ R. L. Reymond. “Incarnation.” *Evangelical Dictionary Of Theology*. 2nd Ed. (Walter Elwell. Gen. Editor). {Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001}: 601.

⁵⁰ William Mounce. *Mounce’s Complete Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*., 109.

⁵¹ Alpha-Omega Ministries. *Practical Word Studies In The New Testament*. Vol. 1. {Chattanooga, TN: Leadership Ministries Worldwide, 1998}: 1167.

people of the Intertestamental Period were looking for a Savior to follow.⁵² They were looking for a Savior who would lead them politically and militarily out of the hands of the Romans. However, many were not looking for the type of Savior with the mission that Jesus came to fulfill in Luke 4:16-21, which is “The Great Mission.”

To further understanding the meaning of the term Emmanuel, it is important to discover the meaning of Jesus as Savior. It is the fact that Jesus is the Savior, “for he shall save his people from their sins,” that will bring to fulfillment the meaning of the term “Emmanuel.”⁵³ It is only when an individual experiences salvation that Jesus dwells within the heart of that individual. This individual then becomes a born-again believer in Jesus Christ, according to teachings found in John 3:5-8, Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:17-24, and Colossians 3:1-10. To be born-again is taught in the teaching of Regeneration or Justification. It is at this point within a believer’s life that change or transformation takes place, because of the redemptive work of Christ found in Matthew 26:1-28:15, Mark 14:1-16:8, Luke 22:1-24:12, and John 18:1-20:18. Through his redemptive work he is the Savior of the World, for the Son of God dwelt among man to save them from their sins.

It is based on the mission of Christ to save the world that true discipleship is accomplished. The mission of Christ should be the mission of the church and each believer. To be a disciple of Christ is to pursue the same mission that Christ pursued. To be a disciple of Christ means that an individual is following the Savior of the world and is seeking to present him to the lost and dying world.

⁵² Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming Messiah are found in the following Old Testament passages, (Ex. 12:1-46; 24:8; Num. 21:8-9; Deut. 21:23; 2 Sam. 7:14; 1 Chron. 17:13; Ps. 2:7; 22:15; 40:6-8; 69:21; 110:1; 118:26; Is. 4:2; 9:7; 11:10; 28:16; 40:1-5; 53:1-12; 55:3; Jer. 23:5-6; Mic. 5:5; Zech. 9:9; 12:10; 13:7; Mal. 3:1).

⁵³ R. T. France. *Matthew*. The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries., 79.

The Servant

Throughout the New Testament the idea of serving is presented as a characteristic of Christ and those that follow him. The term serve is understood in the Greek verb *diakoneo*, which means to serve or wait on tables.⁵⁴ To serve also carries the idea of Christ's sacrificial service, for he stated, "Even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."⁵⁵ It is throughout the life of Christ that acts of service are seen in his daily living and death.

There are many examples of service throughout the Gospels, however, only a few will be addressed. The first act of service that Jesus rendered was at a wedding in Cana of Galilee, in John 2:1-11. It is here that he provides the entire wedding party with the best wine of the evening. Though the host was unprepared for the amount of guests, Jesus performed a miracle by turning the water into wine. This act of service made the host of the wedding shine as a star in the eyes of his guests.

There are many examples of Christ, in his compassion, healing those that were sick and possessed of devils. For example, look at select passages in Mark's Gospel.⁵⁶ There are accounts like the feeding of the five thousand, which are found in Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-22, and John 6:1-15, that speak of Jesus serving the people by blessing them with physical food. Also there is the account of Jesus washing the feet of his Disciples in John 13:1-17, where he teaches the very act of being a servant. The act of washing one's feet was seen by the ancient world as the position of a slave. Within the Jewish world it was often the place of a Gentile

⁵⁴ William Mounce. *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words.*, 634.

⁵⁵ Matthew 28:20, KJV.

⁵⁶ Select passage of Christ's compassion found in Mark's Gospel are: (Mark 1:21-45; 2:1-12; 3:1-6; 5:1-43; 6:53-56; 7:24-37; 8:22-30; 9:14-32; 10:46-52).

slave, for it was considered the lowest of positions. When Jesus began to wash the Disciples' feet, he was presenting the very concept of emptying oneself of pride and becoming humble before others.⁵⁷ Jesus was the leader, but he was the servant to those he led. People followed him because he cared for the people and loved them. Thus, "Christ's life of service becomes the norm for the life of disciples as they serve both Christ and others in humility, as taught in Luke 12:37."⁵⁸ Through these acts of service and his ultimate act of sacrifice, Jesus is the servant to mankind.

Jesus had to become the servant before he would minister to the needs of lost humanity. Jesus had to humble himself before men, by being obedient unto the Father, in order to accomplish his mission of saving the world. "The servant-work was essential if the needs of sinners were to be met."⁵⁹ Jesus never sought to promote self, but to build, strengthen, restore, and establish others. Jesus was a servant, which was the means of his discipleship process. Wilkes gives seven principles to leading like Jesus, which are shown below.

The key to being a disciple-maker is to be a servant. It is through servant leadership that Jesus led the Disciples for three years. He taught them by being a servant, not talking about service. He became the example of leadership. He became the hands of God to the hurting, dying, and needy. Jesus made disciples through the means of servanthood. Through the same means leaders today can become disciple-makers like Christ.

⁵⁷ Gerald Borchert. *John 12-21*. The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture. {Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2002}: 79.

⁵⁸ William Mounce. *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words.*, 634.

⁵⁹ Dwight Pentecost. *Design For Discipleship: Discovering God's Blueprint for the Christian Life.*, 89.

Seven Principles Of Leading Like Jesus
Jesus humbled himself and allowed God to exalt him.
Jesus followed his Father's will rather than sought a position.
Jesus defined greatness as being a servant and being first as becoming a slave.
Jesus risked serving others because he trusted that he was God's Son.
Jesus left his place at the head table to serve the needs of others.
Jesus shared responsibility and authority with those he called to lead.
Jesus built a team to carry out a worldwide vision

Figure 1. Seven Principles Of Leading Like Jesus taken from, Gene Wilkes. *Jesus On Leadership: Timeless Wisdom On Servant Leadership*.⁶⁰

The Good Shepherd

In John 10:1-21, the metaphor of Jesus being the Good Shepherd is used to present the love and care that Jesus has for his people. In Palestine the shepherd was a very important individual. He was the caretaker for the sheep or flock. He led the flock rather than driving or forcing the flock. He fed the flock by leading them to green pastures. He protected the flock from harm and predators. The shepherd was an important position in the land of Israel.

This position in the Old Testament became a symbol of the spiritual leaders of Israel. The spiritual leaders would be “feeders” and “leaders” of God's people.⁶¹ In the prophetic book of Ezekiel, there is found a prophecy concerning the time when God would become their shepherd, for the spiritual shepherds of the day had failed in their duty to feed and lead the people for God. In Ezekiel 34:7-10 the judgment of God is pronounced against the shepherds that have allowed God's people to be a prey to the wild beast and have not fed them, but instead fed themselves. Also in Zechariah 10-11, the analogy of the spiritual leaders as a shepherd is addressed. With the

⁶⁰ Gene Wilkes. *Jesus On Leadership: Timeless Wisdom On Servant Leadership*. {Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1998}: 11-12.

⁶¹ Alfred Edersheim. *The Life And Times Of Jesus The Messiah: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*. {Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993}: 605.

Old Testament understanding of a spiritual leader, the New Testament continues with this same symbolic representation of the position of a shepherd.

In the Old Testament the most eye opening passage concerning a shepherd is found in Psalm 23. Within this Psalm, the Psalter displays God the Father as the Shepherd of Israel. This Psalm teaches that the Shepherd of Israel will lead, feed, and protect his people. Within this Psalm the psalmist's trust and confidence in the Shepherd of Israel is clearly seen, for the goodness of God is praised.⁶²

In the New Testament the most eye opening passage concerning a shepherd is found in John 10:1-21. Within this analogy, Jesus is seen as the Good Shepherd who leads, feeds, and protects his sheep. It is within this passage that the perfect picture of a pastor is painted. The shepherd would protect the door way from outside predators. The shepherd would call out his own sheep. The shepherd would walk before the sheep to lead them.⁶³ The Good Shepherd would love and care for his sheep in such a way that he would "lay down [His] life for the sheep."⁶⁴ It is in the crowning event of Jesus' life, his death and resurrection, that true love and care for the sheep was realized, but he loved and cared for the sheep long before Calvary became a reality. Jesus was, is, and always will be, the Good Shepherd. It is for this reason that he is followed, for he is still calling out to his sheep today.

The followers of Christ loved him. They desired to be near him. They wanted to hear him and learn from his wisdom. Jesus was sought by his followers because of his approach to discipleship. Jesus approached his followers as a caring and loving shepherd. The people knew

⁶² Willem VanGemeren, Allen Ross, Stafford Wright, & Dennis Kinlaw. *Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, And Song of Songs*. The Expositor's Bible Commentary: With The New International Version. {Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991}: 214.

⁶³ Leon Morris. *The Gospel According To John*. The New International Commentary On The New Testament. Revised. {Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995}: 445-447.

⁶⁴ John 10:15, KJV.

him, loved him, and followed him because of his leading, feeding, and protecting approach.

Biblical discipleship follows this same principle.

The Great Teacher

In Matthew 4:23 Jesus is spoken of as a teacher, for it states, “And Jesus went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom.”⁶⁵ This verse along with others, in Matthew 9:35 and Matthew 21:23, points to the idea of Jesus being a great teacher. It is even stated within the Gospels that he was called, “Rabbi” or “Rabboni,” in the following passages: Matthew 23:7-8, John 1:38, John 1:49, John 3:2, John 3:26, and John 6:25, which means “A Teacher” or “Master.”⁶⁶ Throughout the ministry of Jesus, he was addressed by those that followed him as “Master” or “Teacher,” which suggested that teaching was part of Christ’s mission and purpose.⁶⁷ In Matthew’s Gospel chapters five, six, and seven address the famous lecture series, known as “The Sermon On The Mount.” This sermon by Christ displays the teachings of Christ all in one setting. The teachings of Christ are practical, but life transforming if understood and practiced. John Stott makes the point that this sermon can be summed up in two words, “Christian counterculture.” The reason for summing up this sermon this way is that the entire sermon deals with the theme of the Word of God, which is to call God’s Children to live holy and different lives than the culture around them.⁶⁸ The purpose and

⁶⁵ Matthew 4:23, KJV.

⁶⁶ William Mounce. *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words.*, 709.

⁶⁷ Jesus is addressed as the “Master” or “Teacher” in the following passages: (Mk. 4:38; 5:35; 9:17; 9:38; 10:17, 20, 35; 12:14, 19, 32; 13:1, 35; 14:14; Lk. 3:12; 6:40; 7:40; 8:49; 10:25; 11:45; 12:13, 25; 18:18; 19:39; 20:21; Jn. 1:38; 3:10; 8:4; 11:28; 13:13, 14; 20:16).

⁶⁸ John Stott. *The Message Of The Sermon On The Mount.* The Bible Speaks Today. {Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978}: 15-17.

mission of Christ thus was seen in his approach as a Great Teacher for he taught the disciples three things.

First, the Great Teacher taught his disciples the truth. The Truth is that which lines up with reality. “Truth matches the facts.” This definition of truth implies that truth is that which can be examined by the facts.⁶⁹ It was this truth that Jesus came to teach his Disciples; that he was the promised Messiah who would save his people from their sins, teach them the truth, and empower them to live holy and different lives from the culture around them. Jesus taught his Disciples as displayed throughout the gospel accounts, but nothing compares to The Sermon On The Mount, Matt 5:1-7:29, as he teaches his followers to live and lead transformed lives. The very teachings of Christ serve as a foundation or structure for living. As the Great Teacher, Jesus taught the truth, which is “Formation.” Formation is the first step of biblical discipleship for it develops a foundation and structure for the continual process of spiritual growth and development. As a Great Teacher who taught the truth, Jesus was preparing the Disciples for a lifetime of spiritual growth and development.

Second, the Great Teacher taught his disciples how to get alone and pray. Throughout the ministry of Jesus there are accounts of Jesus getting alone to pray and be ministered unto by God the Father in Matthew 4:1-11, Matthew 14:23, Luke 9:18, and John 6:15. It is examples like this that taught the Disciples how to communicate with God the Father personally. Also he taught them to pray as he did in Matthew 6:9-13, as he taught them to pray “The Lord’s Prayer.” Through praying such a prayer as “The Lord’s Prayer,” or any other prayer on a routine basis, there is something that takes place. This something that takes place is nothing other than communion with God. Douglas Small states that there are three categories of prayer, which are

⁶⁹ Norman Geisler. *Reasons For Belief: Easy-to-Understand Answers to Ten Essential Questions*. {Minneapolis,MN: Bethany House, 2013}: 16-17.

communion, petition, and intercession. He teaches that prayer is most importantly communion, for “the heart of prayer is communion with God.”⁷⁰ It is through communion with God that the overall purpose of prayer is achieved.

Elmer Towns teaches that the overall purpose of prayer is to establish and maintain a relationship with the Almighty. He states, “For when our relationship with God deepens and becomes a part of our everyday life, we begin to be transformed by God and become more like His Son, Jesus Christ. Life-changing prayer lies at the foundation of our prayer relationship with God.”⁷¹ When Jesus taught his Disciples to pray, he was teaching them an example of being a communicator with God the Father. He was teaching them to follow his example. Ultimately what Jesus was teaching the Disciples was the way to having a transformed life. It is through communication with God that the lives of the Disciples were changed and transformed. Transformation of the inward man was the purpose for which Jesus taught his Disciples to pray and get alone with God personally.

Third, the Great Teacher taught his disciples how to care for others. Throughout the gospel accounts there are stories of the many miracles and ministry opportunities that Christ performed during his three year ministry. In Mark 1:40-45, “The Healing of the Leper” is told. Within this story Mark, the author, addresses the reason for which the leprous man was healed. The compassion or loving concern of Christ was the reason for his healing. Throughout the ministry of Christ the Disciples were exposed to numerous accounts of healings and ministry opportunities where the loving concern and care of Christ was displayed for them to see. As displayed by Christ in healing the leprous man, Jesus applied the concept of being different from

⁷⁰ P. Douglas Small. *Prayer The Heartbeat Of The Church*. {Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 2008}: 17.

⁷¹ Elmer Towns. *How To Pray: When You Don't Know What To Say*. {Ventura, CA: Regal, 2006}: 235.

culture. He touched the unclean leprous man before healing him, while most of society would have healed him first.⁷² Jesus truly cared and taught his Disciples to apply the truth to their own lives, just as he applied to his life. The application of God's Word is that which comes from a truly transformed believer's heart.

After looking at the life of Christ, it becomes very clear that he truly presented the principles and foundation for discipleship. Only because he is the Son of God can he call his Disciples to make disciples, Matthew 28:18-20, in the Great Commission. It is upon this authority that he is able to call believers today to discipleship. It is the truth that Jesus is the Savior of the world that he can commission his disciples to make other disciples. In the Great Mission, Luke 4:18-19, the Lord, Jesus Christ presented his mission to save the world and gave his followers the mission for their lives as well. The mission for the follower of Christ is to point others to him. The means by which Christ called his followers to make disciples is first displayed as a servant. Jesus came to serve and not be served himself. In order to make disciples for Christ the believer must learn to serve others. The approach to making disciples was for Jesus the leader to be the shepherd of the sheep. Thus he led, fed, and protected the Disciples. The pastors and leaders of the church today must follow this same approach to leadership. Finally, the teachings of Christ must be followed by the believers today. Jesus taught his disciples in three ways, through formation, transformation, and application. The biblical approach to discipleship is to follow the example of Christ. In the next section the approach of the Disciples themselves will be studied.

⁷² Rodney L. Cooper. *Mark*. The Holman New Testament Commentary. {Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2000}: 16.

The Disciples

The Disciples of Christ were twelve men that Jesus called to follow him. He called the first two disciples, Simon and Andrew, and called them to follow him “and I will make you to become fishers of men.”⁷³ This was the calling to all the Disciples. It was a calling to follow Jesus and become fishers of men. The goal for the disciple was to become like Jesus. The objective to achieving that goal was to teach the Word of God, be changed by the Word of God, and live by the Word of God. It was the Disciples’ mission to make more disciples for Christ throughout their lives and ministry. This section will look at a principle that the Disciples of Christ can teach the church and its leaders today. This principle is the purpose of discipleship.

The Purpose of Discipleship Displayed By The Disciples

The purpose of discipleship is important for the church and leaders to fully understand today. The purpose of discipleship gives the reason for both becoming and making disciples. If there is no purpose, then there is no reason for becoming a disciple. The purpose of discipleship displayed by the Disciples is fourfold, which states, discipleship is the process of accepting the call to follow Christ in order to share the good news to others, by being willingly obedient in following Christ and being a servant to all. This purpose gives meaning to the whole process of discipleship. Looking at these four distinct elements of this purpose gives clarity for biblical discipleship, which is formation, transformation, and application.

The first element is to accept the call to follow Christ as spoken of in Matt. 11:28-30, which speaks of coming to Christ for rest. In order for an individual to receive this rest or salvation they must first come to Christ. This means that the individual must accept the call of Christ to receive salvation. Man must play their part in salvation, which is to come humbly to Christ in faith. Coming to Christ means “To come to believe to the point of submitting to His

⁷³ Mark 1:17, KJV.

lordship.”⁷⁴ To accept the call to follow Christ is the initial step in becoming a disciple of Christ and is the ultimate goal for which each disciple seeks to see others take within their lives. Thus, the overall purpose of discipleship is to see others accept the call to follow Christ.

The second element is to share the good news to others, which is commanded in the Great Commission, Matthew 28:18-20. This element within the purpose of discipleship speaks to the message that the disciple of Christ is to teach or share. The message that Christ taught the Disciples, was one of good news. The term “Gospel” is often used to speak of this message. The Greek term *euangelion* is translated “Gospel” and means the good news.⁷⁵ The message of good news that both Christ and the Disciples taught is that the Kingdom of God was near to all who would repent and believe, found in Mark 1:15.

This was the same message that was preached by the twelve Disciples of Christ and all of his followers. The Apostle Peter preached that Jesus has been crucified, but “This Jesus hath God raised up...[and] God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”⁷⁶ The Apostle Paul preached, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”⁷⁷ It was this message that Jesus built his Church upon and it is the same message that the Disciple of Christ preached to build up the Church. It is the same message that leaders today must preach and teach in order to continue the building and edifying of the church spoken of by Paul, in Ephesians 4:11-16. The purpose of discipleship is to accept the call to follow Jesus in order to share (teach, preach, testify, etc.) the

⁷⁴ John MacArthur. *Matthew 8-15*. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary., 274.

⁷⁵ William Mounce. Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words., 302.

⁷⁶ Acts 2:32-36, KJV.

⁷⁷ Romans 1:16, KJV.

good news of Christ to others. To share the good news is to follow the discipleship process of formation, which is to develop others through God's Word.

The third element of purpose is to be willingly obedient in following Christ, as taught in Luke 9:23. It is within this passage that Jesus states, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."⁷⁸ These words speak to the very way of life for a true disciple of Christ. In the book *The Cost of Discipleship* this very concept is spoken of concerning grace and discipleship.

If any man would come after me, let him deny himself." The disciple must say to himself the same words Peter said of Christ when he denied him: "I know not this man." Self-denial is never just a series of isolated acts of mortification or asceticism. It is not suicide, for there is an element of self-will even in that. To deny oneself is to be aware only of Christ and no more of self, to see only him who goes before and no more the road which is too hard for us. Once more, all that self-denial can say is "He leads the way, Keep close to Him." "...and to take up his cross." Jesus has graciously prepared the way for this word by speaking first of self-denial. Only when we have become completely oblivious of self are we ready to bear the cross for his sake.... To endure the cross is not a tragedy; it is the suffering which is the fruit of an exclusive allegiance to Jesus Christ. When it comes, it is not an accident, but a necessity.⁷⁹

It is in the concept of self-denial that willing obedience must be practiced by the disciple of Christ. To deny self is not an easy task. Much has been written concerning this point, but one thing is consistent. To deny oneself is costly. The purpose of discipleship is one that will cost an individual everything that this world holds to be important. The disciple must be willing to say "I know not this man," which is none other than them self. It is only then that the cross can be truly carried in a manner that bears fruit. The purpose of discipleship is to be willingly obedient in following Christ. For the disciples to be willingly obedient in following Christ it will cost them everything, but their lives were fruitful for the purpose of making disciples for Christ.

⁷⁸ Luke 9:23, KJV.

⁷⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer. *The Cost Of Discipleship*. {New York, NY: Touchstone, 1959}: 88.

The Disciples of Christ experience a transformation in their lives that caused a denying Peter and all the disciples to follow Jesus to their own deaths. The only things that could transform their lives in such a way were the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Three things happened in their lives. First, they begin to see the love of God, which lead them to a deeper love for God, in First John 4:7-21. Second, they had a determined will to follow Jesus after the Resurrection of Christ. Third, they received a dynamic power in Acts 1:8 and Acts 2:1-4. This transformational experience in their lives led to the following deaths of his Disciples.

The Deaths Of Christ's Disciples
Three disciples that were crucified (Peter, Andrew and Simon).
A disciple that was murdered with a sword (Matthew).
A disciple that was beheaded (James).
A disciple that was murdered by arrows (Thaddaeus).
A disciple that was killed with a spear (Thomas).
A disciple that was killed by being whipped to death (Bartholomew).
A disciple that was killed by both being stoned and beheaded.

Figure 2. The Deaths Of Christ's Disciples is adopted from, Norman L. Geisler. *Reasons For Belief: Easy-to-Understand Answers to Ten Essential Questions*.⁸⁰

After looking at the price that each of these Disciples paid, the meaning of being willingly obedient in following Christ comes to light. In order to be a disciple of Christ a careful observation of one's self must be made. A decision must be made. The purpose of discipleship is to be willingly obedient in following Christ no matter the cost.

The fourth element is to be a servant to all based on the example of Christ in John 13:2-16. It is within this passage that Jesus washes the feet of the disciples. As discussed earlier, this act of service showed that Jesus was the leader, but he served those to whom he led. The disciples displayed this same type of ministry throughout the book of Acts, especially in the way

⁸⁰ Norman L. Geisler. *Reasons For Belief: Easy-to-Understand Answers to Ten Essential Questions*., 165.

that they cared one-for-another in Acts 2:44-46 and Acts 4:32-37. By being a servant to others, the disciples displayed the purpose of discipleship, which is to be a servant to all. By being a servant to all people, the Disciples of Christ were applying the Word of God to their lives, thus teaching by example. It is for the purpose of accepting the call to follow Christ in order to share the good news to others, by being willingly obedient in following Christ and being a servant to all that the Disciples lived their lives to fulfill their calling in life, Matt. 28:18-20. With this calling in mind the Apostle Paul led those he was called to minister to toward Christ by being an imitator of Christ.

The Apostle Paul

In all of Christendom, outside of Christ, there is no other person that has influenced the Christian faith more than the Apostle Paul. Paul is first mentioned in Acts 7:58; 8:1-3 where he is known as Saul, who persecuted the Christian Church. However, it was on his way to persecute the Christians in the city of Damascus that Saul was converted and his name was changed to Paul in Acts 9:1-31. This devout Pharisee would soon become as sincere for sharing the message of Christ as he was earlier in persecuting the followers of Christ. Throughout his life and ministry there is one thing that stands out, which is his teaching on “Following him, as he follows Christ,” which can be found in First Corinthians 4:16, First Corinthians 11:1, Ephesians 5:1, First Thessalonians 1:6, First Thessalonians 2:14, Hebrews 6:12, and Hebrews 13:7. It is through this teaching that the principle of following the leader is addressed.

The Principle Of Following The Leader

The process of discipleship is to make disciples who can make disciples. For the Disciples of Christ there was the eye witness account of following Christ, but for those that would follow, “What were they to do?” Paul instructed the churches that he ministered unto, to

follow him as he follows Christ. He was serving as a Christ-like example before the people. In the Great Commission, Matthew 28:18-20, the Disciples of Christ were instructed to go out and teach by example for it states, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...”⁸¹ It is Paul’s belief that as an under-shepherd he was to live a life that pointed others toward Christ. This is reflected in his teachings for he states, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” and as he writes to the Thessalonians saying, “And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord.”⁸²

In the process of making disciples of others Paul taught them to follow his life and character. Pratt states, “Paul urged his readers to imitate him, just as children are instructed to follow the example of their fathers.”⁸³ As a spiritual father Paul was telling those that trusted him as a spiritual leader to follow his example of being like Christ. Paul serves as an example for all under-shepherds and spiritual leaders within the church today. The spiritual leader should live and practice the precepts of the Christian faith in such a manner that encourages the same lifestyle and practice of God’s Word within the lives of those that are close to them.⁸⁴ For those that were close to Paul there were many characteristics that would have been evident within his life. MacArthur has listed twenty-six characteristic traits that the Apostle Paul possessed. These traits are shown below.

These characteristics of the Apostle Paul were characteristics that he felt lined up with the character of Christ. For Paul taught his followers to follow him as he followed Jesus. The

⁸¹ Matthew 28:20, KJV.

⁸² First Corinthians 11:1 and First Thessalonians 1:6, KJV.

⁸³ Richard Pratt, Jr. *1 & 2 Corinthians*. Holman New Testament Commentary. {Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2000}: 64.

⁸⁴ F.F. Bruce. *The Epistles To The Colossians, To Philemon, And To The Ephesians*. The New International Commentary On The New Testament. {Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984}: 367.

Twenty-Six Characteristic Traits Of Paul
1. A leader is trustworthy.
2. A leader takes the initiative.
3. A leader uses good judgment.
4. A leader speaks with authority.
5. A leader strengthens others.
6. A leader is optimistic and enthusiastic.
7. A leader never compromises the absolutes.
8. A leader focuses on objectives, not obstacles.
9. A leader empowers by example.
10. A leader cultivates loyalty.
11. A leader has empathy for others.
12. A leader keeps a clear conscience.
13. A leader is definite and decisive.
14. A leader knows when to change his mind.
15. A leader does not abuse his authority.
16. A leader doesn't abdicate his role in the face of opposition.
17. A leader is sure of his calling.
18. A leader knows his own limitations.
19. A leader is resilient.
20. A leader is passionate.
21. A leader is courageous.
22. A leader is discerning.
23. A leader is disciplined.
24. A leader is energetic.
25. A leader knows how to delegate.
26. A leader is Christlike.

Figure 3. Twenty-Six Characteristic Traits of Paul is taken from, John MacArthur. *Called To Lead: Twenty-Six Leadership Lessons From The Life Of The Apostle Paul*.⁸⁵

principle of following the leader is a practical principle to discipleship. The under-shepherd or pastor within a local church is responsible to live a life that imitates the character of Christ, just as Paul imitated the character of Christ. Each spiritual father or pastor should be able to say with surety, "Follow Me, as I follow Christ." Now that the biblical history of discipleship has been

⁸⁵ John MacArthur. *Called To Lead: Twenty-Six Leadership Lessons From The Life Of The Apostle Paul*. {Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004}: 209.

studied, it is time to look at a brief summary of the history of discipleship throughout church history.

Discipleship Throughout Church History

In this section the process of discipleship throughout the history of the church will be studied. This section doesn't serve as an exhausted study of discipleship throughout church history, but a brief history. This section will look at five different historical times within church history. For each of the five historical time periods, the author will give a brief summary and observation of discipleship from the perspective of biblical discipleship as addressed in the previous section. The journey back in history begins now.

Discipleship In The Early Church

In the first century the leaders within the church were the eye witnesses to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. These eye witnesses followed the process of discipleship that Jesus used in making them to be followers of him. The Disciples of Christ followed the secrets to personal transformation that was taught by Christ, which if followed will transform a church and culture. This process of following Jesus is described by Hull in five steps: (1) A disciple submits to a leader who teaches him to follow Jesus, (2) A disciple learns Jesus' words, (3) A disciple learns Jesus' way of doing ministry, (4) A disciple imitates Jesus' life and character, and (4) A disciple finds and teaches disciples to follow Jesus.⁸⁶ This process of following Jesus still works today if pastors and church leaders will follow the example given to the first century disciples by Jesus Christ, our Lord. As described earlier, there are three things that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, did for the sheep. Jesus led the sheep, fed the sheep, and protected the sheep. This same approach to discipleship was used by the Disciples as they served as the under-shepherds of the churches they were called to serve.

⁸⁶ Bill Hull. *Jesus Christ Disciplemaker*. {Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004}: 15-21.

The Disciples Led The Early Church

The Disciples of Christ led the early church as eye witnesses to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They led the church through the formation of the Word of God, the transformation of the Word, and the application of the Word. The Disciples led the church toward spiritual maturity or discipleship. There are two significant ways in which the Disciples led the church toward spiritual maturity. First, the Disciples led individuals to the saving message of Jesus Christ. By sharing the message throughout the known world, the Disciples of Christ “turned the world upside down.”⁸⁷ Second, the Disciples led individuals toward maturity and development of the truth. The Disciples desired to see individuals grow spiritually as taught in Hebrews 5:11-14 and First Peter 2:2. The Disciples led the early church in such a way that the record states, “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”⁸⁸

The Disciples Fed The Early Church

The Disciples of Christ were fed by Christ for three years, as they walked with him, but after the death and resurrection of Christ, they received the Great Commission, which is found in Matthew 28:18-20. The commission commanded them to do one thing: “Go.” Go out and teach the Word. Go out and make disciples. Go out and teach them by example. The very command was to “Go.” That is exactly what each of the Disciples did with their lives. They went throughout the entire known world of their day sharing the good news of the Kingdom of God. The Disciples of Christ made disciples by feeding them the Word of God and by serving the people. They followed the example of Jesus, the Disciple Maker. As a shepherd, Jesus fed the

⁸⁷ Acts 17:6, KJV.

⁸⁸ Acts 2:47b, KJV.

disciples. As under-shepherds the Disciples taught the Word of God, which was their primary responsibility. It is the spiritual nourishment that the flock (church) has to have to survive.⁸⁹

The Disciples Protected The Early Church

The Disciples of Christ sought to protect the Church in many ways. With all that was taking place in the first century, there was a clear need for protection within the church. The church was under constant persecution and false teachings. Thus, in order to protect the Church, the Disciples sought to protect the church through three main means. First, the Disciples protected the followers of Christ by teaching them the truth of God's Word, as taught in Acts 2:14-40, Acts 3:11-26, Acts 7:1-53, Acts 8:4-8, Acts 10:34-48, Acts 13:13-41, Acts 22:1-13, Acts 26:1-23, and Acts 28:17-23. Second, the Disciples protected the followers of Christ by praying for them daily, as taught in Acts 2:42, Acts 4:23-31, Romans 1:9, and First Corinthians 1:4-9. Third, the Disciples of Christ protected other disciples by teaching them to test the teaching and preaching of others by examining it according to their teachings of God's Word, as taught in Galatians 1:6-9 and First Timothy 4:1-11. Through the early church the discipleship model followed that of the leader being a shepherd to the church. The next stage of history is seen in the early church fathers.

Discipleship In The Early Church Fathers

To summarize the discipleship process of the early church fathers, it could be said that they served as under-shepherds of their flock. They sought to lead by example. They sought to make disciples of Christ by leading, feeding, and protecting the sheep. They followed the biblical steps of discipleship, which are formation, transformation, and application. There are two things

⁸⁹ Michael Wilder & Timothy Jones. "Life As A Shepherd Leader." Southern Seminary. Fall 2011. Vol. 79, No. 4. 38.

that stand out concerning the discipleship process of the early church fathers. They wrote letters to their followers and they lived a life in obedience to Christ.

The Teachings and Writings Were A Means of Discipleship

It is clear that the early church fathers wrote letters to churches and believers personally. These writings all have one central issue among them. The issue that was facing the Christian Church more than anything else was persecution.⁹⁰ There are the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, Clement of Rome, Bishop Polycarp, Hermas, and others. However, the issue of concern was ministering to hurting people. It is clear that the early church fathers fed the people the Word of God and were encouraging them to continue in the faith. This form of discipleship is seen as a under-shepherd tending to his flock by caring for them as a leader, feeder, and protector.

The Example Of Obedience Was A Means of Discipleship

When looking at the lives of the early church fathers, it is clear they were obedient to the call on their lives, a call to be followers of Jesus Christ. It is true that church fathers like Ignatius of Antioch and Bishop Polycarp, who both made great contributions to the cause of Christ by willingly laying down their lives, as did so many during those days.⁹¹ These men made great statements concerning their obedience to Christ. Ignatius of Antioch stated, “Now I begin to be a disciple...Let fire and cross, flocks of beast, broken bones, dismemberment...come upon me, so long as I attain to Jesus Christ”⁹² Also the Bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp, stated, “For eighty-six years I have served him, and he has done me no evil. How could I curse my king, who saved

⁹⁰ Justo Gonzalez. *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*. {San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1984}: 67.

⁹¹ Justo Gonzalez. *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*., 41-45.

⁹² J. I Packer. *131 Christians Everyone Should Know*. {Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2000}: 358.

me?”⁹³ These men and others painted the picture of discipleship in the era of the early church fathers. Now it is time to look at discipleship in the Roman Catholic Church.

Discipleship In The Roman Catholic Church

The developments that would lead to the Roman Catholic Church were truly placed in order by the rule of one man, Constantine. This Roman emperor would fight under the Supreme God, Jesus Christ, but would still function as the High Priest of paganism within the Roman Empire. However, he would command his soldiers to worship the Supreme God, who the Christians worship on the first day of the week. It was in the year 325 that Constantine would call the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea.⁹⁴ It was here that Creed of Caesarea was taken as the basis for the adopted “Creed of Nicaea in 325, which reads.

We believe on God the Father All-sovereign, maker of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one in substance with the Father, through whom all things were made, things in heaven and things on the earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, and became man, suffered, and rose on the third day, ascended in the heavens, is coming to judge living and dead.⁹⁵

With creeds like this and others that would follow it, an official theology was developing. This official theology would eventually lead to the development of the Roman Catholic Church. It was through the Roman Catholic Church that discipleship took a new meaning. This new meaning would change the Christian faith for centuries to come. There are three elements that changed the biblical approach to discipleship.

⁹³ Justo Gonzalez. *The Story Of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation.*, 44.

⁹⁴ Justo Gonzalez. *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation.*, 123.

⁹⁵ Henry Bettenson & Chris Maunder. *Documents Of The Christian Church*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University, 1999}: 27.

First, the obedience to Christ seen in both the Disciples of Christ and the Early Church Fathers was no longer required. The persecution of the Church was now over. The Church had become one with the state. The high cost of following Christ was now over, if you followed the Church's program.

Second, the absolutes of God's Word would be altered throughout the centuries. This would lead to compromise and heresies within the church. The teachings of God's Word would only be given to men and women in the Latin language, no matter where the church was located. This would lead to a time in Christian History and World History known as the Dark Ages. It was a time of political darkness, but more importantly, spiritual darkness. During this time there was very little in the way of discipleship or spiritual development outside of the Priest and Monks.

Third, the Church became obsessed with sacraments. The Roman Catholic Church believes that it is through the seven sacraments that God's grace is channeled into the believer's life. These seven sacraments are: baptism, confirmation, the Mass, holy orders, penance, matrimony, and extreme unction.⁹⁶ It is through this style of programs and beliefs that the Church and its members lost their close relationship to the church leaders and with Christ.

It was based on these three elements of the Roman Catholic Church that individuals begin calling for a reformation of the Church. There were leaders like John Wycliffe and John Huss who called for such reformation and return to God's Word. It was Wycliffe that called for the Scriptures to take their rightful place above the Pope. It was he who spoke against heresies such as transubstantiation and private confession. He was the first to begin an English translation of

⁹⁶ H.M. Carson. "Roman Catholicism." *The New International Dictionary Of the Christian Church*. {Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974}:854.

the Holy Scriptures.⁹⁷ It was John Huss who would stand up for the Scriptures and give his life. However, it would be around a century later that Martin Luther would read the writings of Huss and eventually write his own Ninety-Five Theses, which would spark a reformation that would impact the entire world and put biblical discipleship back on a right path.

Discipleship After the Reformation

The date is October 31, 1517 in Wittenberg, Germany. Martin Luther nails his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the Church. It is the official start of the Protestant Reformation.⁹⁸ The theme or overall thought is that of the doctrine of justification. A teaching that states the “just shall live by faith.”⁹⁹ From this one event the entire history, theology, and approach of the church changed. No longer were the church and the people in spiritual darkness. The world was moving into an age of reason and growth. However, at the same time, the church was experiencing an age of growth. It was during this time in history that the church and its leaders begin to understand the steps of biblical discipleship, which are formation, transformation, and application.

During the years that followed the Reformation, there are three things that have taken place within the Church. First, there was a returning to God’s Word. By returning to God’s Word and placing it into the language and hands of the people, a formation or development of God’s Word was firmly established during the years that followed the Reformation. This was clearly seen through the leadership and teaching of men like Martin Luther, John Calvin, Jacob

⁹⁷ J.I. Packer. *131 Christians Everyone Should Know.*, 212-213.

⁹⁸ Justo Gonzalez. *The Story Of Christianity: The Reformation to the Present Day.* {San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1985}: 22.

⁹⁹ Romans 1:17, KJV.

Arminius, Menno Simons, John Wesley, and others. These men sought to restore the Word of God and a firm theological foundation within the hearts and minds of believers.

Second, there was the return to calling individuals to have a transformational experience with God. Martin Luther was sure that there had to be a transformational experience in the believer's life, which only took place through faith in God's grace. He states,

At last meditating day and night, by the mercy of God, I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that through which the righteous live by a gift of God, namely by faith. Here I felt as if I were entirely born again and had entered paradise itself through the gates that had been flung open.¹⁰⁰

It is this message and that which many teachers and preachers taught that must take place within the believer's life. It is only when transformation takes place within the heart and life that an individual can truly be a disciple of Christ. Men like George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Finney, D. L. Moody, and others preached this message throughout the world. The second step to biblical discipleship was being restored.

Third, the application of the Word of God was taking place. No longer was the church taking long Crusades to gain property and wealth, but long journeys were being taken to minister to the poor and lost throughout the world. Missionaries were being sent like William Carey, David Livingstone, and Hudson Taylor. These men willingly obeyed Christ and faced difficult days for the cause of Christ. They followed the Great Commission, found in Matthew 28:18-20. These men and others like them applied the Word of God to their lives and led by example.

Through the centuries that have followed the Reformation there has been great progress in the process of discipleship. However, the process has not always been perfect. In the next section further development and growth toward biblical discipleship will be addressed as the twentieth century is looked at specifically.

¹⁰⁰ J.I. Packer. *131 Christians Everyone Should Know.*, 33.

Discipleship In The 20th Century

The process of discipleship was different during the twentieth century than in the centuries prior. The Church experienced four key elements that determined the discipleship process of the twentieth century. These key elements caused the church to change, divide, and grow. It is through a careful observation of the twentieth century church that the author will seek to find the mindset of the American Church regarding discipleship.

The first element is the acceptance of the fundamentals of the faith. During the late 1800's and throughout the 1920's there was a rise in concern for the faith. With the rise of modernism and philosophies contrary to Christian thought, it was time to unite the Christians regarding a common belief. This drive or concern became known as fundamentalism. The documents that were published were known as the Fundamentals, which focused on a widespread defense of the Christian Faith.¹⁰¹ This element of the twentieth century paved the way for devoted men and women of God who would shape the American culture for the next forty to sixty years, spiritual leaders like that of Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, James Robison, and others.¹⁰² This movement plays a vital role in the discipleship process of the twentieth century because it has helped to shape both the spiritual and political aspects of American society. This movement has called to attention the faith in which the Church must stand upon no matter what society may say otherwise. Through this movement the formational approach to discipleship was truly addressed.

The second element is the promotion of the Sunday school. Within the Southern Baptist Church and others, the emphasis on studying the Word of God has been a key to discipleship.

¹⁰¹ George M. Marsden. *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. {New York, NY: Oxford University, 2006}: 119.

¹⁰² George M. Marsden. *Fundamentalism and American Culture*., 237.

The Sunday school departments within many churches became the main source of discipleship and spiritual growth. This was a great tool that was used by God during the twentieth century, for it caused a foundation to be laid within the lives of young children and adults. The formation of God's Word was truly taking place. Many churches adopted this method of discipleship and it is clear that the minds of believers were truly developed and structured through this methodology.

The third element is the church growth movement. This movement focused on the need to make disciples of the masses. The belief that all believers were to make disciples who could make disciples for Christ was an underlining theme. By focusing on this theme, the obsession of mega churches was birthed. Thus, a study of mega churches was birthed. However, this study of larger churches can be seen in a positive light and in a negative light. On the positive side, the church growth movement has given many tips and strategies that other church leaders and churches could follow in making disciples for Christ. However, on the negative side, the church growth movement has caused many pastors to become discouraged by the failure to grow large mega churches. This movement has included all three components of discipleship, but focused mainly on the formation and application sides of discipleship.

The fourth element is the rise of Pentecostalism. During the twentieth century, no other denominations truly grew as those of the Pentecostal belief. It is stated that one in ten people in the world are Pentecostal or charismatic.¹⁰³ The importance of this movement is that a deeper experience with God was the central focus. The idea of being renewed by the Holy Spirit is vital to Pentecostal worship. It is through this concept that discipleship takes a new meaning. The working of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying the believer is important. Through the continual process

¹⁰³ Elmer Towns & Vernon Whaley. *Worship Through The Ages: How the Great Awakenings Shape Evangelical Worship*. {Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2012}: 359.

of sanctification, the believer is becoming more like Christ. This concept speaks of the developmental process of discipleship from a transformational approach.

During the twentieth century there are signs of biblical discipleship. The signs can be found within every denomination, but the problem is that in some churches all three components cannot be found. In some churches there is strong formation. In other churches there is strong formation and application. In other churches there is strong formation and transformation. However, there must be a balance with biblical discipleship. There has to be a balance of the three components, which are formation, transformation, and application. During the next chapter the discipleship approach within the twenty-first century will be observed to see if the problem listed above is still an issue.

Chapter Two

The Church In The Twenty-First Century

Throughout the centuries the church has had issues that presented themselves, but there is an issue within the church today that is sad. This issue is the decline of the church in America. The church in the twenty-first century is declining at a high rate. A country whose churches once sent missionaries to the mission fields of the world has become a mission field itself. This chapter will address the decline in American Churches, but will ultimately look at the leadership of the church and the methods of discipleship that are being used today. This chapter will show the problem and possible solutions to that problem.

The Decline In Churches

The church in America is declining at an alarming rate. The church is losing its influence on the American culture. The church is losing its influence in the home, school, and politics. A nation that once was governed by Judeo-Christian morals is now being controlled by ideas and philosophies which oppose Christianity altogether. The church is not only declining in influence, but it is declining in numbers. Teens and young adults are leaving the church at an alarming rate, for “more than two-thirds of churchgoing young adults drop out between the ages of 18 and 22.”¹⁰⁴ The back doors of the church seem to be wide open and the decline of the church is taking place at a rapid pace. With such a decline there are questions that must be addressed. One question is why is the church declining? Another question is how can this rapid decline be solved? Finally, the question must be asked, who must stand up to address this issue? The next three sections will look at the facts of decline, the reason or decline, and the solutions to decline in attempt to answer these types of questions.

¹⁰⁴ Thom Rainer & Sam Rainer. *Essential Church: Reclaiming A Generation Of Dropouts*. {Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2008}: 3.

The Given Facts of Decline

Over the last few decades the church in America has been declining in membership and weekly attendance. The church is slowly losing its influence on many within the American culture. As mentioned in the introduction, Rainer states, “Eight out of ten of the approximately 400,000 churches in the United States are declining or have plateaued.”¹⁰⁵ This statistic is addressed by many who study the church. When looking at the percentage of actively practicing Christians, there are only eighty-two million or twenty-nine percent of Americans that would be included within this category.¹⁰⁶ With such a small portion of the American population there is no wonder the church is declining. The church is losing ground in the population race. The society and other philosophies are having a great influence on the population, based on the percentages listed above. The church is declining and what can the leaders and church do to fix this problem?

The Given Reasons For Decline

The facts truly support the idea of the church’s decline. There is no denying the facts, but why is the church declining? This is the question that comes to mind. Why? Why is the church losing its influence? Why is the church losing its youth and young adults? Why is the church not growing numerically and even spiritually? This section will not serve as an exclusive answer to the problem, but will look at three specific problems that have caused the decline in American churches. First, this chapter will look at the leadership within the church. The problem of trustworthiness among the leadership and members of the church has become a problem. Second, the limited fellowship with church leaders has become a problem within the church.

¹⁰⁵ Thom Rainer. *Breakout Churches: Discover How To Make The Leap.*, 45.

¹⁰⁶ Alvin Reid. *Radically Unchurched: Who They Are & How To Reach Them.*, 21.

Third, the limited focus on discipleship has become a problem within the church. By looking at these three problems a clear reason for the decline of American churches will be clarified.

Trustworthiness Is a Problem

In a survey conducted by Gallup Poll, the following results were given concerning the institutions that Americans are confident in: 76 percent were confident in the military; 59 percent were confident in the police; 48 percent were confident in the church; 40 percent were confident in the medical system; and 34 percent were confident in public schools. The following question was asked, “Why is confidence in the church third on the list when it should be first?” This question was answered with these words, “This indicates a lack of trust in the mission of the church and the lifestyle of members of the church.”¹⁰⁷ It is facts like this that show a constant decline in the trust people have in the church or the people within the church.

If the trust in the church is declining, there is no wonder why the numbers within American Churches are declining as well. With the lack of character seen in many pastors and church leaders in recent years, there is no wonder this has become a problem for the church. The lifestyle of the believer is important and must be maintained in order to produce trustworthiness. The issue that has developed is the failure of leaders to produce disciples that are trustworthy in everything they say and do. The world today is looking for real Christ-like pastors and Christians. However, for every believer or leader that fails to be trustworthy, it makes it that much harder for the church to overcome this problem.

¹⁰⁷ Cameron Fisher. “Insights and Trends.” *Engage: A Journal For Church of God Leaders*. Winter 2011. Vol. 7 No. 1. p. 53.

Limited Fellowship Is A Problem

In a survey conducted by the Hartford Institute of Religion Research, it was found that 53 percent of churches today have only one service during the weekend.¹⁰⁸ With only one service provided for over half the churches today, is there a problem with the church due to the limited time spent together in worship and fellowship? There are churches that offer small groups instead of a worship service, but is the pastor truly having time to fellowship and make disciples with such a limited time? Could this be contributing to the disconnection that many Americans are having with the Church?

The key to developing strong churches and disciples is found in the key of relationships. It is through the seven stages of making a disciple that Thompson teaches that discipleship takes place within a concentric circle of concern, which is built upon relationships¹⁰⁹ It is hard to develop relationships within the church with limited exposure to other members and the pastor. The pastor of the church is the influential leader in the area of discipleship. Small groups, Bible studies, and other church related activities are great and do produce disciples. However, the relationship between the leader (pastor) and the congregation is hindered by limiting the time and exposure to each other. Many churches have taken this approach to ministry because of size and convenience, but this very approach could be limiting the potential of the under-shepherd being a true disciple maker. This has caused a disconnection with the church. Many have become more connected to the small group rather than to the church. It is the author's opinion that small groups are great for churches, if the leader of the small group is truly prepared to lead the group. However, in many cases this time has become a time of fellowship more than anything else.

¹⁰⁸ Cameron Fisher. "Insights and Trends." *Engage: A Journal For Church of God Leaders*. Winter 2011. Vol. 7 No. 1. p. 19.

¹⁰⁹ Oscar Thompson & Carolyn Thompson. *Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples*. {Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1999}: 20-21.

Limited Focus On Discipleship Is A Problem

One of the main reasons the church is declining today is due to the lack of focus on discipleship within the church. The church has focused on evangelistic programs in an attempt to win individuals to Christ. This idea is great for growing a church numerically, but in the process of growing a church numerically, the church has failed to produce mature Christians. Maturity is the process of growing spiritually. “Growing spiritually is the purpose of the disciplines.”¹¹⁰ The disciplines of the faith are practiced and used by God to transform the believer into the image of Christ. “Godly people are disciplined people.”¹¹¹ The practice of the disciplines is part of the overall process of discipleship. If the disciplines are neglected then true discipleship fails to exist.

In a study that Barna conducted, it was found that not one individual surveyed stated that their goal in life was to be a devoted follower of Christ or to make disciples for Christ.¹¹² With alarming facts like this, there is no wonder the church in America is declining at a rapid pace. The goal of the believer’s life must line up with the purpose for the believer’s life. The purpose of worshiping God is the overall purpose of the believer’s life. With this purpose in mind, the goal of the believer’s life should be to worship God in all they say and do. Thus, to be like Christ would be the ultimate achievement of that goal or purpose. The church in America has to return to the principles of following the Great Commission. The church should not be so concerned about numbers as much as making mature Christians. The church has to bridge the gap between conversion and maturity in Christ, if the church in America is to grow again.

¹¹⁰ Richard Foster. *Celebration Of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth.*, 8.

¹¹¹ Donald Whitney. *Spiritual Disciplines For The Christian LIFE.*, 17.

¹¹² George Barna. *Growing True Disciples: New Strategies For Producing Genuine Followers Of Christ.* {Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook, 2001}: 8.

The Given Solutions For Decline

The problems that are addressed point toward the need for biblical leadership and discipleship. It is through the proper understanding of leadership that the pastors of local churches can begin to change the trends that are leading toward rapid decline within the church. One solution that has been offered is for the pastor to be a leader who is led by Christ.¹¹³ The most important refocusing of the church today is to return to Christ-centeredness or Christ-likeness. The focus of ministry shouldn't be based on the minister, the programs, the music, or entertainment offered. The focus of ministry should be based on the Lord, Jesus Christ. The leader of the church is not the focus of ministry or discipleship. The focus of ministry is to be led by God's Word and the Holy Spirit, toward the fulfillment of spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity is fulfilled when the image of Christ is restored within the believer's life. Romans 8:28-29 teaches that the believer knows that God through his leading is working all things "for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son...."¹¹⁴ It is only when the believers, especially the leaders of the church, follow this principle that churches will overcome the problems addressed.

True leadership must be led by God's Word and the Holy Spirit to become Christ-like or Christ-centered. A Christ led pastor will solve the problems of trustworthiness, fellowship, and discipleship. A Christ led pastor will have different characteristics within his/her life. Like those mentioned in Galatians 5:22-26, which speak of the Fruit of the Spirit. The Fruit of the Spirit abides within the lives of those individuals that follow the leading of the Spirit of God. A lack of

¹¹³ Stephen Macchia. *Becoming A Healthy Church: Ten Traits Of A Vital Ministry*. {Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999}: 123.

¹¹⁴ Romans 8:28-29, KJV.

such characteristics points toward a lack of fruit. Thus, a lack of fruit points toward an individual who fails to be led by the Spirit of God. A lack of God's leadership in the believer's life will cause problems in being trustworthy.

A Christ led pastor will desire fellowship. It was *koinonia* that Christ gave to his Disciples. It was *koinonia* that the Disciples gave to the early church. It is *koinonia* that the pastor must give to his or her church today. The term *koinonia* simply means, "fellowship, communion, participation, sharing."¹¹⁵ It is when a pastor becomes truly led by Christ, that he/she learns a vital aspect of being a leader, which is being with the people.¹¹⁶ A pastor cannot lead without being with the people. When the pastor begins to have true fellowship with the congregation, the problem of limited fellowship will be addressed. Thus, the issue of not influencing the lives of the congregation will be addressed. The process of discipleship requires fellowship with the leader (pastor).

A Christ led pastor will make discipleship a goal for his or her life. The goal of discipleship is to make a disciple. Biblical discipleship is the formation, transformation, and application of the Word of God in the believer's life. Thus, to make biblical discipleship a goal within one's life is to take the Word of God and do two things. First, the leader must develop or equip the believers' lives by teaching and structuring a system of approach that is based on the Word of God. This approach to pastoral leadership is called formation. Second, the leader must practice and provide opportunities of applying the Word of God in ministry. This approach of pastoral leadership is called application. These two approaches to ministry can be taught, developed, and shown to the congregation of believers by the pastor, but the third aspect of discipleship can only take place through the reading of God's Word and the transforming work

¹¹⁵ William Mounce. *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary Of Old & New Testament Words.*, 247.

¹¹⁶ Jeffrey Arnold. *The Big Book On Small Groups*. {Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004}: 18.

of the Holy Spirit. However, the pastor must encourage a personal communion with God, whereby transformation can take place. If the pastor is Christ led he or she should approach discipleship in this manner or approach. When discipleship becomes the goal of the church rather than gaining large numbers the church will begin to grow. A church doesn't grow spiritually by focusing on the number in attendance.

The Leadership (Pastor) Within Churches

It is through biblical leadership and discipleship that the major problem facing the church today could be solved. Not all the problems of decline within the church can be placed on the leader, but the three problems listed above can be placed upon them. Thus, this chapter will look at the need for true biblical leadership and the pastor's responsibility within the church today. This section will look at four different aspects of church leadership, which are the role of leadership, the environment of leadership needed for discipleship, the pastor as a shepherd, and the pastor as a servant-leader.

The Role of Leadership

The role of leadership is important to understand. This understanding of leadership is important for both the leader and those that follow to understand. By having a clear understanding of a leader's responsibility and duty, the process of being a leader becomes easier to practice. As a pastor it is important that he or she understands their role within the local church. The role of a pastor is not that of an over-powering dictator or even a hiding hermit. This section will address what is leadership, for it is influence on others, it is everyone's business, it is an art that must be practiced continually, and it is a science that must be studied continually. It is through this understanding of leadership that the pastor can have a clear understanding of his or her role as a leader.

What Is Leadership?

The question is simple, but the answer is one that carries many definitions. In an attempt to define what leadership is, it is important to look at four points that will define leadership.

Leadership is both an art and science by which everyone can have influence over others. It is important to acknowledge that leadership can be practiced by everyone, but often it is not. Many fail to lead, though they could, if they applied themselves to doing so. This section will teach that leadership is both an art and science that must be practiced and studied throughout one's lifetime.

Leadership Is Influence On Others

A leader is one who shows forth influence on someone or some group for a particular purpose and cause. As Maxwell states, "leadership is influence, nothing more, nothing less."¹¹⁷ No matter what area of influence an individual may be in, influence on others is leadership. As a pastor, there is a great amount of influence over others. The influence can be negative or positive, but it is influence. It is the pastor's responsibility to influence others to pursue a lifestyle of following Jesus. Through the leader's spoken words and more importantly through his/her non-spoken actions, people will be influenced either to follow or forsake the leader.

This concept of leadership points to the importance of a pastor's influence on others. In the area of discipleship, there is no one more important to the church than the pastor. The pastor is the under-shepherd who is leading, feeding, and protecting the sheep or congregation. The approach that the pastor takes to discipleship will ultimately effect the congregation, simply because of the pastor's influence on others.

¹¹⁷ John Maxwell. *Leadership Gold: Lesson's I've Learned From A Lifetime of Leading*. {Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008}: 193.

Leadership Is Everyone's Business

In this vast world it is important to acknowledge that leadership is not just for the executive leaders or high ranking officials within an organization or church. Leadership is for the ordinary man or woman that has an influence on someone or some group. Kouzes and Posner teach that “Leadership is a process ordinary people use when they are bringing forth the best from themselves and others. Leadership is everyone’s business.”¹¹⁸ This principle of leadership shows that leadership is for everyone. There are no little people and big people within the body of Christ when it comes to leadership. Leadership is for everyone who will seek to follow the principles of God’s Word. However, there is one thing that will produce this type of environment within an organization, especially the church. This one thing is a pastor who will equip people to be leaders. This type of equipping is better understood as empowering. The concept of empowering people to lead is seen when a leader (pastor) decides to give his power away rather than holding on to it. When a pastor empowers his congregation to lead, he or she allows them to feel strong, needed, and capable of achieving great tasks for God.¹¹⁹

Leadership Is An Art That Must Be Practiced Continually

Leadership is classified as an art, for the very reason that when leadership is continually practiced by those that lead, it can become a very beautiful masterpiece for all to see. However, it is classified as an art for the very reason that leadership is a set of principles or methods that govern those that practice it. For they that lead, it is an art in that leadership is a set of principles or methods that can be used by any that practice continually.

¹¹⁸ James Kouzes & Barry Posner. *Christian Reflection On The Leadership Challenge*. {San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004}: 2.

¹¹⁹ James Kouzes & Barry Posner. *The Leadership Challenge*. 4th Ed. {San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007}: 21.

In the study of leadership it has been stated, “Leadership is not a constant science; it is a delicate art.” An art that each pastor must continually practice and study if they are to be successful at all stages of their ministry. In the ministry there are constant changes, different people, new environments, new rules, and a need for changing methods. With all the changes of ministry, a leader must be prepared and ready for the changes that life and ministry will bring their way. Many great pastors have failed to be successful, simply because they failed to study leadership and practice it as an art. In order to be a successful disciple-making pastor, this principle of leadership must be fully understood.

Leadership Is A Science That Must Be Studied Continually

By saying that leadership is a science, it is clear that leadership is a science or knowledge of facts or principles that are gained through systematic study. Therefore, as a leader, it is necessary to study continually the ever changing rules, principles, and practices of leadership. Thus, as one leads he or she will never be the master of leadership, for it is a constantly evolving science that first must be learned, and then practiced.

The reason why leaders fail to be successful is not that they have always been poor leaders, but they have failed to change in their approach to leadership. Thus, a different style or approach is needed. Just as this is true for leadership in general, the pastor must learn to adopt different discipleship methods and leadership approaches in order to make disciples for Christ today. Each pastor needs to read and study to show that they are capable as a leader to adapt to any environment or situation. Leadership is seen as a science, for there is so much to be studied and even more research is needed at this very moment.

The Environment of Leadership Needed for Discipleship

Leadership is defined as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.”¹²⁰ This perspective of leadership is one that builds upon three primary elements needed to produce an environment of leadership. The pastor must have the right environment for making disciples within the church. The following will help pastors to understand the environment that is needed to lead successfully, which will produce disciples for Christ.

The first element of leadership is that the individual leading must be present with his/her influence at hand ready to bestow to others. The greatest challenge for leadership today is that of modeling the way as taught by Kouzes and Posner when they stated that, “Modeling the way is about earning the right and the respect to lead through direct involvement and action. People follow first the person, then the plan.”¹²¹ By modeling the way, the leader becomes present, thus being able to influence others by example. This is the first element of leadership, for without this foundation, people will not follow. If an individual has no followers, then he or she fails to be a leader. The pastor must model the way to discipleship. If he or she fails to model the way of Christ-like living, then the church will be lost in the discipleship process.

The second element of leadership is the group of individuals to whom the leader desires to influence. This is a very crucial element of leadership, because the level of leadership rests within the eyes of those the leader seeks to influence. Maxwell teaches that there are five levels of leadership, which are determined by people and the leader. These five levels of leadership are position, permission, production, people development, and the pinnacle. In order for a leader to move from one level to the next, he/she must understand this crucial element, “the individuals of

¹²⁰ Peter Northhouse. *Leadership: Theory And Practice*. 5th Ed. {Thousand Oak, CA: Sage, 2010}: 3.

¹²¹ James Kouzes & Barry Posner. *The Leadership Challenge*, 16.

the group.” The leader can be at level one from day one, but the people will only “follow you because they have to.” The leader can move up the ladder of leadership by influencing people positively in the area of relationships, and then people will “follow you because they want to.” The leader can even move up the ladder to become a level three leader by producing results within the organization, and then people will “follow because of what you have done for the organization.” The forth step up the ladder is that of people development. When the leader begins to develop people to become leaders themselves, then the people will “follow because of what you have done for them.” Finally, the leader can become a level five leader when he/she has developed leaders who can develop leaders themselves, then people will “follow because of who you are and what you represent.”¹²²

By understanding this element of leadership, the leader can begin to acknowledge that position is only part of leadership. It is the relationships that a leader has with those he desires to lead that are important. “Leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow.... [and] If leadership is a relationship, as we have discovered, then what do people expect from that relationship? What do people look for and admire in a leader?”¹²³

Leadership deals with people. For the pastor who desires to lead people to Christ and make disciples for Christ, there has to be a clear understanding of the pastor’s influence on others through the key element of relationships. A disciple can be made, if relationships are made first. The third element of leadership is that of the purpose and goals of an organization. It is vital that the leader follows a strategic plan of action and calls his constituents to follow in order for the goals to be achieved. The strategic planning of a leader includes the following elements: an

¹²² John Maxwell. *The Five Levels Of Leadership.*, 6-10.

¹²³ James Kouzes & Barry Posner. *The Leadership Challenge.*, 24-25.

envisioned process, a point leader, a leadership team, thinking, and action.¹²⁴ As a leader it is important to build his/her leadership practices by including a strategic plan that involves the entire organization. The process of team work is the key for a leader to move from level two to level three as Maxwell speaks of productivity.¹²⁵ Also Gangel states that the mission of an organization will be the source of all leadership actions, thus if a leader desires to achieve their purpose and goals as an organization, they must make the mission clear to the people.¹²⁶

Leadership rest solely upon these three elements, for the leader must be present with his influence, the people determine the leadership level, and the mission must be clear in order to achieve the goals that have been set. The goal has been predetermined, The Great Commission, if the church desires to follow the biblical mandate for the local congregation. It is important for the pastor to understand his role as a leader, in order to make disciples for Christ. The pastor's approach to discipleship is vitally important for a church to fulfill the mandate of the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:18-20.

The Pastor As A Shepherd

The goal of ministry has been predetermined as mentioned above. However, there is something that must take place in the area of leadership. The pastor must become an under-shepherd to the flock God has called him/her to serve. In both the Old and New Testaments, the symbolic figure for the individual called to lead the people of God, is that of a shepherd. A shepherd is one who helps and nourishes the sheep, by being a feeder of the flock.¹²⁷ It is through

¹²⁴ Aubrey Malphurs. *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model For Church and Ministry Leaders*. {Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005}: 26-28.

¹²⁵ John Maxwell. *The Five Levels Of Leadership*., 8.

¹²⁶ Kenneth Gangel. *Team Leadership In Christian Ministry: Using Multiple Gifts To Build A Unified Vision*. {Chicago, IL: Moody, 1997}: 276.

the three functions of a shepherd listed in chapter one that the pastor will be observed in this section.

The pastor must lead the sheep. As an under-shepherd of the local church, the pastor is responsible for feeding the people. In order to truly feed the people, the pastor must help and nourish the members emotionally, physically, and spiritually. In order to accomplish this task, the pastor must be a great leader. Some may say that leaders are born. Maxwell teaches that leaders are developed or produced by being self-disciplined.¹²⁸ Small teaches that “shepherds are not born shepherds. They need to be trained to be shepherds.”¹²⁹ It is clear that pastors are not born pastors, but are called to become pastors. Just as the leader must develop to become a great leader and the shepherd to become a great shepherd, the pastor must train and develop in order to be a great pastor. The responsibility is great and even difficult, but the trained under-shepherd can truly lead the local church toward success and discipleship. However, in order to lead successfully, self-discipline is required.

The under-shepherd of the local church must be able to feed the congregation. There are many times when the emotional, physical and spiritual part of an individual is in need of true nutrition. Sometime the pastor has to act as a counselor to help with these needs within the lives of the church members. There are times when the pastor has to act as the encourager to help build up a member or members within the church. There are other times when the pastor has to act as the umpire between conflicts. However, at all times the pastor has to act as the spiritual feeder of the soul. The pastor is responsible unto God for his/her calling to the ministry. The

¹²⁷ Oliver McMahan. *Becoming A Shepherd: Contemporary Pastoral Ministry*. {Cleveland, TN: Pathway, 1994}: 23.

¹²⁸ John Maxwell. *Developing The Leader Within You*. {Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1993}: 162.

¹²⁹ Douglas Small. *The Perils Of Sheep And Shepherds*. {Kannapolis, NC: Alive Ministries, 1996}: 16.

pastor must follow the command given to Peter by Jesus, in John 21:15-17, to “feed my sheep.” This calling is important for the pastor. The leading of the sheep is important, but in order to make true disciples for Christ, the pastor must feed the people of God. It is when the pastor has his eyes on the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, that true love and compassion is displayed for others to see and follow.¹³⁰ The Gospel message of Jesus Christ is that message that will provide nourishment for the hungry and thirsty. It is the pastor’s responsibility to feed the people this message of hope.

As an under-shepherd the pastor is responsible for protecting the church. This very act was seen in the ministry of Jesus and of his Disciples. The Shepherd and under-shepherds protected the children of God from false teachings and individuals who desired to destroy the church. The pastor today must guard and notify the church of spiritual dangers within the church or society. The pastor must show that he cares for the church and the community. The true disciple-making pastor will show concern for those he desires to lead. To make disciples for Christ, the pastor must act as a shepherd protecting the sheep.

By being a shepherd, the process of discipleship becomes easier for the pastor. The pastor can seek to implement programs, but programs don’t make disciples. Disciples are made when a leader becomes a leading, feeding, and protecting shepherd to his local members and community. The shepherd is needed for discipleship to take place in the church today. Without this approach to discipleship, the process will fail every time. With this being said, a shepherd can only lead, feed, and protect so many sheep. True discipleship is not achieved in great numbers, unless multiple leaders are making disciples. A solo pastor can only make a limited amount of disciples without making disciples who can make disciples. Now that a shepherding leader is acknowledged as a necessity to discipleship, it is time to look at the need for a servant leader.

¹³⁰ Michael Wilder & Timothy Jones. “Life As A Shepherd Leader.” Southern Seminary., 38.

The Pastor As A Servant-Leader

In order to develop true disciples for Christ, there must be a leader who is like Christ. As previously mentioned, Jesus was a servant who led his followers. Thus, Jesus was a servant leader. If true disciples are developed in the twenty-first century, then pastors must act as a servant leader. A servant leader that is willing to say, “I have not come to be ministered unto, but to minister to others.” This saying would speak to the theme of Mark’s Gospel, when Jesus states, “For even the Son of man, came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”¹³¹

It is the pastor’s responsibility to pursue a relationship with Christ that would transform their character into that of a servant. The pastor is not to be just any servant, but a willing servant. The pastor is to be a servant who cares for people like Christ cared for people. The pastor is to be a servant who loves others as Christ loved others. The truly transformed disciple can be the pastor who serves others. Thus, two components of discipleship are achieved, transformation and application. Transformation is accomplished in the pastor’s approach as a servant leader, because of the love and compassion that is poured out of his or her heart. Application is accomplished in the pastor’s approach as a servant leader, because of the example that is taught to those that follow him/her in their ministry. Now that the need for servant leadership has been addressed, there is a need to address what servant leadership really is at its core.

What Is Servant Leadership?

Servant Leadership is the process of a person emerging as a leader by first serving others; by placing the needs of others first, helping others to become more educated, more free, more

¹³¹ Mark 10:45, KJV.

independent, and more like servants themselves.¹³² This concept of leadership was first introduced by Robert Greenleaf in 1970 when he was at AT&T as an executive. He later went on to lecture at many business schools throughout America and applied his theory of servant leadership in many organizations including his own organization which he founded, the Center for Applied Ethics, which today is the Robert K. Greenleaf Center in Indianapolis.¹³³ In his thoughts concerning servant leadership he states,

It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant—first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The best test is: Do those served grow as person’s; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?¹³⁴

This concept of leadership causes an individual to ask the question, What does a servant leader look like? The C.E.O. of the Greenleaf Center, Larry Spears, identified ten characteristics of the servant leader which are that he or she: (1) Listens intently and receptively, seeking to clarify the group’s will, (2) Exercises empathy through acceptance of each individual’s unique contribution and assuming good intentions. If people fail, they are not personally rejected, even if their performance needs correction, (3) Nurtures healing and wholeness through encouragement of those who may have been hurt or damaged along the way, (4) Unflinchingly and consistently applies ethics and values to each situation, (5) Builds cooperation within the team through persuasion rather than relying on positional authority or coercion, (6) “Dreams big dreams” by thinking not just about the day-to-day activities of the organization, but about its possibilities, (7) Exercises foresight by examining past and present results to predict the

¹³² Peter Northhouse. *Leadership: Theory And Practice.*, 385.

¹³³ Thomas Bausch Servant-leader. “The: Guarding the Dignity of Work.” *The Catholic World*. July-Aug. 1994: p.170. General OneFile. Web. 27 Oct. 2011.
http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?&id=GALE%7CA15597250&v=2.1&u=tel_a_ttu&it-r&p=GPS&sw=w.

¹³⁴ Robert Greenleaf. *The Servant As A Leader*. {Indianapolis, IN: Greenleaf Center, 1970}: 4.

consequences of future decisions, (8) Understands service and stewardship as the first and foremost priority of leadership—applying this to staff, the stakeholders, and the community, (9) Nurtures the growth of employees as a continuous process, and (10) Builds community with the organization, where everyone is encouraged to contribute to the greater whole.¹³⁵ By looking at these ten characteristics an individual can answer the question, what does a servant leader look like? It is clear that a servant leader is concerned about the organization by caring for and about others. In the following definitions of a servant leader, a further explanation of who a servant leader is will be addressed.

First, Servant Leadership is humble service to others based on our love for them.¹³⁶ In the introduction to his chapter on servant leaders Malphurs speaks of the servant leader by stating “A Christian leader is a servant...”¹³⁷ This is especially true, for the Christian leader must follow the example that has been displayed by the Master, Jesus Christ in Matthew 20:25-28, Mark 10:41-45, and John 13:1-17. As Malphurs states, there are “four characteristics: humility, service, focus on others, and love. The following chart speaks of these four characteristics of a servant leader.

By looking at the servant leader, from the perspective that Malphurs presents, an individual can measure others or themselves in light of the biblical view of servant leadership, as a humble servant to others on the basis of their love for others.¹³⁸ It is only when the

¹³⁵ David Peete. “Needed: Servant Leaders.” *Nursing Homes* July 2005: p. 8. General OneFile. Web. 27 Oct. 2011.
http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?&id=GALE%7CA135227011&v=2.1&u=tel_a_ttu&it=r&p=GPS&sw=w.

¹³⁶ Aubrey Malphurs. *Being Leaders: The Nature Of Authentic Christian Leadership*. {Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003}: 43.

¹³⁷ Aubrey Malphurs. *Being Leaders: The Nature Of Authentic Christian Leadership*., 31.

¹³⁸ Aubrey Malphurs. *Being Leaders: The Nature Of Authentic Christian Leadership*., 43.

Characteristics	Biblical Directive	Contrasts
Manner of Leadership	How?	
Humble	“not lording in over”	humility, not ego
Essence of Leadership	What?	
Service	“a servant and slave”	giving, not receiving
Recipients of Leadership	Who?	
Others	“for many”	others, not self
Motive of Leadership	Why?	
Love	“the full extent of his love”	a towel, not a throne

Figure 4. Servant Leadership is adopted from Malphurs, Aubrey. *Being Leaders: The Nature of Authentic Christian Leadership*. Grand Rapids, MI: 2003.¹³⁹

pastor/leader learns the manner of leadership, (humility), that the “How” to minister is answered. It only when the essence of leadership,(service), is learned that the “What” of ministry is answered. It is only when the recipients of leadership, (others), is understood that the “Who” of ministry is answered. It is only when the motive of leadership (love), is practiced that the “Why” of ministry is answered. Without a servant leader guiding the local church, the church fails to understand its biblical purpose. Thus, failing to be true disciples of Christ.

Second, Servant Leadership is based on five characteristics of leadership, which are altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship.¹⁴⁰ Based on these five characteristics, the servant leader must seek to promote an environment that produces a sense of need, health, thinking, listening, and belonging. If a leader

¹³⁹ Aubrey Malphurs. *Being Leaders: The Nature Of Authentic Christian Leadership*., 43.

¹⁴⁰ John Barbuto & Daniel Wheeler. “Scale Development and Construct Clarification of Servant Leadership.” *Group & Organizational Management*, Vol. 31 No. 3. June 2006. 118.

seeks to develop followers in the organization, then he/she must develop believers in the organization.

Servant Leadership, based on the teachings of Christ, is a process of serving on mission and leading by serving those on mission with him/her.¹⁴¹ It is this very concept that Jesus sold to the Disciples. They were taught for three years by the words and deeds of Jesus Christ. Through the leadership style that Jesus presented to the Disciples, they accepted his mission and begin to serve on the same mission that Jesus has presented to them. The reason that the Disciples accepted the mission of Christ is because of the environment Jesus created as a servant leader. The environment was one of growth, love, and service.

Servant Leadership In the Church

The leadership style of a servant leader can be seen in many different settings. A servant leader can be seen in the educational setting, organizational setting, and even church setting. However, it must be stated that these three fields of focus are not the only settings in which servant leadership can be seen. It is possible for a servant leader to be found in other fields such as government, healthcare, and others. Within this study, an in depth overview will be given to servant leadership within the church.

In churches it is important for pastors and Christian leaders to lead as servant leaders. When leading a congregation, it is important to lead as a servant leader. The pastor must understand that his leadership must grow from the spiritual relationship that he has with God.¹⁴² This relationship with God will be the source of his relationship with others. If a pastor values his relationship with God, he will understand that he must be like Christ. Therefore, he must be a

¹⁴¹ Gene Wilkes. *Jesus On Leadership: Timeless Wisdom On Servant Leadership.*, 18.

¹⁴² Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, & James Furr. *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide For The Transformational Journey.* {San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000}: 97.

servant to all. This is the concept by which Christ led his disciples as he taught them, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.”¹⁴³ There are Scriptures that teach the Disciples of Christ to serve others: for the calling of the deacon is that of serving tables as seen in Acts 6:1-7, the calling of the child of God is to freedom that is found in serving one another in love as seen in Galatians 5:13-15, and the calling of the leaders of the church are for the purpose of serving and building up others as seen in Ephesians 4:11-13.

When speaking of servant leadership within the church, it is important to note that leadership within the church is based upon the relationship one has with God and others. The Bible teach that all the law hinges upon the concept of loving God and loving one another as seen in Matthew 22:37-39. These are the values that govern a servant leader within the church. In their teachings on leadership within the congregation or church, Herrington, Bonem, and Furr state,

The value of service and the practice of servanthood are fostered by everything these leaders say and do. Does this mean that their leadership style is laissez faire? Do they simply go with the flow of congregational life? Not at all. These faithful leaders simultaneously take risks. They challenge old ways of doing things and initiate innovative actions consistent with the vision. Sometimes these ventures fail, but the leaders learn from experiences and move ahead with more wisdom and sensitivity.¹⁴⁴

The servant leader is the style of leadership that Christ displayed to his Disciples. It was the type of leadership that taught the Disciples to serve others and lay down their lives for the cause of Christ. The cause of Christ was seen in his mission, a mission to save the world. It is here that the process of serving on mission and leading by serving those on mission is truly seen. The

¹⁴³ Luke 9:23-24, KJV.

¹⁴⁴ Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, & James Furr. *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide For The Transformational Journey.*, 97.

Disciples were under-shepherds that served on a mission to preach the gospel, so that the world might be saved, while leading others to serve on this same mission. It is for this cause that pastors today are called to be servant leaders. In order to truly make disciples for Christ, the pastor must seek to be a servant above all. Jesus said on many occasions, “the last shall be first, and the first last.”¹⁴⁵

The Types Of Discipleship Within Churches

Discipleship is a vital role in the church, but what type of discipleship method will work is the, all important, question within the church today. It is a question that some have answered with great success for a certain season, but have failed to change over time. It is a question that others have never answered. However, few have answered this question time and time again. What type of discipleship works? This section will look at successful types of discipleship within the church today.

Within the last century there has been a global study of churches. This study of churches was known as the “Church Growth Movement.” Within this movement the study of programs and society were the key components to its focus. The methods of ministry were looked at and studied, in order to reproduce programs that had been successful in other churches and ministries. This movement has helped many pastors who could find similar environments to the original program and follow the steps prescribed by the founder. In recent years there have been many books that have been published concerning discipleship/evangelism programs for the church. Such church help books are: *The Purpose Driven Church*, *Breaking The Missional Code*, *Transformational Discipleship*, *A New Kind of Church*, *Eleven Innovations In The Local Church*, *Globalbeliever.com*, *Jesus Never Said To Plant Churches*, *Organic Leadership*, *Essential Church*, *Breakout Churches*, *Simple Church*, and many others. These books have been

¹⁴⁵ Matthew 20:16, KJV.

helpful to the twenty-first century church, but there is a simpler way. That way is to get back to the biblical mandate of discipleship.

In the book, *Eleven Innovations In The Local Church: How Today's Leaders Can Learn, Discern and Move into the Future*, there are eleven different types of discipleship/evangelism strategies that are looked at by three authors. These men seek to present and critique each method that is widely used within churches today. To list a few, there are: organic house churches, recovery churches, multi-site church, community transforming churches, nickelodeon-style children focused churches, attractional churches, and others.¹⁴⁶ These churches offer different styles of worship and focus on ministry. In all the churches interviewed within this book, there is one thing that stands out: they are all successful. Does this mean that there is a true method to disciples above another?

It is the author's opinion that discipleship is not just a program; it is something far deeper than a program. Many churches have unsuccessful programs, but still have disciples of Christ. Discipleship is not based on the entertainment a church offers. Discipleship deals with the pastor's approach to formation, transformation and application. In the next two chapters a study will be conducted to observe the effects of a pastor's approach to discipleship in the area of formation, transformation, and application.

¹⁴⁶ Elmer Towns, Ed Stetzer, & Warren Bird. *Eleven Innovations In The Local Church: How Today's Leaders Can Learn, Discern, and Move Into The Future.*, 7.

Chapter Three

A Biblical Approach To Healthy Discipleship

This chapter will serve as the chapter of findings for the entire Thesis Project, A Pastor's Approach To Discipleship And Its Effect On The Local Church: A Three-Step Approach To Biblical Discipleship. Within this chapter the findings based on three sources will be observed, which are ten pastoral surveys, 100 congregational surveys, and the first quarter of the Mississippi Messenger for each year ranging from 2008 to 2013. Based on these three sources, the following question will be answered: "What is the effect of the pastor's approach to discipleship on the local church?"

In conducting this research, the researcher contacted multiple pastors and obtained permission from ten pastors in the Church of God in the state of Mississippi to conduct both the pastoral (Appendix C) and congregational (Appendix D) surveys. These surveys were conducted during the months of September to December 2013. The results of these two surveys will be observed in two separate manners. First, each church will be analyzed separately to observe each pastor's approach to discipleship. Second, all the surveys will be analyzed together to see the overall approach of pastors in the area of discipleship. It is within this section of the study that the attendance figures will be used to determine the churches effectiveness.

A Pastor's Ideal Approach To Discipleship

Each pastor will be carefully looked at within this section to determine their specific ideal approach to discipleship. In order to keep both the pastor's and church's names confidential, the following code system will be used. For identifying each church, the churches will be addressed as follows: Church 1, Church 2, Church 3...and Church 10. When identifying the pastors of each church, the pastor will be identified with his church based on being the pastor of Church 1

in the following manner: Pastor 1. This sequence will follow the same as the church, for the pastors will be identified as: Pastor 1, Pastor 2, Pastor 3...and Pastor 10. The data concerning the pastor's approach to discipleship and its effect is now reviewed.

The Educational Level Of The Pastor Compared To The Congregation

The second question on both surveys asked the participant to select their highest level of training. The following table (Table 1) gives the educational levels of both the members and pastors that participated in the Thesis Project.

Table 1. Participants' Educational Levels

	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	C 9	C 10
High School	30%	30%	20%	60%	40%	30%	10%	30%	40%	70%
Technical School/ Ministerial Training	10%		10%	10%			20%	20%	10%	
Some College	10%	30%	30%	10%	20%	50%	30%	20%	30%	20%
Undergraduate Degree		30%	30%	10%	30%	20%	10%	30%	20%	10%
Graduate Degree	50%	10%		10%	10%		30%			
Doctoral Degree			10%							
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	P 9	P 10
High School										
Technical School/ Ministerial Training	X								X	X
Some College		X			X	X	X	X		
Undergraduate Degree				X						
Graduate Degree			X							
Doctoral Degree										

C = Church

P = Pastor

After observing these two tables it can be stated that 60 percent of the pastors have an educational training equal or greater than 60 to 80 percent of their congregation. This table shows that Pastor 3 and Pastor 4 have an educational level that is greater than eighty to ninety percent of their congregation. While Pastor 1 and Pastor 9 have an education level that is less

than 50 percent of their congregation's educational level. By looking at the comparison of the educational levels between pastors and his members, the research is seeking to see if there is a relationship between the level of education and the pastor's approach to discipleship.

The Meaning of Discipleship

In the sixth question, both the pastor and members were given ten different statements. They were to determine if they strongly agreed with or strongly disagreed with each statement. Each participant had the option of selecting six different numbers. One meant that they strongly agreed with the statement. Two meant that they agreed with the statement. Three meant that they somewhat agreed with the statement. Four meant that they somewhat disagreed with the statement. Five meant that they disagreed with the statement. Six meant that they strongly disagreed with the statement. Each of the ten questions will be addressed separately due to the significance of each point of measurement.

The Understanding of Discipleship

There are many different meanings that have been given to discipleship. Within this Thesis Project the understanding of discipleship has been "the formation, transformation, and application of the Word of God within the believer's life." This definition gives the three biblical approaches that make up the process of biblical discipleship. Barna states that discipleship is "becoming a complete and competent follower of Jesus Christ."¹⁴⁷ This definition of discipleship states the reason for discipleship, which is to be a complete and competent disciple of Christ. However, discipleship is a process that involves a leader and influence. For the Disciples, that leader was Jesus Christ, a leader who influenced them by teaching them (formation), by giving his life for them (transformation), and by loving and caring for others (application). As spiritual

¹⁴⁷ George Barna. *Growing True Disciples: New Strategies For Producing Genuine Followers Of Christ.*, 17.

leaders, the Disciples followed the same method of discipleship within the first century church. As spiritual leaders today, pastors are to be leaders who have influence on the local church as they teach, encourage changed lives, and practice the Word of God. Based on this concept, the following statement was made in order to measure both the pastor's and members understanding of discipleship. The statement was: "Discipleship is the process of influencing an individual, to the point of empowering them to influence other individuals in the same manner that they were influenced." The following table (Table 2.) will give the results of this question.

Table 2. The Understanding Of Discipleship

	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	C 9	C 10
Strongly Agree	60%	50%	60%	40%	90%	80%	50%	60%	60%	10%
Agree	40%	10%	30%	30%	10%	20%	30%	30%	30%	70%
Agree Somewhat		30%	10%	10%			10%	10%		10%
Disagree Somewhat		10%					10%		10%	
Disagree				20%						10%
Strongly Disagree										
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	P 9	P 10
Strongly Agree	X		X	X	X	X			X	
Agree		X					X	X		
Agree Somewhat										X
Disagree Somewhat										
Disagree										
Strongly Disagree										

C =Church

P =Pastor

The results of this question show, that only one church, Church 10, had a different opinion than their pastor, Pastor 10. This means that the pastor's understanding of the importance of leadership within the discipleship process is slightly different than that of his congregation. This could cause some slight problems for the pastor in his discipleship approach. As a whole group, the members agreed 86 percent with the statement that, "Discipleship is the process of influencing an individual, to the point of empowering them to influence other individuals in the

same manner that they were influenced.” This simply means that the church believes that discipleship takes place when someone is leading the discipleship process. This leader is the pastor. Pastors also agreed 90 percent with this statement. The results of this question place the responsibility of discipleship on the leaders within the church. It is those that can influence others that can make disciples for Christ.

The Approach To Discipleship

The second statement made is one that measures the pastors’ approach to disciples and the congregations’ perspective of discipleship. The modern thought within many books on church growth and development deal with the institution of programs. This modern thought believes that the right program in the right church led by the right person will produce growth and development within the church. However, there are some that study the church who oppose this idea or thought. George Barna is one of those individuals who disagree with the thought of programs. Programs are not the solution to the issue of decline in the church today. Barna states, “Discipleship is not a program. It is not a ministry. It is a life-long commitment to a lifestyle.”¹⁴⁸

Discipleship is the process of producing disciples. This is a simple definition of discipleship. The product of discipleship is a disciple. A disciple is someone taught by a teacher, who follows their teacher, and actively practices what they are taught. As stated above, discipleship is not a program, but a lifestyle. The lifestyle of a disciple is different. The disciple’s lifestyle follows the lifestyle of the teacher. It’s not a program that produces a disciple; it is the lifestyle of the leader that is displayed before the student.

The following statement was made, “Discipleship is not a program.” The following answers were given as shown in Table 3.

¹⁴⁸ George Barna. *Growing True Disciples: New Strategies For Producing Genuine Followers Of Christ.*, 19.

Table 3. The Approach To Discipleship

	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	C 9	C 10
Strongly Agree	20%	10%	20%	30%	50%	60%	30%	30%		40%
Agree	50%	10%	20%	20%	20%	30%	30%	20%	60%	40%
Agree Somewhat		30%	30%	10%	10%		20%	30%	10%	
Disagree Somewhat			10%		20%		10%			
Disagree	20%	20%	10%	20%		10%	10%	10%	30%	10%
Strongly Disagree	10%	30%	10%	20%				10%		10%
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	P 9	P 10
Strongly Agree			X	X	X					
Agree		X				X				
Agree Somewhat	X						X			
Disagree Somewhat								X		
Disagree									X	X
Strongly Disagree										

C = Church

P = Pastor

Within these results it is clear that there are churches, 23 percent, that are looking for programs. Specifically, these churches are looking for structured programs that provide schedules, curriculum, and teachers. This type of approach focuses on the formational approach to discipleship. One of ten churches surveyed preferred programs as a means of discipleship. However, 18 percent of members surveyed were within the gray area. Within this area the member could use a program for disciples, but doesn't necessary have to have a structured format for discipleship. Fifty-nine percent believe that discipleship is not a program. Based on these numbers there is support that discipleship is not just formation, but possibly could include transformation and application.

This study showed that 50 percent of the pastors agree that "Discipleship is not a program." Three of ten pastors find themselves in the gray area, where they would use a program or may not use a program for discipleship within the church. Twenty percent of the pastors are program oriented in their philosophy to discipleship. When comparing the pastors to

their members, four churches, (Church 2, Church 8, Church 9, and Church 10), differed from their pastor's opinion. This could cause a problem for the pastor, especially in those churches that are looking for programs, when the pastor takes different approaches to discipleship.

The Understanding Of Progressive Development

In the process of biblical discipleship, there is one step that is referred to as transformation. This step is a progressive step that takes place by two means: the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit. This process is referred to in theological terms as “justification” and “sanctification.” Justification is the doctrinal teaching, that God the Father has forgiven the sins of the repentive sinner, based on the redemptive work of Christ alone.¹⁴⁹ The concept of justification is that now the forgiven sinner can stand before God, because of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Justification is the first process of spiritual transformation. Sanctification is the process where the Holy Spirit sets the believer apart or makes holy, as taught in Scripture, “You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy,” which can be found in Leviticus 19:2 and First Peter 1:16.¹⁵⁰ However, there are debates concerning the timing and process by which sanctification takes place in the believer's life. Sanctification will be looked at within this study as a progressive development, for it is a process that begins at justification (salvation) and will end at glorification (death or the Rapture of the Church). These two developmental stages in the Christian life are part of the discipleship process, for discipleship is transformation. Discipleship is the spiritual transformation of the believer's life from salvation to the day of physical death or rapture.

¹⁴⁹ French Arrington. *Christian Doctrine: A Pentecostal Perspective*. Vol. 2. {Cleveland, TN: Pathway, 1993}: 210.

¹⁵⁰ French Arrington. *Christian Doctrine: A Pentecostal Perspective*. Vol. 2., 230.

To address this theological concept of discipleship, the researcher asked both the congregational members and pastors surveyed to respond to the following statement.

“Discipleship is a life-long process.” The following results can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Discipleship As A Progressive Process

	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	C 9	C 10
Strongly Agree	70%	90%	90%	80%	60%	80%	70%	80%	60%	60%
Agree	30%	10%	10%	20%	30%	20%	20%	20%	40%	30%
Agree Somewhat										10%
Disagree Somewhat					10%		10%			
Disagree										
Strongly Disagree										
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	P 9	P 10
Strongly Agree	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Agree										X
Agree Somewhat										
Disagree Somewhat										
Disagree										
Strongly Disagree										

C = Church

P = Pastor

Both the pastors and members agreed with this statement. All the pastors agreed with this statement and 97 percent of members agreed with this statement. This was a shocking result for the researcher, for the Church of God has taught that individuals can be sanctified or experiences a sanctifying moment. However, the Scriptures don't teach this type of sanctification. These results show that something important has taken place. Either the pastors are teaching the Word of God, within the Church of God, concerning sanctification as a progressive work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the believers, or there is another possibility that could be taking place within the churches surveyed. The churches surveyed could have a different understanding of progressive development in the discipleship process. The churches could be viewing discipleship as a life-long process of formation and application. This project will seek to answer this question.

The Goal of Discipleship

In the church today there is a driving force to see attendance rise. The number game has always been a means of measuring success within the church. The standard for most organizations are measured in numbers. However, this is not true for discipleship. Within the church, there are areas that are measured by numbers, such as evangelism. In evangelism the goal is to win the lost to Christ. This is part of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20, but this is not discipleship. In most churches, the idea of evangelism and discipleship has become one element of ministry. The success of discipleship has been measured by the success of evangelism. However, discipleship is a totally different ministry. The purpose of discipleship is not to win the lost, but to produce mature believers in Christ. Yes, the two ministries work together, but must be measured differently.

The overall goal of discipleship is to take believers in Christ and produce followers of Christ who become servants of Christ.¹⁵¹ This process of discipleship will only be measured by the fruit that is produced in a believer's life. This fruit is spoken of in Galatians 5 and is commanded by Christ to be evident in the believer's life in John 15. In the believer's life, there is to be much fruit that is visible for all to see. True disciples of Christ cannot be hidden, for they will bear the very love of Christ for others. True disciples of Christ will shine like a candle light in the darkness. True disciples of Christ cannot hide themselves, for Christ shines forth in their lives. Garrison gives true facts about discipleship, for he states: maturity is not determined by age, maturity is not determined by education, maturity is a commitment to lifelong spiritual growth and development, maturity is a process, maturity takes discipline, and maturity is a

¹⁵¹ Alton Garrison. *The Acts Two Church And Implementation Guide: Keys For Building A Healthy Church*. {Springfield MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2010}: 9.

goal.¹⁵² These six facts help to support the thought that discipleship cannot be measured like anything else. Numbers are not the standard for discipleship, but maturity. Maturity is only measured by fruit. How much fruit is the church producing?

The ministry of evangelism cannot be separated from discipleship, for fruit contain seeds. Seeds when planted produce other trees, which if developed correctly produce more fruit. The reason discipleship cannot be measured in numbers is due to the stages of development. It takes time for a tree to produce fruit, which can produce seed. It takes more time for a seed to produce a tree, which can produce more fruit. There is a need for time. Time must be respected by the pastor and church if true discipleship is to take place within a local congregation of believers.¹⁵³ This idea is supported by the results from the following statement. “Biblical discipleship cannot be measured by numbers.” The results are seen in Table 5. These results show that only one Church, Church 6, was unfavorable to this statement. Pastor 6 was also unfavorable to this statement. As a whole the ten congregations that were surveyed responded to this statement with an 81 percent approval. The pastors responded to this statement with a 60 percent approval. With these figures the ten churches surveyed have an overall understanding that the goal of discipleships is not measured by numbers. A focus on numbers can discourage and hinder true discipleship. It is important that the pastor and church understand the success of discipleship cannot be measured by a numerical standard, but a fruit bearing standard. Pastor, the question you need to ask is, “How fruitful is my life and ministry?” The pastor’s fruitfulness will lead to the fruitfulness of the congregation.

¹⁵² Alton Garrison. *The 360° Disciple: Discipleship Going Full Circle*. {Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2009}: 15-21.

¹⁵³ Daniel Smith. “Recapturing Vision Within The Local Church: Engaging God In Prayer.” 6-8.

Table 5. The Standard of Discipleship

	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	C 9	C 10
Strongly Agree	20%	70%	60%	50%	30%	30%	30%	10%	20%	50%
Agree	70%	10%	30%	40%	50%	20%	40%	60%	80%	40%
Agree Somewhat	10%		10%	10%	20%	30%	20%	10%		10%
Disagree Somewhat						10%		10%		
Disagree							10%	10%		
Strongly Disagree		20%				10%				
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	P 9	P 10
Strongly Agree		X	X	X	X					
Agree									X	X
Agree Somewhat	X					X	X			
Disagree Somewhat								X		
Disagree										
Strongly Disagree										

C = Church

P = Pastor

Discipleship Is A Mentoring Process

Discipleship is the process of teaching a believer to become a follower of the Lord, Jesus Christ. The best example to follow is that of Christ. Christ truly taught his disciples by using a mentoring process. He taught them on a one-on-one basis. He taught those who were willing to be taught. The best example of mentoring is that of Jesus as he leads the Disciples, but there is also the example of Paul mentoring a young minister by the name of Timothy. In the epistles of First and Second Timothy, Paul instructs and pours himself into Timothy. His mentoring would help Timothy become a great leader within the early church. Today there is a need for spiritual leaders, especially pastors, to take the time to mentor others.

A mentor is a person who takes the time needed to communicate personal experiences, skills, and wisdom within a spiritual son or daughter, who is teachable.¹⁵⁴ It is the pastor's duty to mentor the potential leaders around them. Every pastor should be looking for believers who

¹⁵⁴ Stan Toler. *Practical Guide For Pastoral Ministry: Real Help For Real Pastors*. {Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2007}: 241.

are teachable individuals. Only teachable individuals will become disciples of Christ. It is important that pastors lead, feed, and protect the congregation. However, the pastor must seek to make disciples of those individuals that will be teachable. C. W. Perry states: “Leadership is accepting people where they are, then taking them somewhere.”¹⁵⁵ It is the pastor’s responsibility to take people and mentor them. However, mentoring takes place in small circles of influence. In order to understand the mentoring process, two statements were made within the research. The first statement was, “Discipleship follows the mentoring process.” The results are found in Table 6.

Table 6. The Mentoring Process

	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	C 9	C 10
Strongly Agree	20%	40%	10%	60%	70%	20%	30%	30%	30%	10%
Agree	20%	50%	60%	40%	30%	60%	60%	50%	30%	70%
Agree Somewhat	60%	10%	20%			10%	10%		20%	20%
Disagree Somewhat			10%			10%				
Disagree								20%		
Strongly Disagree									20%	
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	P 9	P 10
Strongly Agree	X		X	X						
Agree		X			X	X	X		X	
Agree Somewhat								X		
Disagree Somewhat										
Disagree										X
Strongly Disagree										

C = Church

P = Pastor

Only one church, Church 1, showed any misdirection concerning the process of mentoring.

Eighty percent of pastors believe that discipleship involves mentoring. One pastor was doubtful about the mentoring process, while one pastor was in complete disagreement with the statement.

Overall the pastor and church members agree that mentoring is an important process.

¹⁵⁵ John Maxwell. *The Five Levels Of Leadership: Proven Steps To Maximize Your Potential.*, 19.

With this being stated, the second statement was made: “Discipleship only takes place within a small circle of influence.” The results are seen in Table 7., which show that only Pastor 1 agrees with this statement. However, three others pastors agreed somewhat with this

Table 7. Small Circles of Influence

	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	C 9	C 10
Strongly Agree					20%	10%				
Agree		20%		10%					20%	
Agree Somewhat	10%	10%	50%				10%	20%		20%
Disagree Somewhat	30%			20%	10%	10%	20%	20%	20%	10%
Disagree	50%	40%	50%	30%	60%	20%	50%	40%	20%	80%
Strongly Disagree	10%	30%		40%	10%	60%	20%	20%	40%	
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	P 9	P 10
Strongly Agree	X									
Agree										
Agree Somewhat			X		X			X		
Disagree Somewhat				X		X				
Disagree		X					X			
Strongly Disagree									X	X

C = Church

P = Pastor

statement. Only one church, Church 3, somewhat agreed with this statement. However, 68 percent of the churches surveyed disagreed with the concept of discipleship only taking place in small circles of influence. The word “only” may have caused the disagreement with the statement. As the figures state, both the members and pastors felt that discipleship can take place outside of small circles of influence. However, Jesus strategically led a small circle of followers, the twelve Disciples, who learned from their mentor. It was Jesus who glorified God through this type of discipleship process.¹⁵⁶ Based on the example of Christ, it would seem that churches would follow this example. However, the approaches of the pastors surveyed are different from the example of Christ. Only one church and four pastors of ten would even slightly agree with

¹⁵⁶ Dave Early & Rob Dempsey. *The Pocket Guide To Leading A Small Group: 52 Ways To Help You And Your Small Group Grow*. {Houston, TX: Touch, 2007}: 14.

this approach to discipleship, within the Church of God in Mississippi. This could be a reason for the numbers that will be addressed later within this chapter concerning effectiveness from a numerical standard. Based on this assessment, there is a need for this type of formation within the local churches within the Church of God in the state of Mississippi. Small groups or smaller circles of influence are needed. The process of mentoring is needed within the discipleship process within these churches.

The Role Of The Pastor In Discipleship

The role of the pastor has been clearly established. As a pastor there is the responsibility to lead as a spiritual leader. A spiritual leader leads from a leadership-down approach. This simply means that the leader is responsible for the spiritual growth and discipleship progress of the church. The pastor must be a disciple of Christ before requiring others to be a disciple. This means that the pastor must follow Christ as a spiritual leader. In the book *Spiritual Leadership*, there are five tasks that spiritual leaders must perform: (1) The spiritual leader's task is to move people from where they are to where God wants them to be, (2) Spiritual leaders depend on the Holy Spirit, (3) Spiritual leaders are accountable to God, (4) Spiritual leaders can influence all people, not just God's people, and (5) Spiritual leaders work from God's agenda.¹⁵⁷

The pastor must understand that he or she is the spiritual leader of the church God has placed them over, as the under-shepherd. This means discipleship is a leadership-down approach. When the congregation was surveyed, they were given this statement: "Discipleship takes place from a leadership-down approach." The response was that that 59 percent agreed, 31 percent were doubtful, and 10 percent disagreed with the statement (see Table 8). The pastors responded very similar with 60 percent agreeing, 30 percent were doubtful, and 10 percent

¹⁵⁷ Henry Blackaby & Richard Blackaby. *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People On To God's Agenda*. {Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2001}: 20-23.

Table 8. Leadership-Down Approach

	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	C 9	C 10
Strongly Agree	20%	20%	20%	40%	40%	50%	10%	20%	40%	20%
Agree	50%	30%	50%	40%	10%	10%	30%	40%	30%	20%
Agree Somewhat	20%	40%	30%	10%	20%	10%	30%	20%	20%	10%
Disagree Somewhat	10%	10%			10%	20%	10%		10%	30%
Disagree					20%	10%	20%	20%		20%
Strongly Disagree				10%						
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	P 9	P 10
Strongly Agree	X		X		X			X	X	
Agree										X
Agree Somewhat				X			X			
Disagree Somewhat						X				
Disagree		X								
Strongly Disagree										

C = Church

P = Pastor

disagreeing with the thought of pastors being responsible for discipleship. This response shows that only a slim majority of pastors and members believe that discipleship must take place from a top-down approach. With this response, it leaves one to wonder if the problem with churches today could be solved by placing an emphasis on leadership responsibilities within the ministry, rather than focusing the majority of ministerial training on theological issues; for the church is in real need for practical application within the ministry.

Though only two-thirds of the participants believed that discipleship takes place from a leadership-down approach, all 110 participants agreed that, “The pastor must be a true disciple of Christ before requiring those he leads to be a disciple of Christ.” This shows that pastors and members truly believe that the pastor’s approach to leadership is important in the discipleship approach. The pastor’s approach to discipleship does affect the church.

The pastor’s role as a leader is to empower those he or she leads. In Ephesians 4:11-16, the responsibility of the pastor is defined, for he or she must equip the saints for service in the

Kingdom of God. Kouzes and Posner define this aspect of leadership in the concept of enabling others to act. This simply means that a great leader will promote a healthy environment for openness and communication, in order that the organization may benefit from the development of new leaders. The purpose of enabling is to strengthen individuals by educating, informing, and providing opportunities for them to grow.¹⁵⁸ It is through empowering another individual that true discipleship takes place. When a pastor takes time to inform, educate, and provide opportunities for spiritual growth and leadership, true disciples will be developed. This is the same method that Jesus used when making disciples of his twelve followers. In Matthew 10, the Disciples had been equipped to become leaders and apostles. Jesus had empowered them for he had informed, educated, and provided opportunities for ministry. A pastor must empower those whom he leads. The statement was made, “Discipleship only takes place when someone is empowered.” The results are seen (in Table 9.) below.

Table 9. Empowerment

	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	C 9	C 10
Strongly Agree		10%	20%	30%	10%	30%	20%			10%
Agree	20%	40%	30%	40%	10%	40%	20%	20%	10%	40%
Agree Somewhat	60%	20%	30%	10%	40%	10%	10%	50%	50%	50%
Disagree Somewhat	20%	20%	10%		20%	10%	30%	20%	10%	
Disagree		10%	10%	20%	20%	10%	20%	10%		
Strongly Disagree									30%	
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	P 9	P 10
Strongly Agree	X									
Agree			X		X					
Agree Somewhat				X			X			
Disagree Somewhat						X				
Disagree		X						X	X	
Strongly Disagree										X

C = Church

P = Pastor

¹⁵⁸ James Kouzes and Barry Posner. *The Leadership Challenge.*, 225-274.

When surveyed, only 40 percent of members and 30 percent of pastors agreed with the idea that “Discipleship only takes place when someone is empowered.” Forty –seven percent of members were doubtful about the idea, and 13 percent were in disagreement with the concept. Thirty percent of pastors were doubtful about the idea, and 40 percent were in disagreement with the idea. Only two churches strongly agreed with the statement, Church 4 and Church 6. However, both Pastor 4 and Pastor 6 were doubtful about the concept that discipleship only takes place when someone is empowered. By looking at these results, the understanding of the pastor’s role in discipleship is not very clear when it comes to producing an environment and equipping the believers to become true disciples who can make disciples for Christ. This is ultimately a problem that is causing a rapid decline or plateau in American churches.

Finally, within this section of the survey the statement was made, “The goal of a disciple is to be like his teacher.” The response is seen in Table 10.

Table 10. Being Like The Teacher

	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	C 6	C 7	C 8	C 9	C 10
Strongly Agree		20%	40%	30%	40%		30%	20%	60%	
Agree	20%	30%	10%	20%	40%	10%	10%	40%	30%	10%
Agree Somewhat	60%		30%	10%			30%			30%
Disagree Somewhat		40%		20%	10%	30%	20%	20%		40%
Disagree	20%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	20%		20%
Strongly Disagree			10%	10%		50%			10%	
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	P 8	P 9	P 10
Strongly Agree			X						X	
Agree	X	X			X		X			
Agree Somewhat										
Disagree Somewhat								X		
Disagree										X
Strongly Disagree				X		X				

C = Church

P = Pastor

The need for a clear model to follow is required in the process of discipleship. A disciple is a “learner or student.”¹⁵⁹ If a disciple is a learner or student, then there must be a model or teacher to follow. For the Christian, Jesus is the model to follow or to become like. Christians are to become Christ-like in all that they say, do, and think. Thus, the goal of a disciple is to be like his teacher. For the believer that has been called to the position of a spiritual leader (pastor), they are in some ways like the Apostle Paul, for he taught his followers to follow him as he followed Christ as taught in First Corinthians 11:1. The modern day pastor is to live such a life that the members of the congregation could follow his/her example and become like Christ. It is not the pastor’s goal to produce disciples of himself or herself, but to produce disciples that look like the one to whom they themselves should look like, Jesus Christ. When responding in the survey, 46 percent of members agreed that the goal of a disciple is to be like his teacher, while 34 percent were doubtful and 20 percent disagreed with the concept.

The pastors responded to this statement with 60 percent agreeing, 10 percent doubtful, and 30 percent disagreeing. This shows somewhat of a disagreement among the pastors and their congregations. Only three churches, Church 5, Church 8, and Church 9, showed 60 percent or higher in their agreement with this concept. Seven of ten churches showed a 50 percent or lower rate of agreement with this concept of becoming like his or her leader. What this means is that church members themselves are not confident in their leaders enough to fully trust them to the point of following them. The reasons for this mistrust could be many, but what it truly shows is that the pastor’s approach to discipleship is not building confidence among his or her members.

¹⁵⁹ Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, & Philip Nation. *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow*. {Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2012}: 7.

Summary To The Pastor's Ideal Approach To Discipleship

In summary, this section shows the pastor's approach to discipleship from both the pastors' and members' perspective. After analyzing the responses to the survey, within this section of the research, there are nine points that are worth mentioning. These nine points show the importance of the pastor's ideal approach to discipleship. First, 60 percent of pastors have an educational training equal or greater than 60 to 80 percent of their congregation. Second, both pastors and members believe discipleship can take place when someone is leading the process. Third, both pastors and members are divided concerning the need for programs in the process of discipleship, which is a sign of formation. Forth, both pastors and members believe that discipleship is a progressive process, which is a sign of transformation. Fifth, 60 percent of pastors approach discipleship in way that numbers are not the standard of measuring success. Sixth, mentoring is clearly an approach to discipleship. However, 68 percent of members disagree and 90 percent of pastors either are doubtful or disagree that discipleship only takes place within a small circle of influence. Seventh, a slim majority of pastors and members believe that discipleship must take place from a top-down approach, yet all 110 participants believe that the pastor should be a disciple of Christ before requiring others to be a disciple. Eighth, both pastors and members were divided concerning the thought that discipleship only takes place when someone is empowered. Finally, the members showed some mistrust in following their pastor's approach to discipleship, for only 46 percent agreed that the goal of a disciple is to be like his teacher.

The Pastor's Personal Approach To Discipleship

Within this section of the research, the pastor's personal approach to discipleship will be analyzed and compared to that of the congregation's personal approach to discipleship. It is

through one's personal approach to discipleship that the components of formation, transformation, and application can be seen. Within this section of the research, questions seven through eleven on both the pastoral (Appendix C) and congregational (Appendix D) surveys will be addressed. The journey into the personal approach to discipleship has begun. Ninety-six percent of the members surveyed viewed their pastors as being a disciple of Christ at all times, while only 4 percent of members viewed their pastors as being a disciple of Christ more than not being a disciple. However, only 60 percent of pastors stated that they viewed themselves as being a disciple of Christ at all times. This shows that when pastors are truly open to view themselves they realize that their approach to discipleship is not always clear for others to follow.

Personal Approach To Formation

In the personal life of a disciple, there has to be an approach to spiritual formation. Spiritual formation is the development or structuring of one's spiritual life. This structuring or development should lead to spiritual maturity. Many believe that spiritual formation is truly found through applying the spiritual disciplines of the faith. Whitney gives ten spiritual disciplines that help to develop and form the believer's spiritual life. These disciplines are: Bible intake, prayer, worship, evangelism, serving, stewardship, fasting, silence or solitude, journaling, and learning. Without such disciplines the believer will ultimately end up in disaster¹⁶⁰ These ten disciplines don't serve as an exhausted list of spiritual disciplines, but it can serve as a starting point for the concept of spiritual formation. In order for discipleship to take place within a church there has to be both personal and corporate formation. Formation is the structure or development of something or someone. In the process of discipleship, formation is, first of all, the teaching of the Word of God. Then formation is anything that develops a firm structure of the

¹⁶⁰ Donald Whitney. *Spiritual Disciplines For The Christian LIFE.*, 27.

Word of God within the individual's life and the corporate body. The pastor must teach or preach the Word of God, offer programs, offer training for leaders, and etc. in order to approach discipleship from a formational perspective.

In the survey conducted by the researcher, there were two questions that dealt with the pastor's personal approach to spiritual formation. The first question asked the pastors and congregations to describe their personal time in Bible study. Figure 5 shows the results of this question.

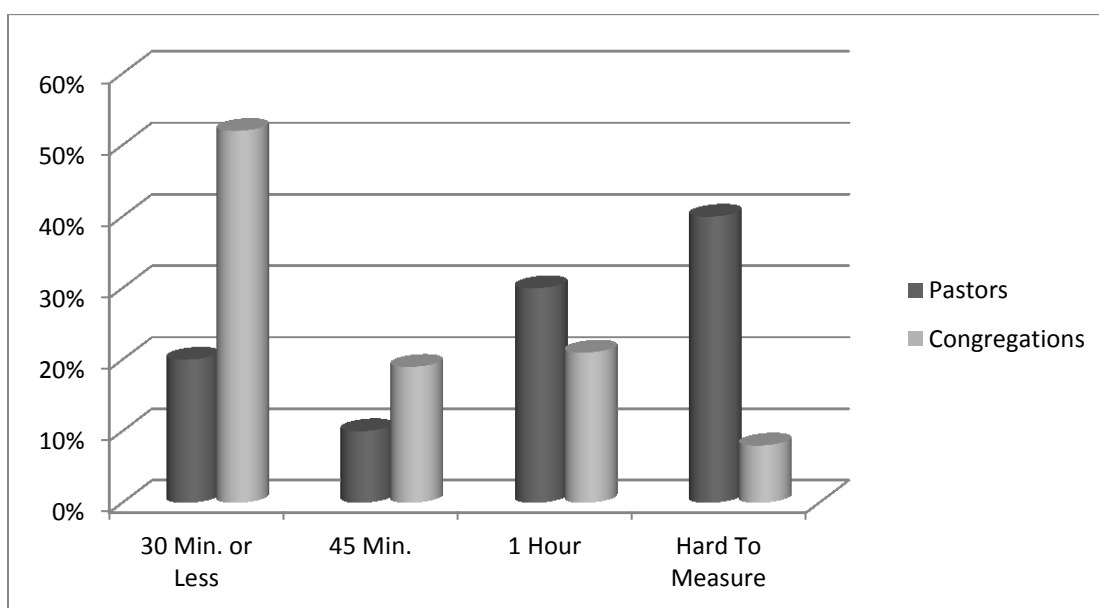


Figure 5. Pastors and Members Time In Daily Bible Study

By looking at this chart, it is clear that most of the pastors and members either study thirty minutes or less a day, or don't have a structured Bible study pattern. If this be the case by looking at this chart, the pastor truly has an influence on the church's approach to formation. However, the next question will look at the pastor's approach to formation by offering training programs. Both the pastors and congregations were asked to determine how many times a year the pastor offered training to the church. Figure 6 will address the results concerning the number of training opportunities the pastor offers a year.

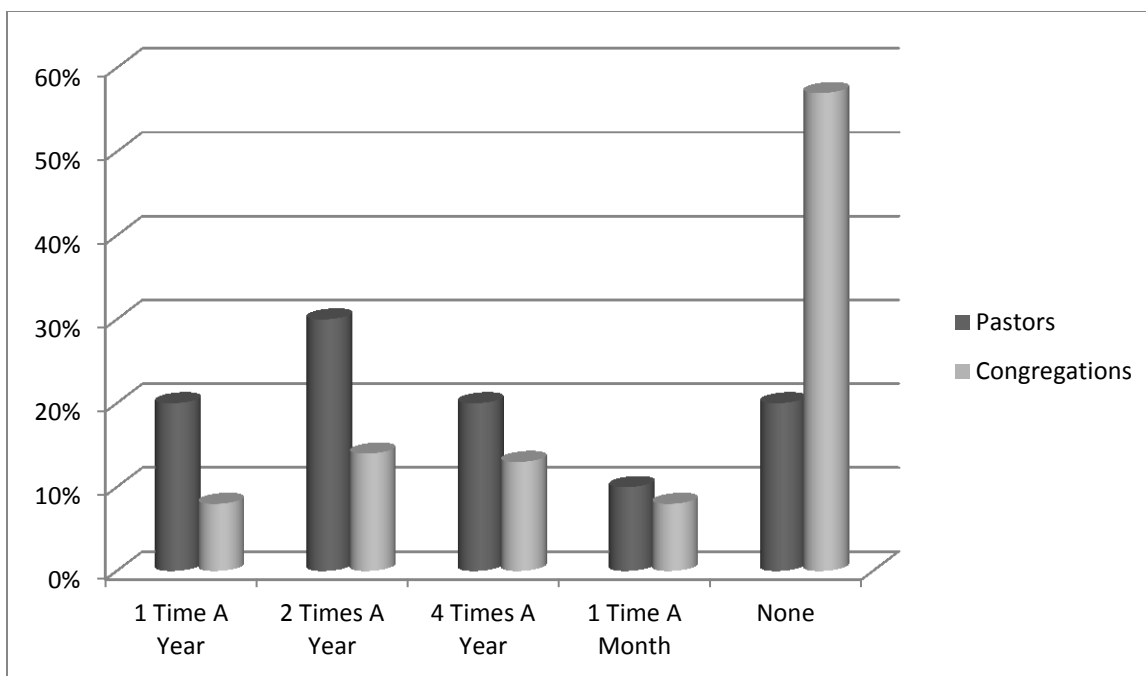


Figure 6. Number of Training Opportunities Offered

When looking at this chart, it is obvious that the pastors' approaches to training are different. However, the majority of pastors offer less than two training opportunities to their churches within a year's time. This information, within this chart, points toward a lack in discipleship by the pastor. The pastors are failing to equip the churches to serve each other and the community. This statistic supports the point made earlier, within this chapter, concerning the division between pastors and congregations over the thought of discipleship only taking place when someone is empowered. Discipleship takes place when a pastor empowers the members to become leader and disciple-makers themselves. The pastor's failure to train people within the church is a failure to make true disciples of Christ.

Personal Approach To Transformation

In the personal life of a disciple, there has to be an approach to spiritual transformation. Spiritual transformation is the process of change that takes place by the Word of God through the working of the Holy Spirit. Many Christians read the Word for knowledge, but never allow the

Holy Spirit to illuminate or bring to light the Word of God within their lives, which is understanding the Word. It is important that the Word of God moves beyond a formational level of knowledge to that of a transformational level of understanding. Foster gives two common reasons why Christians have a problem with transformation. First, people read and study the Bible for information (formation) alone. Second, people read the Bible to find answers to problems.¹⁶¹ With this type of approach to reading the Word of God, there is no wonder why the church is declining. Also, the power of prayer is important in the transformational process of discipleship. Sincere prayer is needed for transformation to occur. Bounds states, “One of the crying evils, maybe of all times [is]—little or no praying. Of these two evils, perhaps little praying is worse than no praying. Little praying is a kind of make-believe, a salve for the conscience, a farce and a delusion.”¹⁶² True disciplines of the faith are need for personal transformation to occur, but only when the Holy Spirit continually sets the believer apart can true discipleship take place.

In the Christian life there has to be the thought of truly being transformed by God’s Word and the working of the Holy Spirit within the believer’s life. Dallas Willard makes a clear statement for all believers to consider, concerning spiritual transformation. He states:

To live as Christ lived is to live as he did all his life. Our mistake is to think that following Jesus consists in loving our enemies, going the “second mile,” turning the other cheek, suffering patiently and hopefully—while living the rest of our lives just as everyone around us does....It’s a strategy bound to fail and to make the way of Christ “difficult and left untried.”¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Richard Foster. *Life With God: Reading The Bible For Spiritual Transformation*. {San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 2008}: 4-5.

¹⁶² Douglas Small. *Transforming Your Church Into A House Of Prayer*. {Cleveland, TN: Pathway, 2006}: 59.

¹⁶³ Dallas Willard. *The Spirit Of The Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives.*, 5.

This statement clearly shows that many Christians fail to live the life that Jesus lived, because they approach discipleship in the wrong way. True discipleship cannot take place without spiritual transformation. The believer can learn the Word of God, which is a formational approach to discipleship, and practice the teachings of the Word to some degree, which is an applicational approach to discipleship, without being a true disciple of Christ. However, if true spiritual transformation hasn't occurred, those closest to them who are within one's closest circle of influence, will know that their character is not like that of Christ. An individual's character will truly be seen among those that are closest to them, such as friends and family. It is for this reason that a disciple of Christ must experience spiritual transformation within their personal life. To address personal transformation within the pastors' lives, two questions were asked to those that were surveyed. First, both the pastors and participants were asked to answer this question concerning the pastor of the church, "Do you believe that your pastor lives a transformed life that is set apart from the world?" The congregations' responses to this question are seen in Figure 7. The pastors were asked to reflect on their own lives by answering this question, "Do you live a transformed life that is set apart from the world?" Figure 8 shows the ten pastors' responses.

When comparing these two charts, it is clear that both the pastor and congregation see the pastor as having a transformed life more of the time than not. This is important for discipleship to take place. If discipleship takes place from a leader-down approach, it is vital that the pastor's life be viewed by those he or she seeks to lead, as being transformed or different from the world. However, a quote from the book *Transformational Discipleship* states: "The sad reality is that the daily lives, aspirations, and desires of many people in our churches mirror those who do not claim to know Christ."¹⁶⁴ Could this be true of the pastors within the church today? Do pastors

¹⁶⁴ Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, & Philip Nation. *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow.*, 16.

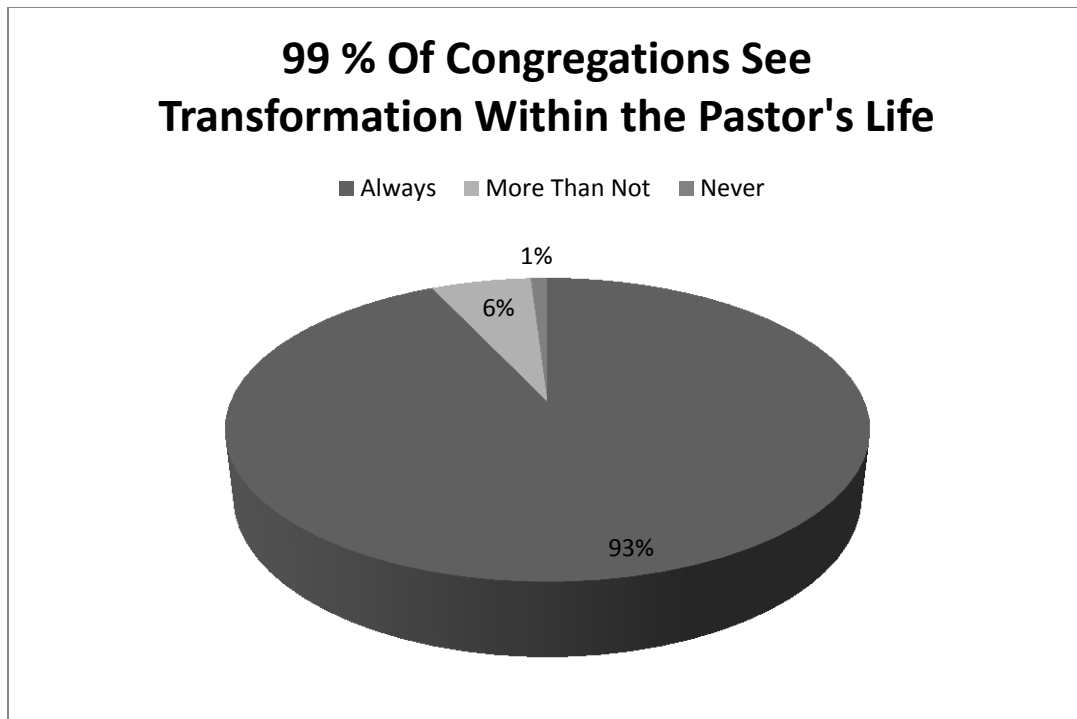


Figure 7. Congregations See Transformation In Pastors

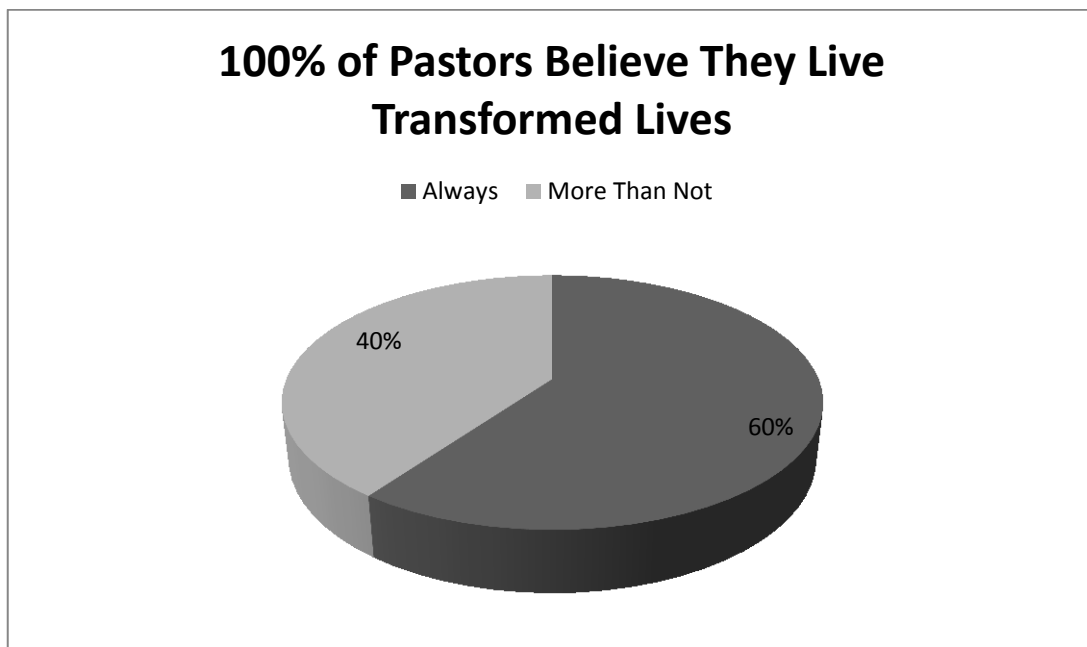


Figure 8. Pastors See Transformation In Themselves

and members see themselves as transformed disciples, but truly mirror those who do not know Christ at all?

When the pastors were asked to speak of their personal prayer life, 40 percent stated that they pray thirty minutes or less a day. Thirty percent of pastors stated that it is hard to determine the time they pray. One of ten stated that he prayed forty-five minutes a day. While 20 percent of pastors stated they pray one hour a day. By looking at these statistics, it is obvious that prayer, or at least a structured time of prayer, is not the most important discipline within these ministers' lives; for a majority spend thirty minutes or less, and have no structure to their prayer life. This shows that transformation may be minimal in the lives of most of these pastors.

When the members of these ten congregations were asked to describe their personal prayer life, very similar responses were given. Fifty-five percent spend thirty minutes or less in prayer, 11 percent spend forty-five minutes in prayer, 17 percent spend an hour in prayer, and 17 percent find it hard to measure their time in prayer. These numbers are very similar when compared to their pastors. This shows that there is a connection between the pastor's approach to discipleship and its effect on the congregation. This can be seen in Figure 9.

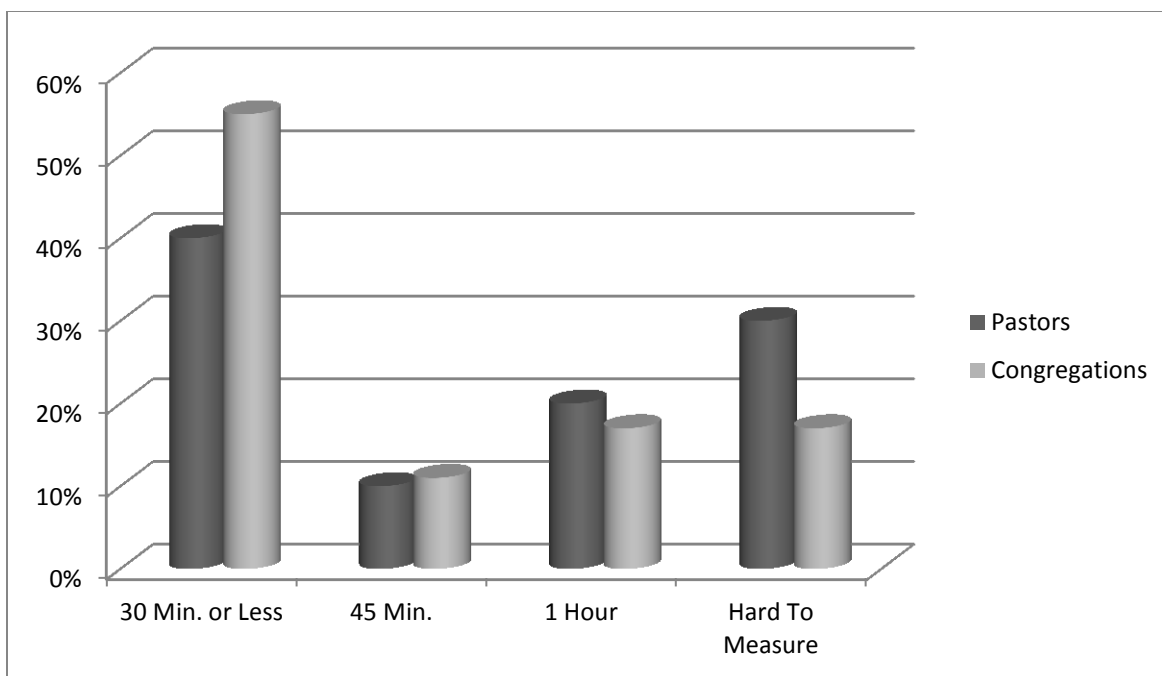


Figure 9. Pastors and Members Prayer Time

When the figures in the columns for thirty minutes or less and hard to measure are combined, there is a clear understanding that the pastor is influencing the time spent in prayer. With this understanding, it is important to emphasize that the pastor's promotion or lack thereof concerning prayer plays a role in the transformational process of discipleship.

Also within the understanding of transformation is the time spent in studying the Word of God. As a leader, the pastor should promote the study of God's Word for sermon preparation, but more importantly, for personal transformation. The Word of God is the tool by which the Holy Spirit uses to develop and mature the child of God. The believer is to follow the Word of God, which is obedience, in order to do what one ought to do. This described obedience is what sustains spiritual growth and transformation. When the believer interacts with the leading of the Holy Spirit, transformation takes place.¹⁶⁵ True biblical transformation is that which equals

¹⁶⁵ John Ortberg, *The Me I Want To Be: Becoming God's Best Version Of You*. {Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010}: 53.

obedience.¹⁶⁶ This is true, for obedience equals discipleship, discipleship equals transformation, and transformation equals obedience. As a true disciple of Christ, the pastor must truly study the Word of God outside of sermon preparation. Two questions were asked concerning this point. The first question asked, “Do you find time to read the Word of God daily, outside of sermon preparation?” Seventy percent said that they find time to study the Word of God daily outside of sermon preparation more times than not, while only twenty percent said they always find time to study God’s Word outside of sermon preparation. The congregations also believed that their pastor studied the Word outside of sermon preparation.

When pastors were asked about the time they studied the Word of God per day, 20 percent studied the Word thirty minutes or less per day, 10 percent studied forty-five minutes per day, 30 percent studied one hour per day, and 40 percent found it hard to count the time they studied. Fifty-two percent of members responded to their personal study of God’s word by saying they study the Word of God thirty minutes or less per day, while 19 percent of members stated they study the Word of God forty-five minutes per day and 21 percent study the Word of God one hour per day.

By comparing the pastors responses to that of their members, there is somewhat of a connection, but not as clear as it was with prayer. However, the pastor’s approach to personal Bible study could play a role in biblical transformation. The pastor has to encourage the reading of the Word of God, and this thought will be discussed within the next section of this chapter. By addressing the need for transformation, the pastor can affect the overall success of discipleship within the church. Transformation has to be understood by the pastor and communicated well

¹⁶⁶ Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, & Phillip Nation. *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow.*, 46.

with the congregation. Without a clear understanding of transformation within one's personal life, discipleship cannot take place as presented in the New Testament.

Personal Approach To Application

The concept of personal application is very clear, but yet it seems to be hard to practice. Christians are encouraged throughout God's Word to follow the teachings of God's law. The believer is encouraged to live by faith in Jesus Christ, but this doesn't do away with the aspect of working for the Kingdom of God. James teaches that "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."¹⁶⁷ This verse simply means that the character of Christ will be seen in one's life who truly lives by faith in Jesus Christ. Anything that is alive will produce fruit. The fruit that is produced will bear the image of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. True faith will produce fruit that is active in faith rather than inactive in faith¹⁶⁸. True faith is practiced and produces life, rather than death. In order to approach discipleship from the right approach, application of God's Word must be observed by both the pastor and members within the church. If the pastor neglects to practice the Word of God within his or her life, how can he or she expect to produce disciples of Christ? The need to practice the Word is vital to discipleship.

In both the pastoral and congregational surveys, the need for application was addressed within their personal lives. The pastors' approach to practicing ministry outside of the pulpit or church walls was looked at within this survey. Sixty percent of pastors perceived that they practiced ministry always outside of the church. While 30 percent believed that they practiced ministry more than not outside of the church and 10 percent less than half-time. The congregations had more faith in their pastors' approach than the pastors put within themselves.

¹⁶⁷ James 2:17, KJV.

¹⁶⁸ Thomas Lea. *Hebrews & James*. Holman New Testament Commentary. {Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1999}: 286.

When looking at the example that pastors give to their congregation, the pastors' responses were important to look at. Seventy percent of pastors believe that they lead others by example more than not. With this type of response, it becomes clear that there are some doubts within the pastors' minds that they are failing to lead their congregations at all times by true example. When the pastors were asked about their personal time in evangelism, 50 percent responded that they spend two hours in evangelism a month and 50 percent stated that they witness every time they can. In comparison, the congregations' response can be observed in Figure 10.

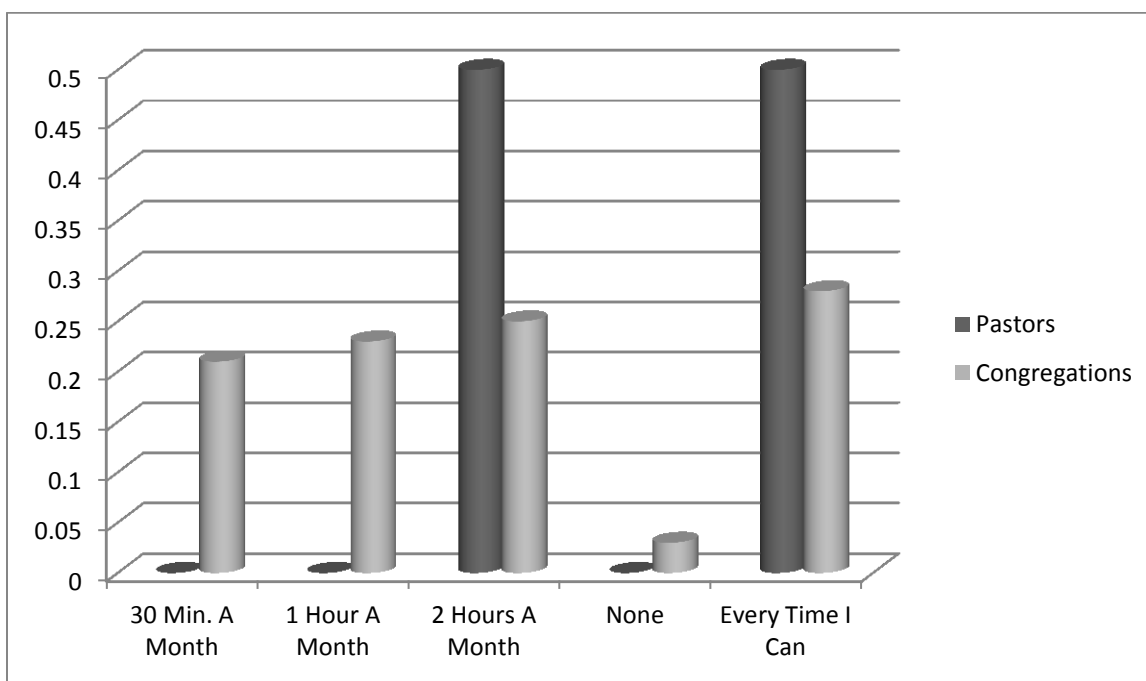


Figure 10. Pastors' and Congregations' Witnessing

Based on this figure there is a plus side to the pastors' approach to witnessing for Christ. The congregations have been encouraged to witness for Christ at least thirty minutes or more a month. This is important for true discipleship to take place. From the statistics on the pastors'

approach to personal application, there seems to be an importance placed on practicing the Word of God.

Summary To The Personal Approach To Discipleship

Within this section of the study, the pastor's personal approach to discipleship has been observed. It is important to understand that within the personal life of the pastor there must be a balanced approach to discipleship. The balance of personal formation, personal transformation, and personal application is needed for true discipleship to take place (as show below). For

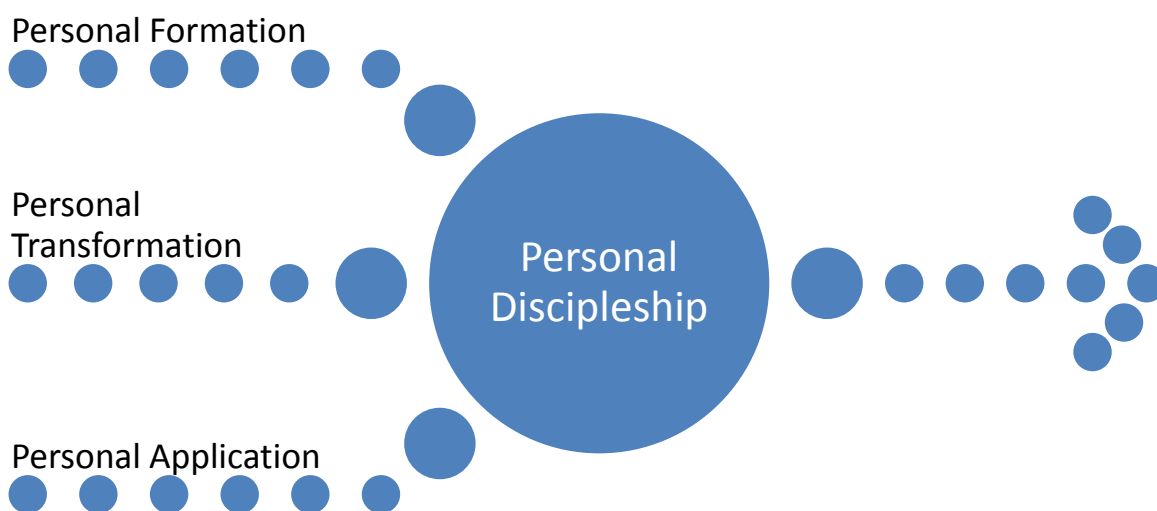


Figure 11. Personal Discipleship

biblical discipleship is the formation, transformation, and application of God's Word in the believer's life. The following six points were discovered when analyzing the materials within this section of the research. These points show the strengths of the pastors' approach to personal discipleship within their own lives, which truly influences the congregations they are seeking to lead. First, most of the pastors and members either study thirty minutes or less a day, or don't

have a structured Bible study pattern. Second, the majority of pastors offer less than two training opportunities to their members each year. Third, Church of God pastors and members believe in personal transformation more than any other approach to discipleship. Fourth, the pastors' approach to prayer is influencing the congregations' approach to prayer. Fifth, pastors are somewhat doubtful that they are leading their congregation by example at all times. Finally, pastors are placing an emphasis on witnessing within the local church, but there is room for much improvement.

The Pastor's Approach To Discipleship

Within this section the pastor's approach to discipleship will be looked at by observing the responses from questions three, four, and five, of both the pastoral (Appendix C) and congregational (Appendix D) surveys. By looking at these responses, the pastor's approach to discipleship will be addressed. Also, the effectiveness of their approach will be observed. To begin this process, the pastor's approach will be discussed.

The Pastors' Approach To Discipleship

This section will show all ten pastors' responses and all 100 members' responses. By looking at their responses as a whole, the overall pastor's approach to discipleship will be addressed within the Church of God in the state of Mississippi. One of the ways to observe the pastor's approach to discipleship and its effect was to ask both the pastor and congregation to describe the pastor's understanding and teaching concerning discipleship. They were given nine choices; three choices were geared toward formation, three toward transformation, and three toward application. The following will give a list of the choices and how they were scored.

Formation	Transformation	Application
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching the Word • Training Programs • Quoting the Word 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading/Praying • Holy Lifestyle • Fasting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evangelism • Ministry to Shut-Ins • Ministry to the Poor

Figure 12. The Guide To The Pastors' Understanding/Teaching Concerning Discipleship

When the pastors responded to this question, they believe that their understanding and teaching concerning discipleship is heavily sided toward formation by 47 percent, followed by transformation by 37 percent, and very weak with only 17 percent of the pastors believing that they approach discipleship from an applicational approach. This is seen in Figure 13. Based on this one question, the pastors' approach to discipleship is off balance. There seems to be a heavy leaning toward the formational and transformational approaches to discipleship without truly teaching the practicing of the Word of God within their lives. This could be based on a lack of teaching from the pulpit or even by example.

When the congregations were asked to describe their perspective of their pastors' approach to discipleship within their pastors' understanding and teaching regarding discipleship, 41 percent of members said that their pastor's approach to discipleship is transformational. Forty-two percent of members stated that their pastor's approach to discipleship is formational. Only 7 percent of members stated that their pastor's approach to discipleship was applicational. These statistics are shown in Figure 14.

Pastors' Approach To Discipleship Based On Their Understanding and Teachings Concerning Discipleship.

■ Formation ■ Transformation ■ Application

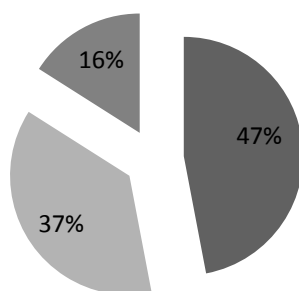


Figure 13. Pastors' Approach To Discipleship Based On His Understanding/Teaching

The Congregations' Perspective Of The Pastor's Approach To Discipleship Based On His Understanding and Teachings Concerning Discipleship.

■ Formation ■ Transformation ■ Application

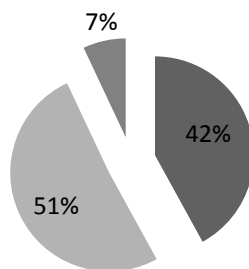


Figure 14. Pastors' Approach To Discipleship Based On His Understanding/Teaching From The Congregations' Perspective.

By looking at the two charts above, it is clear that the pastors' approach to discipleship is off balance within the Church of God in Mississippi. Though a perfect balance many not exist within most churches, there should be a more balanced approach than shown above in these two figures. The pastor's approach to discipleship would be close to balance if true biblical discipleship is to occur. The question that is raised from this chart is, "Are pastor's producing healthy disciples of Christ who produce healthy churches?" The answer for a vast majority of pastors would, sadly, be no. The reasons being that too many churches have traded in the calling to make disciples for Christ, for producing larger churches instead. However, larger churches don't glorify God, but mature followers of Christ will glorify God.¹⁶⁹

Another way to observe the pastors' approach to discipleship was to ask them about their methods used to fulfill the Great Commission, in Matthew 28:18-20. In response to this question, the participants had five choices to choose from, but were not limited to only one answer. The following figure will list the way in which this question was scored conceding the three approaches to discipleship.

Formation	Transformation	Application
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Groups • Leadership Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evangelism Projects • Other (Missions)

Figure 15. The Guide To The Methods Pastors Use To Fulfill The Great Commission

¹⁶⁹ Mark Dever. *Nine Marks Of A Healthy Church*. {Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004}: 25.

When the pastors responded to this question, 39 percent of pastors used approaches that are applicational, 35 percent used approaches that are formational, and 26 percent used approaches that are transformational. When compared to the congregations' perspective concerning the methods being used within the church by the pastor, 34 percent responded by saying the pastor uses methods that are applicational, 34 percent stated that the pastor uses methods that are transformational, and 32 percent stated that the pastor uses methods that are formational.

By comparing these statistics it is clear that the approach to discipleship is balanced from a program approach to discipleship. This simply shows that discipleship is not a program, but programs are involved in discipleship. When discipleship is approached as a program, there may seem to be a balance among the three components of discipleship, but the understanding and teaching of the pastor concerning discipleship may cause the pastors' approach to be unbalanced. The next question will answer this concern.

The priority of the pastor concerning discipleship will be observed by looking at the responses of both the pastors and members to six approaches to making disciples for Christ. The participants were to number six approaches that were given to them in the order of priority, in their opinion, regarding the importance of making disciples for Christ. The six approaches are listed below to give clear understanding to the way they were scored by the researcher.

When the pastors responded to this question, 80 percent of pastors placed teaching the Word of God as the number one priority in their approach to discipleship. Fifty percent of pastors placed encouraging the reading of God's Word as the second priority within their approach to discipleship. However, when it come to the third and fourth priorities within the pastors'

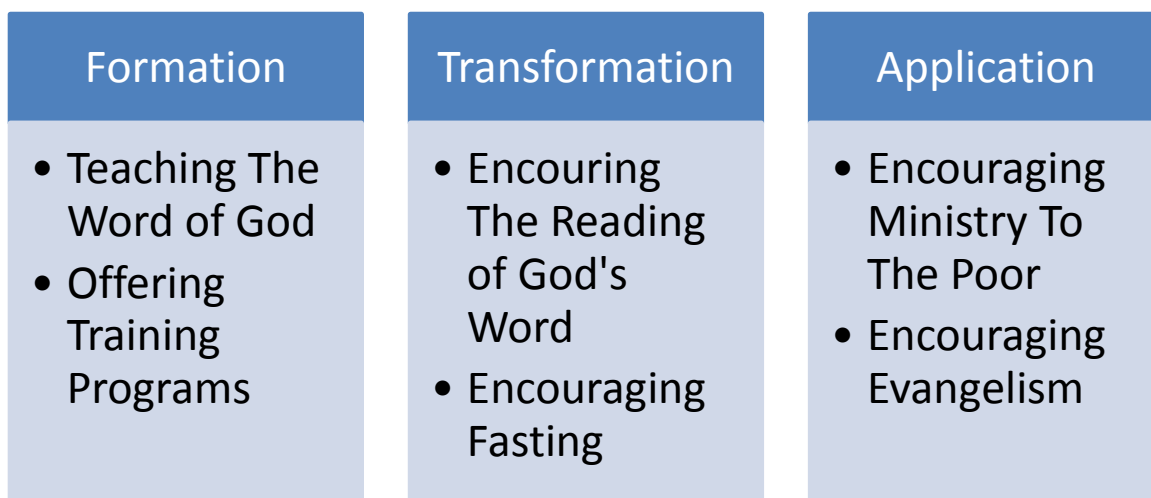


Figure 16. The Guide To The Priorities of Making Disciples For Christ

approach to discipleship there is no clear choice. Again the pastors show that their clear approach to discipleship is formational and transformational.

Table 11. Pastors' Priorities In Making Disciples For Christ

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teaching the Word of God	80%	20%				
Encouraging the Reading of God's Word	10%	50%	30%		10%	
Encouraging Ministry to the Poor			10%	40%	30%	20%
Encouraging Fasting				10%	5%	40%
Offering Training Programs		20%	30%	20%		30%
Encouraging Evangelism	10%	10%	30%	30%	10%	10%

When comparing the responses of the pastors to that of the congregations, it is very clear that the pastors' approach to discipleship is very influential on the members of the local church. This can be seen by looking at Table 12., for both formation and transformation are seen as both the pastors' first and second priorities in making disciples for Christ. However, there is no clear approach that stands out as any of the other four positions.

Table 12. The Pastors' Priorities In Making Discipleship For Christ Based On The Congregations' Perspective

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teaching the Word of God	79%	17%	4%			
Encouraging the Reading of God's Word	18%	66%	11%	4%	1%	
Encouraging Ministry to the Poor	2%	2%	10%	26%	39%	21%
Encouraging Fasting		4%	25%	21%	18%	32%
Offering Training Programs	1%	5%	19%	24%	19%	32%
Encouraging Evangelism	1%	5%	27%	29%	23%	15%

After observing the pastors' approach to discipleship in the Church of God in the state of Mississippi, it is obvious that there is an unhealthy approach to discipleship. The approach that is being taken by the pastors surveyed seems to be based on both a formational and transformational approach. It appears that pastors, as a whole, are in need of leading by example. The drive for biblical application is needed. In America today there is a need for true biblical maturity, but the church seems to not offer its people the maturity they need. Malphurs gives a vivid description of the church today when he states,

It would appear that a significant number—possibly a majority—of our struggling churches sprinkled all across America represent a lukewarm rather than a vibrant Christianity that is doing more harm than good to those who attend them. Could it be that a growing number of Christians who want to mature in their faith and commitment to the Savior are better off leaving their churches and looking for some alternative ministries, such as those found in the parachurch sector?¹⁷⁰

This description of the modern church should cause the pastors to take careful consideration to their approach to discipleship. It is clear from both the literature and research presented that the pastor's approach to discipleship has a vital effect on the church. Within this next section, the pastor's approach will be observed along with the true effect that they are having upon the church.

¹⁷⁰ Aubrey Malphurs. *A New Kind Of Church: Understanding Models Of Ministry For The 21st Century*. {Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007}: 22.

The Pastor's Approach To Discipleship

To truly look at the pastor's approach to discipleship and its effect, it is necessary to look at each church and pastor separately. By looking at each pastor's approach, the true effect of the pastor's approach can be observed. This section will look at each of the ten pastors and the effectiveness of the church in order to determine the pastor's approach to discipleship.

The researcher will analyze the results from question five to determine the pastor's approach to discipleship. The reason this question has been selected is due the wording of the question. On the congregational survey (Appendix D), the participants were asked to list from one to six the most important issues to making disciples in their opinion. Also, on the pastoral survey (Appendix C), the pastors were asked to list from one to six the most important issues to making disciples in their opinion. After looking at the results from this question and comparing them to the attendance records obtained from the Mississippi Messengers for the last six years, there are some interesting conclusions regarding the effects of the pastor's approach to discipleship.

The pastor's approach to discipleship will be addressed by looking at each of their opinions regarding discipleship. Within this question the participants had six choices which are: (1) Teaching The Word of God (TWF), (2) Encouraging The Reading of God's Word (ERT), (3) Encouraging Ministry To The Poor (EMA), (4) Encouraging Fasting (EFT), (5) Offering Training Programs (OTF), and (6) Encouraging Evangelism (EVA). The results were alarming concerning the effects of the pastor's approach to discipleship. The following table will show each pastor's opinion and their congregation's opinion side-by-side.

Table 13. The Unbalanced Approach To Discipleship

Pastor 1	(TWF) – (OTF) – (ERT) – (EMA) – (EVA) – (EFT)	(Unbalanced)
Church 1	(TWF) – (ERT) – (OTF) – (EVA) – (EMA) – (EFT)	(Unbalanced)
Pastor 2	(ERT) – (TWF) – (EVA) – (EMA) – (EFT) – (OTF)	(Balanced)
Church 2	(TWF) – (ERT) – (EVA) – (OTF) – (EMA) – (EFT)	(Balanced)
Pastor 3	(TWF) – (ERT) – (OTF) – (EFT) – (EMA) – (EVA)	(Unbalanced)
Church 3	(ERT) – (TWF) – (EVA) – (TMA) – (EFT) – (OTF)	(Balanced)
Pastor 4	(TWF) – (ERT) – (OTF) – (EVA) – (EFT) – (EMA)	(Unbalanced)
Church 4	(TWF) – (ERT) – (EVA) – (EFT) – (EMA) – (OTF)	(Balanced)
Pastor 5	(TWF) – (ERT) – (EMA) – (EVA) – (EFT) – (OTF)	(Balanced)
Church 5	(TWF) – (ERT) – (EFT) – (EVA) – (OTF) – (EMA)	(Unbalanced)
Pastor 6	(TWF) – (ERT) – (EVA) – (OTF) – (EFT) – (EMA)	(Balanced)
Church 6	(TWF) – (ERT) – (EVA) – (EMA) – (EFT) – (OTF)	(Balanced)
Pastor 7	(TWF) – (ERT) – (EVA) – (OTF) – (EMA) – (EFT)	(Balanced)
Church 7	(TWF) – (ERT) – (EVA) – (OTF) – (EMA) – (EFT)	(Balanced)
Pastor 8	(TWF) – (EVA) – (ERT) – (EMA) – (EFT) – (OTF)	(Balanced)
Church 8	(TWF) – (ERT) – (EVA) – (EFT) – (EMA) – (OTF)	(Balanced)
Pastor 9	(TWF) – (OTF) – (ERT) – (EVA) – (EMA) – (EFT)	(Unbalanced)
Church 9	(TWF) – (ERT) – (OTF) – (EMA) – (EVA) – (EFT)	(Unbalanced)
Pastor 10	(EVA) – (TWF) – (OTF) – (EMA) – (ERT) – (EFT)	(Unbalanced)
Church 10	(TWF) – (ERT) – (EFT) – (OTF) – (EVA) – (OTF)	(Unbalanced)

Based on the list above, there are only four pastors, (Pastor 2, Pastor 6, Pastor 7, and Pastor 8), of ten that balanced their ratio between the three components of discipleship, (formation, transformation, and application), along with their congregation. For those pastors and churches that were unbalanced in their approach to discipleship, the majority of them were heavily formational and transformational in their approach. Now it is time to look at the attendances for these ten churches by looking at two figures, Figure 17 and Figure 18.

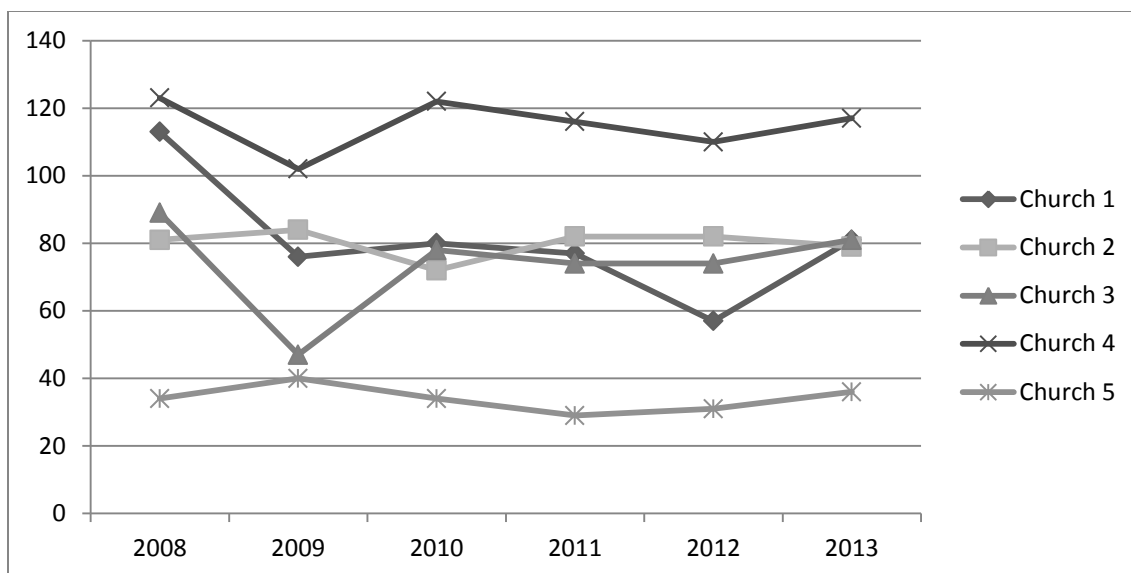


Figure 17. Church Attendances From 2008 – 2013 (Church 1 – Church 5)

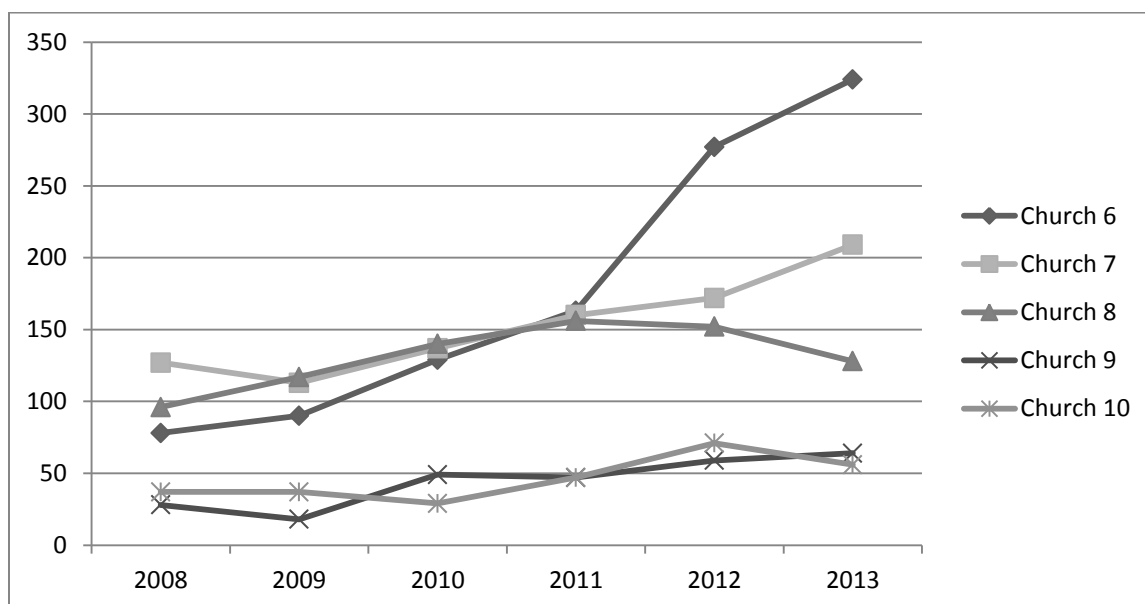


Figure 18. Church Attendances From 2008 – 2013 (Church 6 – Church 10)

These two charts show that the ten churches participating are in three different stages. The first stage is a stage of growth, which speaks to the numerical growth of the church over a period of time. The second stage is a stage of decline, which speaks to the numerical decline of

the church. Finally, there is the stage of plateau, which speaks of a time of level or stable attendance. There are three churches that have shown significant growth in the last six years, but one of those churches, Church 8, has begun to show a decline in the last two years. Thus, there are only two churches, Church 6 and Church 7, which are presently growing churches. The other seven churches are on a steady pace or plateaued state at the present time. This research is supported by published research like that of Rainer's who states: "With more than 80 percent of North American churches stagnant or declining, the church is quickly becoming nonessential to society. With nearly four thousand churches closing their doors permanently each year, a turnaround is imperative."¹⁷¹ It is sad that this is the constant findings of research throughout the church. However, it is the findings of this research as well.

When comparing the ten pastors' approaches to discipleship, there are six churches that were unbalanced in regards to the three components of discipleship (formation, transformation, and application). However, all six of these churches show a stable or plateaued status in attendance. Of the other four churches that showed a balanced approach, only two churches showed a continual growth in attendance. The two churches that are growing were the only two churches that showed a perfect match, among the first three priorities, of the pastor's and congregation's opinions. This clearly shows that a balanced approach to discipleship truly affects the numerical success of the church.

Summary of the Pastor's Approach To Discipleship

The pastor's approach to discipleship is important for the disciplining process to truly take place. The problem that exists within the church today is the need for a balanced approach to discipleship. A true balanced approach to discipleship is found when the pastor presents three equal components which are formation, transformation, and application. This section addresses

¹⁷¹ Thom Rainer and Sam Rainer. *Essential Church: Reclaiming A Generation Of Dropouts.*, 21.

seven key points that show the unbalanced approaches of the Church of God ministers surveyed. These key points are very important to the discipleship process. First, pastors believe they are approaching discipleship from a formational approach. Second, pastors believe they are approaching discipleship from a transformational approach. Third, pastors are doubtful that they are approaching discipleship from an applicational approach. Fourth, congregations agreed with the pastors' beliefs concerning the pastor's approach to discipleship. Fifth, a pastor's programs may have balanced among the three components of discipleship, but the pastor's teachings and understanding of discipleship may cause the pastor's approach to discipleship to be unbalanced. Sixth, only 40 percent of churches are balanced in their approach to discipleship. Of the four churches that were balanced, only two churches were balanced and growing. These two churches were the only churches growing at the time of this research. Finally, the pastor's approach to discipleship does affect the local church in its discipleship process.

Throughout this chapter the pastors' ideal approach to discipleship, the pastors' personal approach to discipleship, and the pastor's approach to discipleship have been observed. Within each section, findings have been summarized for clarity. However, within the next chapter a summary of the entire Doctor of Ministry Thesis Project will be given. To clarify this entire journey, the researcher will summarize: *The Pastor's Approach To Discipleship And Its Effect On The Local Church: A Three-Step Approach To Biblical Discipleship*.

Conclusion

A Three Step Approach To Biblical Discipleship

The question can be asked, “What is the effect of the pastor’s approach to discipleship on the local church,” now that the journey has been taken, this journey has looked at the pastor’s approach to discipleship from a historical setting, which is found in the New Testament and Church History. Through the historical teachings it is clear that pastors or leaders play a significant role in the discipleship process. The leader is seen as the key component of discipleship. Thus, the pastor’s approach to discipleship and its effect on the local church is clearly seen within the historical data found within this Doctor of Ministry Thesis Project.

As the researcher looked at the church in the twenty-first century, it was clear that the church in America has been in a state of decline for a few decades. The church is gradually dying or losing influence within the lives of the American people. This decline is due to many different reasons, but within this research the influence of church leaders were looked at as a main cause for the decline in American churches. With issues like trustworthiness, limited fellowship, and limited focus on discipleship, regarding the leadership of the local church, there is no wonder why the church has lost its influence on the American society. However, there is hope for the local church if the pastor will become the leader God has called him or her to be within the local church. The local pastor is called to be a true biblical leader, which simply means they are to follow Christ. The example of Christ’s leadership points the pastor toward being a pastor who understands his or her role, produces the right environment for discipleship, becomes an under-shepherd, and truly serves others as a servant-leader. It is only when the local pastor follows the example of Christ that healthy discipleship takes place within the local church.

To truly follow Christ is to become a disciple of Christ. The working definition of a disciple is, “A disciple is someone taught by a teacher, who follows their teacher, and actively practices what they are taught.” To be a true follower of Jesus Christ means to follow Jesus, the Great Teacher, and to actively, not passively, practice the teachings of Jesus Christ. For the local pastor to become a true disciple he must apply this working definition of a disciple within his/her life. The working definition of biblical discipleship is, “Biblical discipleship is the formation, transformation, and application of the Word of God in the believer’s life.” For the local pastor to truly practice biblical discipleship, he/she must actively practice the Word of God within their life through an equal approach concerning formation, transformation, and application. Within this Doctor of Ministry Thesis Project, the following eleven concepts were presented to the participants of the study concerning discipleship. First, discipleship is formation, transformation, and application. Second, discipleship is the process of influencing an individual, to the point of empowering them to influence another individual in the same manner that they were influenced. Third, discipleship is not a program. Fourth, discipleship is a life-long process. Fifth, biblical discipleship cannot be measured by numbers. Sixth, discipleship follows the mentoring process. Seventh, discipleship only takes place when someone is empowered. Eighth, discipleship takes place from a leadership-down approach. Ninth, discipleship only takes place within a small circle of influence. Tenth, the goal of a disciple is to be like his teacher. Finally, the pastor must be a true disciple of Christ before requiring those he/she leads to be a disciple of Christ.

These eleven concepts help to give structure to this entire Doctor of Ministry Thesis Project. By giving the structure needed for this Thesis Project, these concepts guide the research and findings regarding the pastor’s approach to discipleship and its effect on the local church. The overall finding of this Thesis Project answers the question of purpose in this manner, “The

pastor's approach to discipleship affects the process of discipleship in both negative and positive way. The effect of the pastor's approach is negative due to the lack of balance in the three components of discipleship, (formation, transformation, and application). The pastor's approach to discipleship is positive when balances of the three concepts are presented.

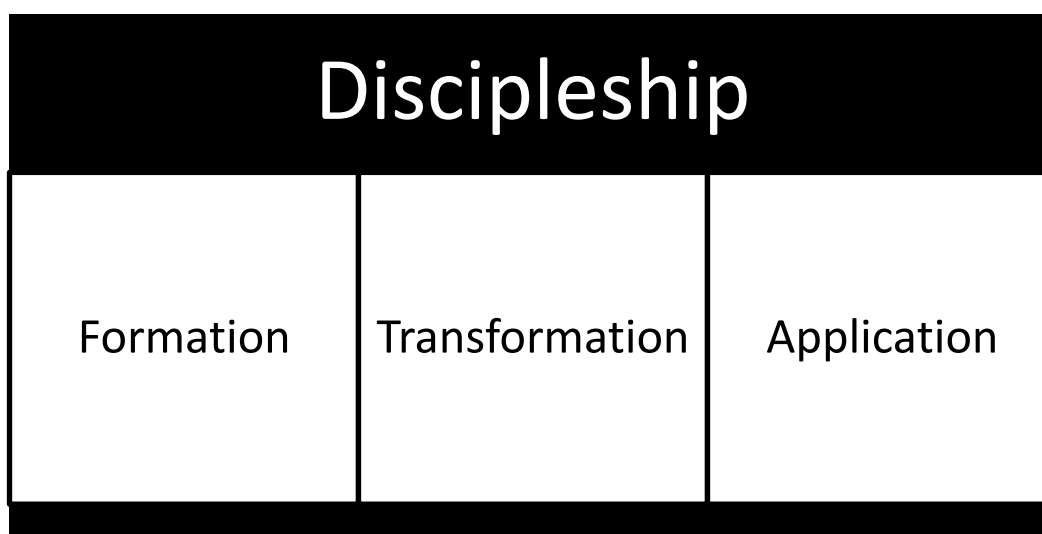


Figure 19. The Balance of Discipleship. True biblical discipleship has a balanced approach to each of the three components of discipleship shown above.

In order for true biblical discipleship to take place the pastor must approach discipleship within his or her personal life in a balanced manner. If Jesus, the Disciples, the Apostle Paul, the early church fathers, and others displayed discipleship in a balanced manner, then pastors today should show forth a balanced approach to personal discipleship. The key to the pastor's approach is his example for others to follow. In a survey, American workers were asked to select the characteristics that they looked for in a leader; the number one response was that they looked for a leader who could lead by example.¹⁷² The key to the pastor's approach to discipleship that will help to fix the problem facing American churches today is for he or she to provide an example of a balanced disciple.

¹⁷² John Maxwell. *The Five Levels Of Leadership: Proven Steps To Maximize Your Potential*., 47.

The process of discipleship is seen in three steps. Each step comes from the Word of God. In the Word of God the believer is introduced to three terms: knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. Each of these three terms refers to a stage in the process of discipleship, or rather, three steps of discipleship.

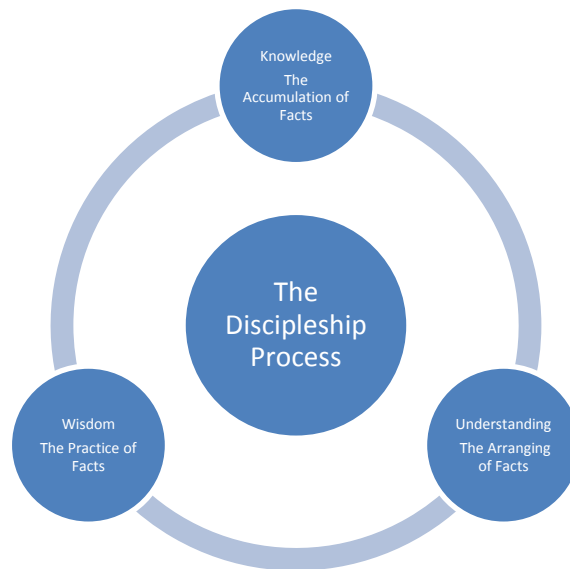


Figure 20. Discipleship Process

The first step is formation, which will be referred to as knowledge. It is within this stage that the accumulation of facts is provided through different means of learning. This simply means that knowledge is being obtained. The second step is transformation, which will be referred to as understanding. It is within this stage that the arranging of facts is provided. This means that the individual begins to understand the Word of God. This can be understood as the working of the Holy Spirit to bring enlightenment concerning the hidden mysteries of God's Word. It is only when understanding is obtained that salvation and continual growth is seen in the believer's life. The third step is application, which is referred to as wisdom. Wisdom is the practicing of the facts. As a believer, wisdom is only seen when there is a practice of that which

has first become knowledge and understood. The problem that this Thesis Project found was that a majority of pastors and churches only have a knowledge and understanding approach to discipleship. However, true biblical discipleship is knowledge, understanding, and wisdom.

The summary of the findings will be set forth in the next three sections of this conclusion. The three step approach to biblical discipleship will be observed, which is biblical formation, biblical transformation, and biblical application. Each of the next three sections will look at each step separately, in order to give clarity to the pastor regarding his/her effect on discipleship.

Biblical Formation

Biblical formation is the development or structuring of the child of God. The means of development are many, but the principles of development are few. The principles of development are found in one source, God's Word. The first step that a pastor must take is to find that one source, God's Word, and develop a daily self-feeding exercise within his personal life. Jeremiah placed this priority within his personal life for he states, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts."¹⁷³ It is important that the pastor spends time in God's Word. However, it is not the time or amount of reading that is necessarily important, but a structured time of Bible study is needed within the personal life of the pastor. If the pastor is to approach discipleship from the right perspective, then the first step must be formational.

The Reason For A Formational Structure

The formational structure of God's Word or the discipline of reading God's Word is needed. It is the Word that God uses to change and transform the believer's life.¹⁷⁴ When the

¹⁷³ Jeremiah 15:16, KJV.

¹⁷⁴ Eric Geiger, Michael Kelly, and Philip Nation. *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow.*, 67.

pastor approaches spiritual formation in the right manner, he or she is establishing the spiritual foundation on which God desires to establish the believer's spiritual growth or maturity. It is through God's Word that Cordeiro states four things take place. First, by reading the Word of God the believer is prepared to face life. Second, by reading the Word of God the believer's life is fruitful. Third, by reading the Word of God the believer is able to recognize the voice of God, which is important in the transformational approach to discipleship. Finally, by reading the Word of God the believer is equipped to make wise and healthy decisions in life.¹⁷⁵ In order to truly be the disciple and disciple-maker that Jesus has called the pastor to be, as seen throughout the New Testament, he or she must establish a solid foundation on which the Holy Spirit can build upon. This foundation is established through the first step of formation.

Leading Toward A Deeper Knowledge of God's Word

In this first step of formation, the pastor must personally build within his or her life this foundation, but at the same time there must be an emphasis within the local church concerning the teaching and preaching of the Word of God. This step is not a program, though a program may be used by the pastor to emphasize this first step to biblical discipleship. If a program is used within the church, then a simple question must be asked by the pastor and leadership team within the local church, which is: "Is this program leading the church toward a deeper knowledge of God's Word?" It is very simple; everything the pastor and church does should lead toward a deeper knowledge of God. If it doesn't, then the pastor and church doesn't need to do that activity, program, or etc. any longer. The pastor must approach discipleship in a manner that

¹⁷⁵ Wayne Cordeiro. *The Divine Mentor: Growing Your Faith As You Sit At The Feet Of The Savior*. {Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2007}: 54-59.

produces the formation of God's Word within the believer's life, for discipleship is the formation, transformation, and application of God's Word within the believer's life.

In order to approach discipleship that is biblical, there must be spiritual formation of God's Word within the pastor's and congregation's lives. For a pastor, it is important that the following questions be answered in order to approach discipleship in a biblical manner. This project is not seeking to present a program for spiritual formation, but to guide the pastor and church toward spiritual formation. It is the researcher's opinion that God will guide the local pastor toward the right type of method or strategy for each local congregation. The questions must be answered. First, What type of emphasis is being given toward the learning of God's Word within this local church? Second, what is being taught within this local church? Third, is the Gospel message of Jesus Christ the focus of ministry within this local church? Fourth, are the teachers or leaders of this local church being trained to teach/lead this local church toward spiritual formation? Fifth, are the present programs, within this local church, leading the church toward a deeper knowledge of God's Word? Sixth, is the purpose of this church pointed toward gaining a deeper knowledge of God's Word? Finally, are the goals and objectives of this church pointed toward gaining a deeper knowledge of God's Word?

Pastor, after you have answered these seven questions, take the time and pray about the approach that you are presently taking toward biblical formation. If there is a need for redirecting your approach to discipleship, please take the time to pray and seek God concerning the process that is needed, for this a vital step in discipleship within your local church. Pastor, remember your calling to be an under-shepherd, like Christ, who feeds, leads, and protects the local church through the formation of the Word of God within their lives.

Biblical Transformation

Biblical transformation is the supernatural change of form within the life of the believer. Biblical transformation is only achieved through the working of the Holy Spirit and by the Word of God within the life of the believer. Transformation can only be received when the believer actively receives this work of grace within their life through faith in the redemptive work of Christ. However, biblical transformation is a continual work of God's Spirit within the life of the believer from salvation to the day of death or rapture of the church. It is for this reason that the pastor and local church must continually experience the working of God's grace within their lives.

The Reason of Biblical Transformation

It is the goal of being conformed to the image of the Son, Jesus Christ, as taught in Romans 8:29, that the believer must actively pursue God as taught by Tozer. He believed that the child of God must thirst for the divine by entering the presence of God, which has been made available to every believer through the redemptive work of Christ at Calvary. By entering into the presence of God, the perishing world and famishing church will "become suddenly aware that we are in God and God is in us."¹⁷⁶ It is important that each child of God comes to the realization that God's image should be seen within their life. For a pastor, this is the most important concept to discipleship. The image of Christ must be seen in the pastor's personal lifestyle. If the lifestyle of the pastor doesn't lineup with the teachings of Christ, then true biblical discipleship will never be achieved. Biblical transformation only comes with true personal encounters with God. "People do not choose to become spiritual leaders. Spiritual leadership flows out of a person's vibrant, intimate relationship with God. You cannot be a

¹⁷⁶ A. W. Tozer. *The Pursuit Of God: The Human Thirst For The Divine.*, 36-38.

spiritual leader if you are not meeting God in profound, life-changing ways.”¹⁷⁷ Without true meetings with God, the pastor cannot lead the local church as a true under-shepherd who feeds, leads, and protects the local church in the process of biblical transformation.

Leading Toward a Deeper Understanding of God’s Word

Through the process of formation, the knowledge of the Word of God has been established as a foundation for the believer. This is a crucial step that must continue throughout the believer’s life, but there is a need for the Holy Spirit to guide and teach the believer in the Truth according to John 14:17, John 14:26, John 15:26 and John 16:13-14. It is when the Holy Spirit brings to light the Word of God that knowledge becomes understanding. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the understood Word of God can transform the very form or being of the individual. Concerning the understanding of the Word of God, Willard makes the point that the child of God must individually hear the Word of God. For the Word of God must be a living Word and not a written Word alone in the life of the believer.¹⁷⁸ It is the living Word of God that transforms the believer’s life.

For the pastor, there must be personal transformation that transforms the inner-man into that of the image of Christ. It is the will of God to transform the lives of those that believe in Jesus Christ as their savior, but God will not force spiritual transformation upon his children. Just as in salvation, the believer must come to God in faith to receive. In the process of discipleship the child of God must come in faith to receive the transforming work of God in their lives. Each pastor must not allow the discipleship process within their local church to fail because of their personal failure to pursue God.

¹⁷⁷ Henry Blackaby & Richard Blackaby. *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People On To God’s Agenda.*, 100.

¹⁷⁸ Richard Foster. *Life With God: Reading The Bible For Spiritual Transformation.*, 24.

Pursuing God for spiritual transformation must be both a personal and corporate goal for the pastor. Each pastor must make it a priority to promote spiritual transformation through personal example. The best means to encouraging personal encounters with God is to live a life that displays evidence of God's presence. There is no way to truly explain the fullness of a life filled with God's presence, but when the church sees it, they will desire to follow. The pastor must ask himself or herself the following questions concerning their approach to biblical transformation. First, what is your personal understanding of a spiritual encounter with God? Second, how long has it been since you have had a true encounter with God's presence that it changed your ways of living, thinking, and ministry? Third, how often do you preach or teach regarding spiritual transformation? Fourth, how often do you refer to the doctrine of sanctification within the local church? Fifth, is your lifestyle different from the world, but more importantly, is your lifestyle different from the average believer? Six, what type of example are you presenting before the local church? Seventh, would you be satisfied with the church, that you pastor if they became just like you, in all ways and at all times? Eighth, what can you do to promote biblical transformation within the local church? Finally, does the present ministry of the church promote transformation within the lives of the members? How? or Why Not?

Pastor, your calling is to be the under-shepherd of the local church. What are you going to do to feed, lead, and protect the believers toward a more healthy approach to spiritual transformation? Without this approach to discipleship, the church will never bear the image of Christ to a lost and dying world. The mission of the church is to make disciples for Christ who can make disciples for Christ. To accomplish this task, the pastor and congregation must live transformed lives, which are separate from the modern world. The church must be different. True disciples are not made by being like the world or imitating the things of the world. Jesus was in

the world, but he was different. Pastors and members must be different in order to reach the lost world.

Biblical Application

Biblical application is the practice or use of God's Word. The believer should be a practitioner of the Word of God. In order to be a true disciple of Christ, the Word of God must be the practice and deeds of one's life. James gives great teaching concerning the practice of God's Word within the believer's life, according to James 1:19-27. It is not enough to hear the Word of God alone. This speaks to the processes of knowledge and understanding. Many Christians practice the two approaches of formation and transformation to an extent within their lives. This Thesis Project showed that both pastors and congregations approach discipleship from both a formational and transformational approach, but have very little emphasis on application. It is for this reason, that the pastor's approach to discipleship was viewed as being negative.

The Reason For Biblical Application

The reason that biblical application is needed, within the life of the believer, is due to the need for true examples of love within the world today. The Bible is clear, for Jesus stated, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."¹⁷⁹ (John. 13:35). When the example of love is seen within the lives of the believers there is the mark of true discipleship. However, love must be that which is described only in the term *agape*, for this type of love is self-emptying, self-denying, and self-giving. Application has been described by Cordeiro in the following manner.

Application is what seals God's Word to our hearts. Application makes the difference between hearing His will and doing His will. Application is what sets apart a disciple

¹⁷⁹ John 13:35, KJV.

from a dabbler, a follower from a fan. Application states how you will live differently because of what you've just read.¹⁸⁰

Pastor, it is your responsibility to lead by example. In order to lead by example, the pastor must apply the principles of the Word within their daily living. Taking the knowledge that many pastors have mastered, and the understanding that God has given, it is the pastor's responsibility to become a practitioner of the Word of God. The clearest way to express this point is for the pastor to practice what he/she preaches. Don't be a teacher who fails to teach by example. Jesus taught the Disciples by example, for he didn't send them out without first giving clear examples of servanthood. Pastor, you are called to be an under-shepherd who feeds, leads, and protects the local church, but you are called to be a servant-leader who serves the people around you on a daily basis.

Leading Toward A Deeper Practice Of Wisdom

It is important that the believer obtains knowledge and understanding of God's Word. However, to only have these two elements of God's Word leaves the believer powerless. The believer can be the highest trained professor, pastor, or member in the Word of God, and fail to be a true disciple of Christ. Knowledge and understanding do not equal discipleship. Discipleship is the formation, transformation, and application of God's Word within the life of the believer. To fail to practice knowledge and understanding is a failure to practice wisdom. For wisdom is the practice of the knowledge and understanding of God's Word. Pastor, the third step to biblical discipleship is the step of applying the Word of God. The personal lives of the believers and the ministry of the church should be focused on applicational advances. Pastor, take the time to ask yourself the following questions regarding application. First, what is your understanding of application? Second, how are you personally applying the Word of God

¹⁸⁰ Wayne Cordeiro. *The Divine Mentor: Growing Your Faith As You Sit At The Feet Of The Savior.*, 106.

outside of the church walls? Third, how are you personally applying the Word of God within your home? Fourth, what level of importance do you personally place on practicing the disciplines of the faith? Fifth, what level of importance do you personally place in witnessing/sharing your faith? Six, how often do you promote activities and ministry opportunities that cause others to share their faith? Seventh, do the members of the local church and community see a true model of application within your life? Finally, does the present ministry of the church promote application? How? Or Why Not?

Pastor, there must be a balanced approach to biblical discipleship if the decline of American churches is to stop. However, this Thesis Project doesn't seek to solve the decline of American churches, but to present a three step approach to biblical discipleship by addressing the need for pastors to approach discipleship in a balanced manner. The formation, transformation, and application of God's Word within the life of the believer are vital for a positive effect on the local church to take place. It is only when the local pastor will approach discipleship through these continual steps, that the negative effect found within this Thesis Project will be addressed and changed.

Appendix A: A Letter Of Permission



Church of God State Executive Offices

August 1, 2013

Daniel Smith
Doctor of Ministry Student at
Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary

My name is Joseph Mirkovich; I am the Administrative Bishop of the Church of God in Mississippi. As the Administrative Bishop of the Church of God in the state of Mississippi I give permission for Daniel Smith, a student at Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, to conduct his research within the local churches in Mississippi.

Understanding of Participants

I understand that ten members of each church participating within this research project will be surveyed during the month of September 2013. Also, I understand the researcher will conduct a survey of each pastor participating within this Thesis Project.

Understanding Church and Individual Protection

I am aware that the researcher will protect the church and participants' identification. The researcher will avoid using the names of the church and the participants within the Doctor of Ministry Thesis Project. The churches will be addressed by number, such as (church 1). The pastor will be addressed by number, such as (pastor 1). The members will be addressed by the church number and by alphabet, such as (member 1a).

I understand the church and individual protection involved in this research.

☒ yes or no ☐

I grant permission to Daniel Smith to conduct research within the local churches throughout the Church of God in Mississippi during the month of September 2013.

Appendix B: A Letter Of Permission

Letter of Church Permission

To:
Daniel Smith
Doctor of Ministry Student at
Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary

My name is _____; I am the pastor of the _____.
As pastor I give permission for Daniel Smith, a student at Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, to conduct his research within this local church.

Understanding of Participants

I understand that ten members of my church will be surveyed during the months of September to December 2013. Also, I understand the researcher will conduct a survey of me as a part of his Thesis Project.

I understand that I will provide ten members, and that the members and I will be surveyed as part of this research. ____ yes or no ____

Understanding Church and Individual Protection

I am aware that the researcher will protect the church and participants' identification. The researcher will avoid using the names of the church and the participants within the Doctor of Ministry Thesis Project. The churches will be addressed by number, such as (church 1). The pastor will be addressed by number, such as (pastor 1). The members will be addressed by the church number and by alphabet, such as (member 1a).

**I understand the church and individual protection involved in this research.
____ yes or no ____**

I grant permission to Daniel Smith to conduct research within this local church during the months of September to December 2013.

Signature

Date

Print (Name)

Appendix C: Pastoral Survey

Pastoral Survey Consent to Participate in Research

A Pastor's Approach to Discipleship and Its Effect:
A Three Step Approach to Biblical Discipleship
Daniel Allen Smith
Liberty University
Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary

You are being asked to participate in a research study.

Before you agree, the investigator must tell you about (i) the purposes, procedures, and duration of the research; (ii) any procedures which are experimental; (iii) any reasonably foreseeable risks, discomforts, and benefits of the research; (iv) any potentially beneficial alternative procedures or treatments; and (v) how confidentiality will be maintained.

Reason You are Asked to Participate:

The researcher is researching Church of God pastors' and their congregation within the state of Mississippi. Your pastor has granted permission for this research to be conducted within your local church. Upon his permission you have been asked to participate within this research study.

Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to determine the ways in which the pastor influences discipleship in the local church: in the areas of formation, transformation, and application.

Procedures:

1. You will take the fifteen question survey, which will take 10 to 15 minutes.
2. Once the survey is completed you will seal the survey within the provided self-addressed stamped envelope.
3. Then you will mail the survey to the researcher.

Risk:

There are no risks in taking this survey, outside of the risk of everyday activities.

Benefits:

There are no direct benefits for participating in this survey.

Confidentiality:

The researcher will be the only person that will know who the church and pastor is once the survey is submitted. The pastor will know who participates in the survey, but will not know the results of the survey. The researcher will protect the identity of the church, pastor, and congregational members by using the following code. He will use a numbering system for each of the churches, pastors, and members.

Compensation:

By participating within this survey you will enable you church to be one of three churches to receive an \$100 gift card to Office Depot. Each church will be enrolled within a drawing, which will be conducted on December 4, 2013.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University and the Church of God. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Number of People Participating In the Study:

There will be 110 people participating within this research project. Ten pastors and 100 Members, ten from each church participating, within the Church of God in Mississippi will participate in this research.

You may contact Daniel Allen Smith at (662) 647-7479 any time you have questions about the research. The researcher's faculty mentor is Dr. Charlie Davidson and you may contact him by email at cdavidson@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

IRB Code Numbers: 1658.091313

IRB Expiration Date: September 12, 2014

Pastoral Survey

This survey is a part of the research required for Daniel Smith's Doctor of Ministry Thesis Project, "The Pastor's Approach To Discipleship And Its Effect: A Three Step Approach To Biblical Discipleship." Answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Remember, the information provided will be kept confidential and will be reported without using the names of the pastor or the church.

Questions:

What is the name of the church you pastor?

What is the highest level of training that you have received?

- ☐ High School
- ☐ Technical School
- ☐ Ministerial Training
- ☐ Some College
- ☐ Undergraduate Degree
- ☐ Graduate Degree
- ☐ Doctoral Degree

Which of the following statements would best describe your understanding and teaching concerning discipleship? (*Select Three That Apply*)

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching The Word | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading/Praying | <input type="checkbox"/> Training Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Holy Lifestyle | <input type="checkbox"/> Evangelism | <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry to Shut-Ins |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quoting The Word | <input type="checkbox"/> Fasting | <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry to The Poor |

What methods do you use in the process of fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20)?

- ☐ a. Small Groups
- ☐ b. Evangelism Projects (Outreach)
- ☐ c. Prayer Services
- ☐ d. Leadership Training
- ☐ e. Other _____

There are six issues listed below. Which is the most important, in your opinion, in making disciples? Rank them from one (being the most important) to six (being the least important).

- ☐ Teaching The Word of God
- ☐ Encouraging The Reading of God's Word
- ☐ Encouraging Ministry to The Poor
- ☐ Encouraging Fasting
- ☐ Offering Training Programs
- ☐ Encouraging Evangelism

Answer this question by relating it to your ministerial experience. How would you personally view the following statements?

1—Strongly Agree 2—Agree 3—Agree Somewhat 4—Disagree Somewhat 5—Disagree 6—Strongly Disagree

- ___ Discipleship is the process of influencing an individual, to the point of empowering them to influence other individuals in the same manner that they were influenced.
- ___ Discipleship is not a program.
- ___ Discipleship is a life-long process.
- ___ Biblical Discipleship cannot be measured by numbers.
- ___ Discipleship follows the mentoring process.
- ___ Discipleship only takes place when someone is empowered.
- ___ Discipleship takes place from leadership-down approach.
- ___ Discipleship only takes place within a small circle of influence.
- ___ The goal of a disciple is to be like his teacher.
- ___ The pastor must be a true Disciple of Christ before requiring those he leads to be a Disciple of Christ.

On a scale of 1 - 4 how would you answer the following questions about yourself?

1—Always 2—More than Not 3—Less than Half-Time 4—Never

- ___ Do you consider yourself a Disciple of Christ, based on your personal walk with the Lord?
- ___ Do you live a transformed life that is set apart from the world?
- ___ Do you find time to pray and read the Word of God daily, outside of sermon preparation?
- ___ Do you find time to practice ministry outside of the pulpit and church walls?
- ___ Do you find time to lead others by example?

Which of the following would best describe your personal time in prayer per day?

- ___ a. 30 min. or less
- ___ b. 45 min.
- ___ c. 1 hour
- ___ d. other _____

Which of the following would best describe your personal study time per day?

- ___ a. 30 min. or less
- ___ b. 45 min.
- ___ c. 1 hour
- ___ d. other _____

Which of the following would best describe your practice of evangelism, witnessing, and care for the needy per month?

- ☐ a. 30 min.
- ☐ b. 1 hour
- ☐ c. 2 hours
- ☐ d. None
- ☐ e. other _____

How often do you offer training for your leaders?

- ☐ a. 1 time a year
- ☐ b. 2 times a year
- ☐ c. 4 times a year
- ☐ d. 1 time a month
- ☐ e. other _____

As the pastor, how effective do you see your approach to discipleship in promoting development and structure within your personal life?

- ☐ a. very fruitful (continual development)
- ☐ b. somewhat fruitful (slow development)
- ☐ c. lacking fruit (no development)
- ☐ d. other _____

As the pastor, how effective do you see your approach to spiritual growth within the lives of your members?

- ☐ a. very fruitful (continual growth)
- ☐ b. somewhat fruitful (slow growth)
- ☐ c. lacking fruit (no growth)
- ☐ d. other _____

As the pastor, how effective do you see your approach to discipleship in practicing the Word of God outside of the church within your life?

- ☐ a. very fruitful (continual practice)
- ☐ b. somewhat fruitful (limited practice)
- ☐ c. lacking fruit (no practice)
- ☐ d. other _____

From your personal experience, what is the best approach to discipleship?

Appendix D: Congregational Survey

Congregational Survey Consent to Participate in Research

A Pastor's Approach to Discipleship and Its Effect:
A Three Step Approach to Biblical Discipleship
Daniel Allen Smith
Liberty University
Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary

You are being asked to participate in a research study.

Before you agree, the investigator must tell you about (i) the purposes, procedures, and duration of the research; (ii) any procedures which are experimental; (iii) any reasonably foreseeable risks, discomforts, and benefits of the research; (iv) any potentially beneficial alternative procedures or treatments; and (v) how confidentiality will be maintained

Reason You are Asked to Participate:

The researcher is researching Church of God pastors' and their congregation within the state of Mississippi. Your pastor has granted permission for this research to be conducted within your local church. Upon his permission you have been asked to participate within this research study.

Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to determine the ways in which the pastor influences discipleship in the local church: in the areas of formation, transformation, and application.

Procedures:

1. The pastor will ask ten of his members to come before or after church during the months of September-November 2013 to conduct the survey among all ten participants at one time.
2. You will then take the sixteen question survey, which will take 10 to 15 minutes.
3. Once the survey is taken, you will seal their survey within the provided envelope.
4. Once the envelope is sealed it will be returned to the pastor.
5. After all envelopes are sealed. The pastor will place all ten sealed envelopes within the self-addressed stamped storage envelope.
6. Finally the pastor will mail the storage envelope to the researcher.

Risk:

There are no risks in taking this survey, outside of the risk of everyday activities.

Benefits:

There will be no direct benefit for your participation within this survey.

Confidentiality:

The researcher will be the only person that will know who the church and pastor is once the survey is submitted. The pastor will know who participates in the survey, but will not know the results of the survey. The researcher will protect the identity of the church, pastor, and congregational members by using the following code. He will use a numbering system for each of the churches, pastors, and members.

Compensation:

By participating within this survey you will enable you church to be one of three churches to receive an \$100 gift card to Office Depot. Each church will be enrolled within a drawing, which will be conducted on December 4, 2013.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University and the Church of God. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships..

Number of People Participating In the Study:

There will be 110 people participating within this research project. Ten pastors and 100 Members, ten from each church participating, within the Church of God in Mississippi will participate in this research.

You may contact Daniel Allen Smith at (662) 647-7479 any time you have questions about the research. The researcher's faculty mentor is Dr. Charlie Davidson and you may contact him by email at cdavidson@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

You may keep this consent form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

_____ Yes
_____ No

IRB Code Numbers: 1658.091313

IRB Expiration Date: September 12, 2014

Congregational Survey

This survey is a part of the research required for Daniel Smith's Doctor of Ministry Thesis Project, "The Pastor's Approach To Discipleship And Its Effect: A Three Step Approach To Biblical Discipleship." Answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Remember the information provided will be kept confidential and be reported without using the member or church names.

Questions:

What is your church's name?

What is the highest level of training that you have received?

- ☐ High School
- ☐ Technical School
- ☐ Some College
- ☐ Undergraduate Degree
- ☐ Graduate Degree
- ☐ Doctoral Degree

Which of the following statements would best describe your pastor's understanding and teaching concerning discipleship? (*Select Three That Apply*)

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching The Word | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading/Praying | <input type="checkbox"/> Training Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Holy Lifestyle | <input type="checkbox"/> Evangelism | <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry to Shut-Ins |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quoting The Word | <input type="checkbox"/> Fasting | <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry to The Poor |

What methods does your church take in the process of fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20)?

- ☐ a. Small Groups
- ☐ b. Evangelism Projects (Outreach)
- ☐ c. Prayer Service
- ☐ d. Leadership Training
- ☐ e. Other _____

There are six issues listed below, which is the most important, in our opinion, to making disciples? Rank them from one (being the most important) to six (being the least important).

- ☐ Teaching The Word of God
- ☐ Encouraging The Reading of God's Word
- ☐ Encouraging Ministry to The Poor
- ☐ Encouraging Fasting
- ☐ Offering Training Programs
- ☐ Encouraging Evangelism

Answer this question by relating it to your pastor's approach to discipleship. How would you personally view the following statements?

1—Strongly Agree 2—Agree 3—Agree Somewhat 4—Disagree Somewhat 5—Disagree 6—Strongly Disagree

- ___ Discipleship is the process of influencing an individual, to the point of empowering them to influence another individual in the same manner that they were influenced.
- ___ Discipleship is not a program.
- ___ Discipleship is a life-long process.
- ___ Biblical Discipleship cannot be measured by numbers.
- ___ Discipleship follows the mentoring process.
- ___ Discipleship only takes place when someone is empowered.
- ___ Discipleship takes place from a leadership-down approach.
- ___ Discipleship only takes place within a small circle of influence.
- ___ The goal of a disciple is to be like his teacher.
- ___ The pastor must be a true Disciple of Christ before requiring those he leads to be a Disciple of Christ.

On a scale of 1 -4 how would you answer the following questions about your pastor?

1—Always 2—More than Not 3—Less than Half-Time 4—Never

- ___ Do you consider your pastor to be a Disciple of Christ, based on his personal walk with the Lord?
- ___ Do you believe that your pastor lives a transformed life that is set apart from the world?
- ___ Do you believe that your pastor finds time to pray and read the Word of God daily, outside of sermon preparation?
- ___ Do you believe that your pastor finds time to practice ministry outside of the pulpit and church walls?
- ___ Do you believe that your pastor finds time to lead others by example?

Which of the following would best describe your personal time in prayer per day?

- ___ a. 30 min. or less
- ___ b. 45 min.
- ___ c. 1 hour
- ___ d. other _____

Which of the following would best describe your personal study time per day?

- ___ a. 30 min. or less
- ___ b. 45 min.
- ___ c. 1 hour
- ___ d. other _____

Which of the following would best describe your practice of evangelism, witnessing, and care for those in need per month?

- ☐ a. 30 min.
- ☐ b. 1 hour
- ☐ c. 2 hours
- ☐ d. None
- ☐ e. other _____

How often do you attend training that your pastor offers to the church?

- ☐ a. 1 time a year
- ☐ b. 2 times a year
- ☐ c. 4 times a year
- ☐ d. 1 time a month
- ☐ e. other _____

As a member, how effective do you see your pastor's approach in promoting development and structure within the church?

- ☐ a. very fruitful (continual development)
- ☐ b. somewhat fruitful (slow development)
- ☐ c. lacking fruit (no development)
- ☐ d. other _____

As a member, how effective do you see your pastor's approach to spiritual growth within the church?

- ☐ a. very fruitful (continual growth)
- ☐ b. somewhat fruitful (slow growth)
- ☐ c. lacking fruit (no growth)
- ☐ d. other _____

As a member, how effective do you see your pastor's approach to practicing the Word of God outside of the church?

- ☐ a. very fruitful (continual practice)
- ☐ b. somewhat fruitful (limited practice)
- ☐ c. lacking fruit (no practice)
- ☐ d. other _____

What type of affect has your pastor had upon your life in the area of discipleship?

- ☐ a. positive
- ☐ b. somewhat positive
- ☐ c. negative

What type of affect has your pastor had upon the lives of the entire church in the area of discipleship?

- ☐ a. positive
- ☐ b. somewhat positive
- ☐ c. negative

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VITA

Daniel A. Smith

PERSONAL

Born: November 11, 1982

Married: Leslie M. Black, July 24, 2004.

Children: Samuel A. Smith, born January 22, 2008.

Kaylee Madison Smith, born June 20, 2009

Haylie Jo Smith, born March 1, 2011

EDUCATIONAL

B.S., Blue Mountain College, 2005.

M.Div., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010.

S.T.M., Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011.

MINISTERIAL

Exhorter Certificate: July 14, 1999, Church of God, Cleveland, TN.

Ordained Minister Certificate: November 16, 2001, Church of God, Cleveland, TN.

Ordained Bishop Certificate: November 27, 2007, Church of God, Cleveland, TN.

PROFFESIONAL

Pastor, Fame Church of God, 2004-2006.

Pastor, Charleston Church of God, 2006-2010.

Adjunct Professor of Bible and Theology, Valor Christian College Online, 2011-2013.

Pastor, Bude Church of God, 2010-present.

September 13, 2013

Daniel Smith

IRB Exemption 1658.091313: A Pastor's Approach to Discipleship and Its Effect: A Three-Step Approach to Biblical Discipleship

Dear Daniel,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and that no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101 (b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and that any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption, or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling

(434) 592-4054

Liberty University