

Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary

Five Challenges to Disciple Making and Strategies to Address Them

A Thesis Project Submitted to  
The Faculty of Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary  
in candidacy for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

by  
Leonard Baldwin

Lynchburg, Virginia

June 2016

Copyright 2016, Leonard Baldwin.  
All rights reserved.

Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary

**Thesis Project Approval Sheet**

---

Mentor Dr. Dan Burrell

---

Reader Dr. Fernando Abella

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Five Challenges to Disciple Making and Strategies to Address Them**

Leonard Baldwin

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016

Mentor: Dr. Dan Burrell

In today's society, the church has missed an opportunity to make a definite impact on the lives of the congregations. Disciple making has all but disappeared from the life of the church. This has left the church with a lot of members but very few disciples. The purpose of this project is to develop five strategies to help pastors and lay leaders address the discipleship challenges in the church. The five areas that will be addressed are theology, tradition, training, time, and transparency. Each challenge will be addressed individually and a strategy developed for that challenge. This project will provide church leaders with the information necessary not only to deal with the current situation but also to change the culture of disciple making in the future.

Abstract length: 126 words.

## Contents

<b>Title Page</b> .....	i
<b>Copyright</b> .....	ii
<b>Signature Page</b> .....	iii
<b>Abstract</b> .....	iv
<b>Contents</b> .....	v
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	vii
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	viii
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	2
Statement of Limitations .....	5
Definitions .....	6
Theoretical Basis .....	9
Statement of Methodology .....	12
Review of Literature .....	14
<b>Chapter Two</b> .....	25
Discipleship in the Gospels .....	26
Discipleship in the Book of Acts .....	30
Discipleship in the Epistles .....	33
Discipleship Down Through the Centuries .....	37
<b>Chapter Three</b> .....	45
Challenge One: Theology .....	46

Challenge Two: Tradition .....	51
Challenge Three: Training .....	55
Challenge Four: Time .....	60
Challenge Five: Transparency .....	64
<b>Chapter Four</b> .....	78
Philosophy .....	79
Purpose.....	75
Process .....	79
Priority .....	83
Personal.....	87
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	99
Biblical DM .....	100
Challenges and Strategies .....	96
<b>Appendix A:</b> Disciple Making Survey .....	120
<b>Appendix B:</b> Disciple Making Survey Results .....	115
<b>Appendix C:</b> Figures .....	116
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	117

## **List of Figures**

Figure 3.1      Theology Survey Results

Figure 3.2      Tradition Survey Results

Figure 3.3      Training Survey Results

Figure 3.4      Time Survey Results

Figure 3.5      Transparency Survey Results

## Abbreviations

Diss	<i>Dissertation</i>
DM	<i>Disciple-Making</i>
DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
EdD	<i>Doctor of Education</i>
HS	<i>Holy Spirit</i>
PhD	<i>Doctor of Philosophy</i>



## Chapter One

### Introduction

One of the most misunderstood and most neglected areas in the church is the area of disciple making (DM). Whether this problem is intentional or accidental, the effect on the church is just as severe. God provided the process of DM and He sent Jesus to model it for the world. The original DM process consisted of Jesus finding a few men into whom He could pour His life, and then teaching them how to find a few men into whom they could pour their lives into. Therefore, Jesus not only showed the disciples what it meant to be in relationship with God, He also taught them how they could have the same relationship.

Another area to examine is the number of people who can be effectively discipled at any given time. Jesus knew that if He was going to be effective, He had to limit the number of people with whom He spent intimate time. Jesus created levels of intimacy within the group of people who traveled with Him. To affect the lives of people, a relationship of trust and confidence needs to be established. Jesus had as an inner circle where He discussed personal matters. This cannot be done in a large group setting.

The early disciples were committed to Jesus and to carrying on His teachings through their words and deeds.<sup>1</sup> When Jesus left the disciples, He gave them specific instructions on how to continue the work that He had started. Those disciples did that but things have been going terribly wrong over the centuries. Sadly, the strategy was there but the execution was not.

---

<sup>1</sup> George Barna, *Growing True Disciples: New Strategies for Producing Genuine Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001), 14.

Many religious trappings and abuses have infiltrated the body of Christ today.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the body has no clear plan in place for making disciples. There are very few disciple-makers in the church today and if things don't change, the body of Christ may lose its effectiveness. The church has drifted from DM into convert making and the desire to be like Christ has been reduced to a desire to have thousands of church members.

The people who were entrusted with carrying on the process needed to be more diligent in their commitment. What started out as the greatest movement in the life of the church has sadly become one of its biggest tragedies. The world is searching for something and it has no idea what that is. As a result, the world moves further and further away from God.

#### Statement of the Problem

The command to make disciples has been swallowed up by the desire to grow the number of people who carry the name of Christ. Surveys talk about how much the Christian now resembles the rest of the world. George Barna reveals that six out of ten Americans believe that the church has no relevance in today's society.<sup>3</sup> In another survey Barna states that "In the aspects of lifestyle where Christians can have their greatest impact on the lives of non-Christians, there are no visible differences between the two segments."<sup>4</sup> The church has been warned not to allow the world to influence it to the point that it is no longer able to impact unbelievers. Christians are slowly becoming marginalized in society.

---

<sup>2</sup> Bill Hull, *New Century Disciple Making: Applying Jesus' Ideas for the Future* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1990), 29.

<sup>3</sup> Barna, *The Frog and the Kettle* (Ventura, CA: Baker, 1990), 138.

<sup>4</sup> Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church* (Nashville TN: Word 1998), 6.

This is due in part to the lack of understanding concerning true Christianity. Worshipers want the experience of being with God without the commitment that relationship requires.<sup>5</sup>

The lack of a biblically based DM model has led to mediocre Christians and a church that is in need of the Holy Spirit. The church has lost its direction and Christians have lost their commitment to the things of God. The term *disciple* has lost its significance and the church is suffering for it. As a result, the church is having difficulty understanding how to make disciples. It is difficult to fulfill the Great Commission when the standards have been lost.

The problem with DM in today's churches is twofold: the focus of the church and the commitment of the Christians who attend church. These two areas need to be addressed before any real change can take place.

### **Church Focus**

Today's church needs to reexamine itself to see if it is living up to its purpose. Church is defined by what they are and do rather than by the presence and work of Jesus.<sup>6</sup> Churches no longer focus on biblical DM. They have programs that they consider to be discipleship; however, true commitment from the disciple-maker or the person being disciplined rarely takes place. People are asked to learn about being disciples but not to act on what they learn. DM was never about how much information you can pass from one person to another. Until the church focuses on the biblical model of DM, the term will always mean education without application.

---

<sup>5</sup> Robert Lewis, *The Church of Irresistible Influence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 2001), 24.

<sup>6</sup> Neil Cole, *Church 3.0: Upgrades for the Future of the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Boss 2010), 57.

Another church failure has been in the area of leadership. Many times, leadership positions are decided based on relationships rather than calling or gifting. There has been a push in the church to be placed in seats of honor based on accomplishments rather than based on spirituality. As a result, the church has failed to identify and place competent leaders in the DM process.<sup>7</sup>

To develop an effective DM ministry, the leader needs to be committed to the process. It does not matter how well thought-out the program is; if the wrong people are leading it, the result will be less than what God demands. Dedication starts at the top, not at the bottom. If the leader is not committed, the laypeople will act the same. God's work must be done God's way if it is going to have the effect that God intended.

### **Christian Commitment**

Jesus commanded the disciples to make disciples. The disciples with whom Jesus worked set out to accomplish that mission. Over time, the later generation of disciple makers began to focus more toward church growth and less toward DM. Most people don't know that they are not living up to the mandate because they have never been exposed to the actual command. George Barna states, "The real obstacle to becoming fully devoted, zealous Disciples of Christ are not money, time, methods, or knowledge. The major obstacle is the human heart."<sup>8</sup> People have become so busy with themselves that they don't feel they have time to invest in others. Jesus says that a person must be willing to give up his life if they wish to be His followers.

---

<sup>7</sup> Barna, *Growing True Disciples*, 98.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

And those that do not take the time to spend with people never really expose themselves in a way that reaches the other person.

According to the scriptures, DM requires a relationship (Matt 4:18-22;16:24;19:29). It is impossible to have a lasting effect in a person's life without having a relationship with that person. The result is a superficial relationship that lacks commitment and lacks the power to effect change in the life of another. DM requires authenticity and a genuine concern for another believer.

This lack of focus on DM has left the church with several challenges and very few strategies to deal with them. This project will look at five of those challenges and develop strategies to address those challenges. As with all things, a solution cannot be obtained until the issues have been identified. This project is not intended to be an authoritative solution to the problem, but it will provide solid strategies that can be applied to the challenge.

#### Statement of Limitations

One of the limitations to this project is the lack of a consistent biblical DM model. The church over time has developed a model that resembled its belief system rather than the model demonstrated by Jesus. With so many models from to choose, the church has lost its consistency. The saturation of books and lesson plans has also reduced the amount of work required by the church leaders and removed the desire for relationship building.

Another limitation is the commitment to DM in the church. The church has become so focused on seeing people saved that it has forgotten that salvation is a step in the process of Christian maturity, not the end. The church calls the people to salvation but rarely calls them to grow.

Other than a few mentions throughout the sermon, people never hear the call to grow in Christ. This lack of commitment to the cause has many believers thinking that spiritual growth is a personal matter, and DM, while mentioned, is not a priority for the believer.

Other limitations include the unwillingness of churches to change how they view DM. Until the church makes it a priority, the people will not make it so. DM can be seen as a class being offered in the church and oftentimes a signup sheet to see how many people are interested. When the church considers DM just another program, the effectiveness of the church is limited.

The final limitation, and probably one of the most critical, is the unwillingness of people to be open and transparent when it comes to their lifestyle outside church. The church is full of people who have been conditioned to act as if they are following God and very few have evidence of that in their everyday lives. The walk does not match the talk. It is possible for a person to quote scriptures without internalizing the words.

## Definitions

### **Believer**

A believer is any person that has truly given their life to Jesus and made Him Lord and Savior. This person demonstrates that Jesus is in control of their life in both word and deed. This person, however, may not be involved in a disciple-making relationship.

### **Christian**

A person who states they believe in Jesus. This person may or may not have been actively evangelizing or living according to the values established by the Christian faith. It is this area that the church is having trouble with.

**Church**

In this project, the word *church* refers to the building as well as those people who claim to be believers. Although it is difficult to distinguish between a true believer and a nonbeliever based on attendance in church, this project will consider any one attending a gathering for the sake of religious activity to be a part of the church.

**Disciple**

In this context, a disciple is a person who is living the Christian life in both word and action. This person must spend time learning and growing in the area of spiritual maturity as well as working to advance the kingdom. A disciple is also a person who is involved in the process of making other disciples.

**Discipleship**

The current process used to teach a person how to model the life of a disciple. Discipleship is seen as a group class or classes that have a predicted end. In this context, it is meant to convey the way some churches are currently discipling its members.

**Disciple Making**

The process by which a person spends time with another person to help them develop into the type of believer they are called by scripture to be. This does not end based on a schedule; this is a lifelong commitment to both God and the person being disciplined. This is meant to represent what is believed to be the biblical model of DM.

**Evangelism**

Any activity that involves the interactions between people with the intent of sharing the gospel. While in some cases evangelism can be a planned event, for the sake of the project it is any type of sharing of the gospel.

**Mentor**

For the purposes of this project, a mentor is a person who invests both time and effort in helping another person grow in the area of spiritual maturity. This person must be in a position to help through modeling both knowledge and lifestyle.

**Pastor**

The head of the Local church, and the person who is responsible for the welfare of the members of a church. This person does not have to be working in a paid position. The requirement is to be the overseer for a specific body of believers.

**Spiritual Disciplines**

Strategies used by a person to help in their relationship with God. These disciplines help the person establish a set of activities that can be duplicated over time. These activities include but are not limited to prayer, Bible study, and meditation.

**Theology**

In this project, the word *theology* is limited to the area of discipleship—specifically, discipleship as it is presented in scripture. This definition does not take into account any denominational preferences.



## **Traditions**

How the church currently views and carries out discipleship. This includes things that are believed to be scriptural and a mandate for disciple makers. This does, however, include denominational preferences.

## **Training**

The current way churches conduct their discipleship programs. This includes but is not limited to classrooms, large groups, small groups, and, in some cases, one-to-one discipleship. The focus is not so much the setting but the way in which the discipling is conducted.

## **Transparency**

For this project, transparency means the sharing of oneself to establish a meaningful and personal relationship with another person. This includes sharing of one's personal life when the time is appropriate. This includes things that may be uncomfortable for the people involved.

## **Theoretical Basis**

And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:18–20).<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the New American Standard Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995).

### **Example Set by Jesus**

The first area seen in the work of Jesus was the selection process and the invitation. Jesus began His DM ministry by carefully selecting the people whom He would disciple. The selecting was not based on personal preference; it was based on the needs of God. He gave a personal invitation to the potential disciples: “As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector’s booth; and He said to him, “Follow Me!” And he got up and followed Him” (Matt. 9:9).

Once Jesus selected the disciples, He explained to them the level of commitment they would have to have to carry out the mission (Luke 14:27–30). This commitment not only included giving up their time; it also included giving up their worldly possessions and their desires for worldly success. “So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions” (Luke 14:33). To be a disciple, it is necessary to give up all rights to self. Jesus showed the level of commitment needed to be a successful disciple maker.

Jesus also let the disciples know that regardless of how successful they felt they were becoming they would have to count on Him for the power to accomplish the mission. Jesus reinforced to them the reality that everything they accomplish would be a result of their connection to Him:

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. (John 15:5–8)

### **Example Set by Paul**

As Paul went across the country explaining the gospel to people, he also demonstrated what it meant to live out that message. As a result, many people not only heard and responded to the gospel; they made the changes necessary to ensure that the work of God would go on. The believers became a community that cared for each other and continued in fellowship with each other long after Paul had departed.

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42–47)

Paul also explained that they would have to work out their salvation. “So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12), which is something that seems to be missing from today’s believer. The church has not focused on the requirement for believers to demonstrate their belief by the way in which they live.

Paul also felt to need to address the potential for arrogance within the body, so he explained that everyone has a place in the body and that no one is more important than anyone else “from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love” (Eph. 4:16). If the body is to grow, every part needs to be working in concert with all the other parts.

DM is the method that God uses to expand the church and the kingdom. Jesus and Paul have demonstrated what that looks like when done correctly. It is up to the disciple makers of today to follow the model presented in scripture and to ensure that the church becomes a DM church and not just a group of superficial Christians.

### Statement of Methodology

The survey will consist of twenty questions designed not only to see how the church presently views DM but also to determine what the church feels is an appropriate DM process. The survey will concentrate on the areas of theology, traditions, training, time, and transparency. This survey will be a paper survey handed out to church members during a Sunday morning service.

The process will be done two consecutive Sundays to allow those who may be absent on one of the Sundays to participate in the survey. The church members will be instructed to return the survey to a prepositioned box when they exit the sanctuary. The church members will be under no obligation to participate and no records of any kind will be recorded. No personal information will be collected.

Using the results of that survey and the literature published in those five areas, the project will develop five strategies to help the church address the challenges that those areas pose to biblical DM. The project will be laid out in the following order:

### **Chapter One – Five Challenges to DM**

Chapter One introduces what is a problem for the church when it comes to fulfilling the Great Commission.

The project will present the biblical mandate for DM and also the current state of DM in today's churches. This chapter also acknowledges that while there are many other challenges to true DM, this project will only focus on five areas. The chapter will also lay out the methodology used as well as the resources used in the completion of this project.

## **Chapter Two – Background of DM**

Chapter Two will present the history of DM and how it has changed over the years. The chapter will present the models used in the past and the effectiveness of those models.

In this chapter, the lack of specific guidance will be addressed and the effects that denominational preferences played in the discipleship of believers will be described. This chapter will include both people and events that contributed to current state of DM.

## **Chapter Three – Five Challenges to Effective DM**

Chapter Three is a consolidation of all the research used and the insights gained through the survey process. In this chapter, the project will present the five challenges chosen in a logical and concise way. This will allow the reader to see exactly how the challenge presented has affected the way the church currently makes disciples.

The challenges addressed will include the theology of DM as set forth in scripture, the way DM has been done in the past, the training models used to make disciples, the effects of time on the DM process, and the lack of transparency in DM and in the local church as a whole.

## **Chapter Four – Strategies for Effective DM**

Chapter Four presents five strategies that specifically address the challenges presented in the previous chapter.

These strategies will be developed using the data from the survey results as well as other written resources on the subject. These strategies will directly address each of the challenges presented. The strategies will be presented in ways that the reader can easily identify the areas that need to be addressed if the DM process is going to be successful. The information is provided to assist in the development of a successful DM ministry and should be seen as the only way to do so.

## **Chapter Five – Conclusion**

Chapter Five will be a summary of the entire project presented in a way, that if needed, could be taken individually and still capture the essence of the project. It will be designed to provide a comprehensive recap of the information presented by this project. This chapter will arrange both the challenges and the strategies in a way that can be easily followed by anyone facing the challenges mentioned. This will be presented in a one-to-one format which will allow for ease of content. This will give the reader a quick reference guide that will help him or her deal with the challenges of biblical DM.

### Review of Literature

#### ***The Jesus Revolution: Learning from Christ's First Followers* by Leith Anderson**

The book was written to explain how the disciples went about advancing the kingdom of God after the death of Jesus. The book follows the advancement of the gospel through the thoughts and actions of the disciples. The book demonstrates what can happen when people decide to trust Jesus for their existence. It removes the excuses often presented by believers who are willing to commit to making disciples.

***Growing True Disciples: New Strategies for Producing Genuine Followers of Christ* by George Barna**

The book establishes through research what the current struggles are in the area of DM. This book provides the factual evidence to support the belief that a large part of the problems with DM stems from the lack of commitment on the part of the people who are responsible for the task. The believers have not given the DM the correct amount of dedication and commitment necessary to be successful. This book is a call to carry out the biblical mandate given by Jesus to the church.

***The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert E. Coleman**

This book sets out to explain the true mission of the church and the role that believers play in it. The books suggest that the first duty of church leadership is to see to it that a foundation is built that leads to a successful evangelistic ministry. This book also explains that evangelism is work that has been given to the church by God and that if it is going to be effective then God must be a part of the process.

***The Lost Art of DM* by Leroy Eims**

Provides the project with a comprehensive look at what has become the missing part of DM. The author explains that Jesus gave the blueprint for DM. This book also demonstrates the differences between past and present DM philosophies. History shows that Jesus's message was personalized in His everyday affairs of life and the life of His followers. The present generation needs to understand the model and begin the execution of the mission.

***Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow* by Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation**

This book points out that for any true DM to take place, there must be a transformation in the life of all parties involved. It also demonstrates how transformation is foundational to true Christian living. A believer can only mature when they commit themselves to fully understanding and living out what it means to be a follower of Jesus. When the believer internalizes the message of the gospel, they will be compelled to act. It is through that action that the church will continue to grow.

***Jesus Christ Disciple Maker* by Bill Hull**

The author points out that the foundation of ministry is caring, and the link to a caring spirit is communion with God. The author also states that Christians should be grounded in word, prayer, fellowship, and witnessing. Unless the disciple maker is walking with the Holy Spirit (HS), they will eventually sabotage their witness to the world. The relationship with God and with fellow believers is to be ongoing and should never be taken for granted. The ability to be successful rests in the relationships developed both on the horizontal and the vertical levels.

***New Century Disciple Making* by Bill Hull**

This book has tried to tackle one of the issues that plague most churches today: the lack of authentic DM. The author points out that many religious trappings and abuses have infiltrated the body of Christ and caused the church to lose focus on the mission. The author addresses the reason most people do not get involved in DM. True DM is difficult because it entails change, it takes a long time, and it is hard to visualize. The culture today is very reluctant to do anything that does not bring an immediate return on time and effort.



***Just Like Jesus by Max Lucado***

This book presents the case for being a true disciple. It discusses the relationship between God and the believer. It also explains the way that a believer needs to view himself in relationship to God. This book will be used to establish the baseline measurement for a disciple of Christ. The goal should always be to reflect Jesus to the rest of the world. This can only be done through a knowledge and commitment to the things of Christ. Jesus was the model for all believers to follow.

***Making Disciples: Developing Lifelong Followers of Jesus by Ralph Moore***

This book discusses the mindset of a disciple maker. The book also discusses the biblical mandate for all believers to make disciples and points out several essential parts of DM that are often overlooked. This book will be used to stress the importance of DM as well as discuss the dynamics needed in the DM relationship. The book focuses on the importance of relationships in the life of a disciple maker. The relationship is both horizontal and vertical; it is impossible to have one without the other and still be living the Christian life correctly.

***Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples A Few at a Time by Greg Ogden***

This book presents the case for going back to the Jesus model of DM. It talks about the realization that very few discipleship models being used today effectively transform the life of the people involved. This book will be used to establish what it means to have a discipleship model that not only transforms the believer but also gives them the ability to reproduce themselves in a meaningful way. It exposes the reader to the personal aspects of disciple making as well as gives the justification for the need to be engaged in the lives of others.

**“The Discipleship Art of Biblical Mentoring: A Christian Discipleship Curriculum Design for Fashioning a Great Commission Church” by Holt A. Clarke**

This thesis seeks to establish the current state of affairs in the 21st-century church. It also points out where the church has fallen short in the area of discipleship. This thesis will be used to help validate the belief that the church has not met the needs of the people in the area of DM. Mentorship is something that is spoken of in the secular world but hardly ever practiced in the church. This thesis also helps define what happens when believers live out the scriptures in their everyday lives. It also helps establish the fact that DM needs to be planned to be effective.

**“Growing Disciples in the Pattern of the Twelve: The Ecclesiola in Ecclesia as a Model for Spiritual Transformation and Local Church Discipleship” by Steven L. Dunmire**

This thesis presents the need for the church to select a small group of people to be the core group of disciple makers. This position is based on the way Jesus recruited and organized His disciples. The author points out that Jesus initiated the relationship. This thesis will be used to reinforce the need for church leaders to actively look for someone to disciple. Once the people have been identified, there needs to be a concerted effort to make genuine disciples.

**“The Relationship Between a Church’s Discipleship Practices and the Development of Maturing Disciples” by Eric Richard Erskine**

This thesis states discipleship is the most important thing and the most often overlooked ministry in the church. The author believes that without strong disciples, the church will falter in all areas of ministry. This thesis will be used to demonstrate why the classroom approach to DM is not sufficient for the task at hand.

This thesis will also be used to demonstrate the importance of DM in the church and how the lack of DM hampers the work of the church as well as limits the growth of the believer. If the church does not have spiritually-grounded workers, the church's ability to influence the world will be greatly reduced.

**“The Great Invitation: A Call to Discipleship” by Richard Novel Foster**

This thesis presents an overlooked area in DM. Many pastors have graduated seminary with very little, if any, training in the area of DM. As a result, pastors become disillusioned when they don't see growth in the spiritual maturity of their members. If this trend is going to change, pastors will need to revisit the way they handle discipleship in the church. This thesis will be used to stress the importance of developing pastors in the area of DM.

**“Using the Jesus Narrative for Discipleship” by Christopher Todd Heckaman**

The thesis states that the use of imagery helps to deepen the desire for discipleship. The thesis also points the success Jesus had by the use of narratives as a teaching model. This thesis will be used to help demonstrate the need for both imagery and the use of narratives when presenting information to the disciple. The thesis will also be used to point out the need for a systematic DM process in the church.

**“The Barnabas Discipleship Method and Model: A Quest for True and Effective New Testament Discipleship” by Wayne Thomas Keinath**

This thesis presents the idea that every word of Jesus needs to be taken as authoritative and should be followed. It develops methods and models that could be used to create a DM curriculum for the church.

The thesis also presents the case that the work Barnabas did in Antioch is a successful model that should be incorporated in the DM approaches of today's churches. This thesis will be used to support the need for a well-planned DM process that can be duplicated as the need arises.

### **“The Cost of Discipleship: Losing One's Life for Jesus' Sake” by Paul Tanner**

This article points out how difficult it has been for believers to be willing to sacrifice personal desires for Christ. The article also presents the realization that to be a true disciple, a person must be willing to surrender all areas of his or her life for the sake of the gospel. This article will be used to demonstrate the level of commitment a person must have if they are going to be a true disciple. One of the major struggles in this life is the struggle to give up one's self for the advancement of the kingdom.

### **“Discipleship” by Dallas Willard**

The church in the past has misrepresented what it means to be a disciple of Christ. The article presents the case that making convert was never what Christ wanted and also demonstrated that to truly follow Christ means to make disciples not converts. Jesus spent time with His disciples and in turn the disciples had firsthand knowledge of how they should behave and what they should share with the world after Jesus left them. This article will be used to reinforce the biblical model of DM.

## **Scriptures**

### **Acts 2:21**

Many people have taken scriptures that speak to the assurance of salvation and have decided that giving their life to Christ was enough.

There has been no further thought to the responsibilities that come with being saved. This thinking may have played a role in the lack of disciple makers in today's churches. The church has failed to give an accurate picture of what it means to call on the name of the Lord. Salvation is only the beginning of the walk with Jesus.

**Matthew 16:13–19; John 10:27**

Those people who spend time with you should not have any problem understanding who you are and what you stand for. The disciples were enlightened by Jesus and also told that as disciples they would have to carry on the work of the church. Jesus said that His sheep would know Him and follow Him. This passage points out that it is only through a personal relationship with Christ will a disciple maker be able to clearly follow His direction.

**John 9:28; 18:15, 16**

Sometimes people reject what they don't know. Even though Jesus had demonstrated His Deity, the people were still refusing to accept Him and were even going so far as profess their allegiance to Moses. This scripture demonstrates how powerful traditions can be in trying to change the way people view their religion.

**Matthew 26:74**

Knowledge and familiarity are no guarantee when a person would be willing give his or her life for another. Even though Peter knew who Jesus was, he was not ready to commit himself to the same fate that Jesus was about to endure. This should be a caution for all those who believe that they have arrived. True character is revealed when tested and what a person says is not always what they will do.

**John 12:4**

This verse demonstrates that when a person is disillusioned, there is no telling how they will respond. Some people are with willing to do anything as long as they can see a benefit for them. This scripture points out that there is something in all of us that if not controlled can lead to selfish thoughts and actions.

**Matthew 28:18–20**

It is important to establish by whose authority the disciples would be working. To do the things of God, you have to be following the plans of God. This passage not only provided the authority; it also provided the plan and process for the successful accomplishment of the mission. The disciples were shown how to make disciples through the life of Jesus.

**Mark 2:14**

This scripture shows how impactful a personal invitation can be. Jesus gave Matthew a personal invitation for discipleship and as a result Matthew followed Him. Some people are willing but are waiting to be asked to help. People sit week after week in the congregation waiting for someone to ask them to do something. DM must involve an intentional and personal approach if it is going to be successful.

**John 20:21; Matthew 6:33**

These passages will be used to point out that not only is DM doable; it also has the promise that God will be there to ensure that it is successful. God wants His people to seek His kingdom first and He will provide for them.

It reinforces the fact that DM is a God-ordained activity. God is waiting to show that He can accomplish whatever He wants in this world and in the life of His children.

**John 15: 5–8**

This passage is a reminder that anything done for God must include Jesus as the anchor. Jesus points out that He is the life source and without Him, they will not be successful. It also provides the promise that if you do things for the glory of God, He will make sure that the resources are there.

**Acts 2:42–47; John 13:35**

This scripture is used to demonstrate what happens in the life of a person that has truly been saved. The results of salvation lead to a changed life and a dedication to the things of God. It also speaks to the effects the disciples had on the communities. This passage points out that it is impossible to be a true representation of Christ without demonstrating a love for people.

**Hebrews 10:24–25**

This passage speaks to the need for community. It explains that through community, we can be there for each other. It also points out the reality that one day things will be different and that the believers have a responsibility to be ready.

**Ephesians 4:16**

This passage speaks to the need for each member of the body to understand its place and its role in the body. This passage also points out that every member is needed if the body is going to work as it was designed.

**Luke 14:26–27, 33**

This passage speaks to the requirement for Jesus to be number one in the life of the believer. If a person is going to be a disciple of Jesus, they have to be totally committed to the work of the gospel.

**John 8:31–32; 12:26**

This scripture confirms the need for the disciple to trust and obey what Jesus taught. Jesus assures them that He is the truth and only through the truth can they be truly free. Jesus also reminds them that the Father will be there to reward their service.

**Acts 13:52**

This passage demonstrates what having a relationship with God can do for the believer. The Holy Spirit (HS) is a never-ending supply of power in the life of a disciple. It is this connection that allows the discipler to be effective in the area of DM.



## **Chapter Two**

### **History of Disciple Making**

Disciple making is grounded in the Word of God and demonstrated in the life of Jesus. God knew that to restore the relationship that was destroyed by Adam, He was going to have to be the initiator. God longed for a relationship with His people and Jesus was the instrument to get it done.

When Jesus was returning to His place in glory, He commanded His disciples to go and make disciples. Those disciples set out to accomplish that mission. However, somewhere between the end of the gospels and the present-day church, the mission of DM morphed into the mission of convert making.

The church has been on a campaign to get as many people as possible to state that they are Christian but has totally missed the call for evidence of that fact. DM in the local church has been reduced to a few classes where the subject is discussed but a commitment to execution is not asked for. The church became more about what is said than what is actually done.

A clear understanding of what DM is and how to go about the work of DM has been missing from the church for quite some time. If the church is going to truly make disciples, it is going to have not only to get busy; it is also going to have to reeducate the people who believe they are already doing it. What the church needs is a few good people dedicated to fulfilling the mission in the way that Jesus intended it to be done. This will require a recommitment to the lordship of Jesus and a willingness to live as He lived. To make disciples, you have to be willing to be a disciple.

## Discipleship in the Gospels

All the information concerning Jesus and His earthly ministry can be found in the gospels. Jesus demonstrates through His lifestyle and teachings what it means to be a follower of God and also sets the standard for what it means to be a disciple.

Jesus concentrates on training twelve men and presenting His deity for everyone to see. The disciples will be required to learn the principles of discipleship and are expected to apply those principles on demand.<sup>10</sup> It was these principles that would be the standard for all disciple makers.

As the life of Jesus unfolds throughout the New Testament, several things become obvious, one of which is the plan of God to create a way for generations of unbelievers to become children of God. Jesus went all over His region influencing thousands at a time but the true plan of recovering those that are lost would rest in the lives and actions of a few good men. Jesus touches thousands but He only trains twelve.<sup>11</sup>

Jesus teaches that being a disciple means making God a priority. Disciples cannot let the cares of the world cause them to compromise themselves. God is going to have to be first in their life. “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth” (Matt. 6:24). He makes sure that the disciples understand the cost of discipleship and that they are willing to pay that price.

---

<sup>10</sup> Barna, *Growing True Disciples*, 19.

<sup>11</sup> Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980), 28.

To be a disciple, they must be willing to give up their wants and desires for the sake of the gospel. Jesus told the disciples that they would have to deny their own plans and join God in His plan for redemption. “And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me’” (Mark 8:34).

To be a true disciple, a person has to be willing to put Christ above everyone else. A disciple of Christ must be willing to give up all earthly possessions for the sake of the gospel (Luke 14:33). Jesus will lead and guide a person through the work of the HS if they are willing to be led. The world will try to distract, depress, and confuse the believer to get them to lose focus and to drift away from the work of the Lord.

Jesus was requiring a total commitment but that commitment did not come without some assurances. Jesus knew that things would be difficult and the disciples would have to have something they could hold on to. In John, Jesus gives the disciples that assurance: “So Jesus said to them again, Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21).

Sometimes people are torn between doing what they know God is asking them to do and doing what they feel is best for them at the time. This tension can be overwhelming but Jesus also taught that if they seek God first, the things that they need will be given to them. “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matt. 6:33). Anyone desiring to disciple others must be able to demonstrate through their choices that this scripture is guiding their everyday decisions. Selecting the right people is also important. Jesus shows that to be effective, the disciple cannot select people based on human observation. Jesus shows that recruiting and training the right people requires a look inward.

When selecting whom to train, it is important to make sure that they are committed to the process. The goal is to select the people who will replicate DM not to select people who will do whatever they are told. Discipleship is a lifelong commitment to a lifestyle.<sup>12</sup> It is not a commitment to a person.

Jesus had a systematic plan for choosing whom He would disciple (Mark 2:14). He carefully selected the disciples and made sure that they are committed to the mission that they were being called to carry out. Another area that Jesus addressed in His earthly ministry was His identity and His reason for being on earth. Jesus felt that it was important for the disciples to have a clear understanding of Who He was and what the plan for the future was going to be (Matt. 16:13–19). The early disciples were sold out to Jesus and to carrying on His teachings through their words and deeds.<sup>13</sup> Jesus showed that with the right people, anything is possible. The disciple makers of today need to be just as careful about whom and how they disciple. The church of tomorrow is counting on the disciple makers of today to continue the process.

As with all training, there needs to be a time when the disciple needs to be able to demonstrate that they understand the mission and that they are capable of carrying it out. Jesus put the disciples in situations that would help them understand who He was. Jesus made sure that the disciple would have no doubt of His deity after He had left them. Jesus also stressed the idea that being a disciple was not about what a person could get but rather what a person could give.

Many people view Jesus as a person they can call on when needed and put on the shelf when things are going well.

---

<sup>12</sup> Barna, *Growing True Disciples*, 19.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

Following Jesus is a lifelong journey and should not be viewed as a way to avoid trouble. “So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, if you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:31–32).

Another concern that came up in the gospels was that of expectations. Being with Jesus was no guarantee that everyone would understand the mission. The disciples were expecting Jesus to take over as king and when He did not, it caused doubt in some. It was that doubt that contributed to Judas betraying Jesus. However, the more time a person spends with Jesus, the more they are able to discern His will for them. “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (John 10:27).

As Jesus came to the end of His earthly ministry, He tried to prepare the disciples for what they would face. He had dinner with them and demonstrated what it meant to be a servant and then He willingly gave His life. The disciples saw Jesus again after the resurrection and as a result, they knew that they wanted what He had. Jesus had taught them through His actions what it means to do the will of the Father. Not all the disciples got it but the ones who did changed the world.

The work of reconciliation was now moving from Jesus to the disciples. Jesus had prepared them for the work ahead but it would be up to them to carry it out. If the gospel was going to be preached, it would have to be done by a group of men who had seen it in action and were able to continue it regardless of the obstacles that would be put in their path. The disciples did not always understand what was happening, but they understood that Jesus was committed to them and the mission.

The final commandment given by Jesus was recorded in the gospel of Matthew. “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’” (Matt. 28:18–20). It is on this command that the church was established and it is on this command that the church will survive.

Jesus established the standard for biblical DM and the church has a record of that in the gospels. As the church expands its footprint in society, the role of the disciple becomes vital to the success of the church. The disciples are expected to model what it means to be a follower of Jesus to the rest of the world. The expansion of the kingdom of God would rest with these disciples and with those who would become their disciples. This would be the beginning of human-to-human DM not only in their region but also in the world as a whole.

### Discipleship in the Book of Acts

In the gospels, the command for DM is seen in the words of Jesus to the disciples. In the epistles, DM is directed at churches and to specific people in specific situations.<sup>14</sup> As a result, the process of true DM begins to take shape. The disciples of Jesus for the most part remained in Jerusalem but that did not stop the expansion of the gospel. The spread of the gospel in Jerusalem can be seen in Acts 1:1–7:45 while Acts 8:1–12:25 show the gospel moving into Judea and Samaria.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Perkins, *Reading the New Testament*, 2nd edition (New York, NY: Paulist Press), 265.

<sup>15</sup> A.L. Barry, *To the Ends of the Earth: A Journey Through Acts* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1997), 25.

As the book of Acts continues to progress, the gospel expands to the rest of the world. It is important to note that not all movement was voluntary. Many times the movement was the result of persecution or the fear of such. Jesus tells the disciples that after He leaves, God will send a helper and that helper is the HS. The thirteenth chapter of Acts points this out: “And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:52).

The HS enables them to perform the same miracles that Jesus performed. The disciples use signs and miracles to validate their authenticity to the people with whom they come in contact. During a time of constant opposition by the political leaders it was the HS that sustained them. Another area of support came when the disciples had to deal with people that were on their side one day and against them the next day.

The book of Acts presents the early Christian communities as examples of DM.<sup>16</sup> DM in Acts produces the same outcome regardless of which disciple is doing it. The disciple preaches the gospel to a group of people and based on the Word of God and the work of the HS, the people accept what is being said. Many times in the book, there are people coming to faith by the thousands. As people hear about the growth of Christianity, they hear about how the people are all willing to support each other both with their time and possessions.

The record shows that devotion to God leads to increased fellowship as well as an increased number of believers (Acts 2:42–47). Once a believer understands who Jesus is and what He has done and will continue to do, there is no limit to what can be accomplished in the world. The new Christians follow the example of the disciples just like the disciples follow the example of Jesus.

---

<sup>16</sup> Perkins, *Reading the New Testament*, 266.

While Paul is a dominant figure in the book of Acts, there are several other disciples who are also responsible for the spread of the gospel. The book of Acts begins with Peter being a major player. Not only is Peter relevant, he is also the first person to reach a gentile. God uses Cornelius to demonstrate that gentiles who accepted Jesus as Savior were acceptable to God.<sup>17</sup>

Philip is largely responsible for the advancement of the gospel in Samaria. His preaching produces many of the same signs that accompany Jesus.<sup>18</sup> Among Philip's converts are Simon the sorcerer and the Ethiopian eunuch. There has been some debate on whether the conversion of Simon was genuine because he later tried to get the ability to perform miracles from Peter (Acts 8:18–19).

Barnabas is the key figure in the spread of the gospel in Antioch and is a key player in Paul being accepted by the other disciples. Both Paul and Barnabas played key roles in the spread of the gospel throughout the book of Acts.<sup>19</sup> Later, they will separate and take on other partners as they further expand the gospel throughout the region. Barnabas carries on with John Mark while Paul goes out with a man named Silas.

Acts also shows that with the spread of the gospel comes persecution. Wherever God is at work in the life of people, the devil is also at work. Paul constantly refers to how everywhere he goes; the opposition follows; sometimes working the crowd up to the point of bodily harm for him. Paul is an example of what it means to suffer for the gospel. Paul is also the model used today for effective DM.

---

<sup>17</sup> Perkins, *Reading the New Testament*, 263.

<sup>18</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough, eds., *Encountering the New Testament. A Historical and Theological Survey*, 2nd edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 225.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 228.



The book of Acts further reveals the fact that Jesus not only demonstrates the process of DM, He so ingrains it in the disciples that they are able to duplicate it on a consistent basis. As they disciple other believers, those believers travel to other parts of the world and duplicate the process. Christianity in America is an example of what DM can accomplish. The church would not be where it is today if it were not for the sacrifices made by Paul and the other disciples.

The men who are referenced in the book of Acts can be considered heroes. The world would not know what discipleship looks like without the sacrifices made by these men. It is the ability to reproduce disciples that makes the process work. DM is a never-ending mission for those who believe.

### Discipleship in the Epistles

The gospels present the ministry of Jesus. The book of Acts presents the ministry of the disciples of Jesus. And now the focus is on the establishment of the church as well as the character required to be a true disciple. The people with firsthand knowledge of the life of Jesus write to others to ensure that their lives are representative of the person they say they follow.

The epistles are a collection of writings by Paul and some of the other disciples. The letters are written to help in the spiritual development of the believer. While some of the letters address specific situations, others are written as universal instructions to be shared among all the churches. The epistles establish the framework for living life as a believer both as an individual and as a member of a larger community. Not all the epistles are referenced in this paper. This is not to say that they are any less important.

## Pauline Epistle

With the help of a few disciples, Paul is able to create Christian communities throughout the area. Paul visits several regions during his journeys trying to share the gospel with the gentiles. When Paul is not able to travel, he writes letters to the churches that have been established to either provide more guidance or to correct misunderstandings that are being presented as fact. These letters are not limited to places that he has visited; he also wrote to places that he had not personally been to encourage them in their faith.

In the letters to Corinth, Paul addressed the lifestyles of the believers as well as what appears to be an obsession with position. The church also has an obsession with the gift of tongues. It appeared that the church in Corinth was self-serving and did very little for other believers. They lack the spiritual maturity that was needed to represent the gospel authentically. The Corinthians oftentimes put themselves in the place of Christ and Paul needs to get them to understand that Christ is the center of everything.<sup>20</sup>

Paul's letters to the church in Thessalonica focus on their potential to pull away from the faith when things get difficult. Paul tells them that they will have to suffer for their faith. "You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit" (1 Thes. 1:6) but that they should feel secure in the fact that they will be victorious in the end.<sup>21</sup> There is also the question of what will happen to those believers who have already died. Paul assures them that those believers will also be resurrected. The discussion of the rapture is also a prominent subject in the letter.

---

<sup>20</sup> Elwell and Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament*, 294.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 330.

## Prison Epistles

Paul has a collection of letters that have come to be known as the prison epistles. These letters are intended to be circulated throughout the region. In these letters, Paul addresses the fact that salvation is a gift from God and that the believers are not required to live by a code of conduct to be justified in the eyes of God.<sup>22</sup> These letters show how dedicated Paul was to the advancement of the kingdom. At a time when he could have felt sorry for himself, he was trying to encourage others.

Paul also addresses the need for the believers to stay spiritually aware of their surroundings. He tells them that they are in a spiritual battle and they would need God's help to prevail: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12).

In the letter to the Philippians, the focus is on Christian living. The issue is whether or not trials and temptations will lead the people to abandon the faith. Paul is trying to instill in them that their walk with Jesus is an individual walk and that each of them needs to stand on their own during times of trouble. All believers need to be prepared to handle the persecution that will follow their conversion. He tells them that the way they live will be the test of whether they have faith in Jesus. (Phil. 2:12).

The need to stay connected to Jesus is also prominent in the letter to the Colossians: "And not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God" (Col. 2:19).

---

<sup>22</sup> Elwell and Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament*, 303.

## **Pastoral Epistles**

During this time, the churches have no formal structure. Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus have been called pastoral epistles because the letters helped define the roles of church leaders. As the years passed and the disciples moved on to other areas, it is important for the churches that have been established to be able to carry on. The future of the church will rest with the people left in charge.

## **General Epistles**

The general epistles are epistles written by other disciples and these letters also focus on Christian living. The author of Hebrews goes to great lengths to tell the people not to be intimidated by the circumstances and to stay devoted to Jesus.<sup>23</sup> The author goes on to reinforce the fact believers need to encourage other believers when things are difficult “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near” (Heb. 10:24–25). The last thing the believer needs is to allow themselves to be isolated.

James speaks to the believer about having a faith that does nothing. He asked the question, what good is faith if it does nothing to help others?

Peter, on the other hand, chooses to focus on the believer's relationship with Jesus. Every person must be willing to live in a way that brings glory and honor to Jesus (2 Pet. 1:1–8). He reminds the believer that they are living in a fallen world and as a result, they should not do as the world does.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Elwell and Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament*, 351.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 364.

## Discipleship Down Through the Centuries

### First Three Centuries

During this time in history, the church sees itself as the place created by God to ensure that everyone is taken care of. The work of the church, however, is not without its opposition. Roman persecution erupted in the middle of the third century and the church became fractured.<sup>25</sup> The lack of togetherness created many different belief systems. As a result, it was important for the church to develop some type of belief system that everyone can agree on. Several councils began to form for the purpose of establishing creeds and functions that will be carried out by all churches.

The process of DM was another area in the church that has not been formally identified. Despite that problem, the people develop a habit of searching for something outside themselves. As a person realizes that they are in need of something more, they become open to hearing the gospel. That hearing leads to them give control of their life to Jesus. While some never mature beyond this point, others realize that just being converted is not the end and they begin to evangelize others. It is this cycle that has been reproduced throughout history.

### Middle Ages

The Middle Ages is known for the acceptance of the church by the state. The focus on religion grew and so did the visibility of the church buildings.

---

<sup>25</sup> Rodney Stark, *The Triumph of Christianity—How the Jesus Movement Became the World's Largest Religion*, (New York, NY: Harper Collins 2011), 141.

When Constantine came to power, there were very few organized churches.<sup>26</sup> This was the beginning of the church construction phase. As a result, the buildings became the focus instead of the people. The building of local churches got its start with Constantine, and it was also during this period that the building of massive cathedrals began in earnest.

The changes not only happened outside the church; they also happened inside the church. During this time, there was a shift in who was considered responsible for the work of the church. Many churches began to elevate the clergy to a point of almost God-like status. This elevation of the clergy led to the work of the laypeople being diminished, some to the point of no work at all. Hull states that a healthy ministry or church engages clergy and non-clergy alike in the work of the church.<sup>27</sup> Pastors need to help the congregation understand that they are also ministers of the gospel.

### **Pre-Protestant Reformers**

During this time, a split began in the church over the church's position and mission in the community. The church was searching for an identity. Different factions had clear beliefs on the roles that they felt that the church should play. It was at the Council of Constance that both John Hus and John Wycliffe were condemned for their views and the Council of Florence declared the seven sacraments of the church to be dogma. As the church began to fracture, more and more church leaders spoke out against the established church. The church was losing the control it had over the people. The people began to see that if they disagreed with the church, they would be unfinished and this led to unrest.

---

<sup>26</sup> Stark, *The Triumph of Christianity*, 172.

<sup>27</sup> Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010), 94.

People who disagreed with what the church was doing began to revolt while others chose to distance themselves from the church totally.

Education began to replace religion as the guiding force in society. Schools began to emerge as an alternate authority to the church. Scholasticism replaced the fathers of the church as the guardians of truth.<sup>28</sup> As a result, the human mind began to be the final authority on what a person should believe and not believe. The people began to question what the church was saying and this played a role in what has come to be known as the Protestant Reformation.

### **The Protestant Reformation**

It was during this time that the church fathers started to come to the forefront. The prominent man and founder of the Lutheran wing was Martin Luther (Rome), who was an Augustinian monk. He was a teacher at the University of Wittenberg and was the founder of Lutheranism. He is known for his 95 Theses which he nailed to the door of the church in Wittenberg. Another person involved in the movement was Philip Melanchthon. Melanchthon was also a teacher at Wittenberg and he was considered the theologian of the Lutheran movement. The Lutheran church can still be seen largely following the teachings of Martin Luther today.

The reformed wing gave us John Calvin (France). Calvin was twice convinced to pastor churches by being told that God would punish him if he did not do it. Calvin's theology is still one of the dominant theologies used in the church today. Another man was Jacob Arminius. Arminius tried to modify what has come to be known as Calvinism.

---

<sup>28</sup> Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries, 3rd edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic Books, 1996), 226.

He believed in universal prevenient grace and the freedom of the will. Calvinism and Arminianism still influence the church today.

The Anabaptists (Re-baptizers) Wing are sometimes referred to as the radical wing of the reformation. The Anabaptist focused on adult baptism and church membership. A dominant name in the Anabaptist movement is Menno Simons (Netherlands). Simons left the priesthood in 1536 and was rebaptized. He is considered the founder of the Mennonite movement. The Amish are also a part of this wing.

Some of the important writings of this time were (1) *Freedom of the Christian Man* (Luther), which stressed the priesthood of the believers, (2) *Loci Theologici* (Melanchthon), the first major systematic theology of the reformation, (3) *The Bondage of the Will* (Luther), a writing on total depravity and total inability, (4) *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Calvin), which sought to prove that evangelicals were heirs to the apostolic church, and (5) *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, the longer and the shorter Catechisms.<sup>29</sup>

## **The Enlightenment**

The Enlightenment brought about people like Francis Bacon, who had two distinct methods of acquiring truth, induction based on experience and faith. Others were Galileo Galilei, who believed that scripture and nature were both produced by the word of God, and Isaac Newton, who felt that God was the efficient primary cause of the universe and that natural laws were the instrumental cause of the universe.

---

<sup>29</sup> The information in this section was taken from Henry Bettenson, ed., *Documents of the Christian Church*, 3rd edition (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999).



During this time, Europe saw a shift away from God and a shift to free thinking and self-determination, as well as the introduction of pietism, a spiritual movement that stressed a heartfelt conversion and a personal relationship with God. Major figures were John Bunyan (England), William Ames (Holland), Philip Jakob Spener (Germany), called the father of pietism, and August Hermann Francke (Germany). These men were largely responsible for the growth of pietism in Europe.<sup>30</sup>

In the area of higher education, this period produced schools like Cambridge, College of Rhode Island, Harvard, Oxford, Princeton, Saint Andrews, William and Mary, and Yale. These schools started as religious institutions and should serve as a warning about thinking more highly of ourselves than we should. The reason for this shift can be seen in 2 Tim 4:3-4 “<sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, <sup>4</sup> and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths”. The more these school accepted the beliefs of society the further they drifted away from the truth of scripture.

Seminaries also began to open during this time. Seminaries were created in an attempt to educate the leaders of the church. Schools like Moravian, Andover, Princeton, Western Theological, McCormick Theological, and Lance Theological seminaries were all created during this period. These schools were necessary if the church was going to ensure that theological truths would be taught to future generations. AS time passed the number of Seminaries continued to grow.

---

<sup>30</sup> Information in this section was taken from Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries*, 3rd edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic Books, 1996).

## **The 19th and 20th Centuries**

The 19th century brought the beginning of liberalism and men like Friedrich Schleiermacher (father of modern religious liberalism), who believed that the essence of religion was absolutely dependent on being in a relationship with God. Dietrich Bonhoeffer rejected natural theology and said that God was revealed in Christ.

The growth of organized churches and religions produced countless denominations in a short period of time. This expansion blurred not only the mission of the church but also what the church considered important. Sadly, the Great Commission has been moved to the back of the church's priorities. Very few churches had making disciples as the number one priority. In most church literature, there is a mention of the Great Commission but very few churches have a dedicated DM ministry. The further society moves away from God, the more difficult it would be to move it back. The First and Second Awakenings further divided the church and lead to the creation of many new denominations. These denominations came with their own beliefs on how to make disciples. The church focused on the nature of the church, inerrancy of scripture and the work of the HS.<sup>31</sup>

## **The 21st Century**

The 21st century created a new philosophy when it comes to DM. In the church of today, there is a mix between the old and the new. The church is at a crossroads; should they have large buildings for assembling believers or should they have small house churches where individual discipleship can take place?

---

<sup>31</sup> Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries*, 459.

In the area of disciple making the church has continued to talk about it but the execution varies depending on denominational differences. According to Michael Wilkins “The church has used the term *discipleship* to refer to any training that involves the spiritual disciplines.”<sup>32</sup> Spiritual disciplines can help with personal growth but unless both the discipler and the person being disciple use them DM will not be effective. True DM cannot be done in a classroom or in a meeting. DM needs to be put in a place of priority both in the life of the church and in the life of the believer. The number of people who profess to be Christian and the number of people who live like disciples are vastly different. “The chief barrier to effective discipleship is not that people do not have the ability to become spiritually mature, but they lack the passion, perspective, priorities, and perseverance to develop their spiritual lives.”<sup>33</sup> DM is the mission and the church needs to develop a strategy to accomplish the mission.

### Summary

Throughout history the role and mission of the church has been constantly being redefined. Despite the changes the biblical mandate has not changed. The goal of the church should be to have “true disciples – men, women, boys and girls committed to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and growing daily in their knowledge, love, and service to Him.”<sup>34</sup>

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the role of church leaders and church members in the DM process. Producing disciples is not just for clergy or church leadership; it is the responsibility of everyone who claims to be Christian.

---

<sup>32</sup> Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 332.

<sup>33</sup> Barna, *Growing True Disciples*, 54.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

God calls believers to be disciples, not just the church leadership. Every believer needs to get involved in a DM relationship if the church is going to be successful. The church has lost its effectiveness and this in some part has to do with the fact that the church is more has not placed an emphasis on the mandate to become and to make disciples.

Various Christian churches have reduced what they ask of their people and as a result, many people left the church and those who remained are not very committed to the cause.<sup>35</sup> Jesus has left the church with a mission and that mission still exist. The church needs to continue and must remain committed to DM.

---

<sup>35</sup> Stark, *The Triumph of Christianity*, 359.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Five Challenges to Effective DM**

The researcher surveyed 35 members of the church in the areas of theology, traditions, training, time, and transparency. The survey consisted of 20 questions designed not only to see how the church presently views DM but also to determine what the church feels is an appropriate DM process.

This survey was handed out to church members during a Sunday morning service. They were instructed to complete the survey and place it in a box that was set up outside the sanctuary after the service. The survey was conducted two consecutive Sundays. The surveys were collected and analyzed with intent of finding out what believers think about DM and what they think is the best way to make disciples.

What follows is the results of the survey and the information gleaned from the answers provided by the congregation. While this information is not to be considered definitive for every believer, it is an example of what believers believe and therefore the information is useful in the development of strategies that can be used by the church to develop an effective DM ministry.

The information will be presented as challenges to the DM process at work in the surveyed church. If the church is going to fulfill its role in society, it must understand what is required and where it needs to improve its impact. These challenges are just a few of the issues affecting the church today, but if this church can improve in these areas, it will go a long way in advancing the kingdom. The results of the survey expose a fundamental problem in the surveyed church. Many believers have head knowledge of what it means to be a believer, but very few know what it means to be a disciple or how to make disciples.

### Challenge One: Theology

The church was asked to rate the following statements. The intent was to discover what the church believes the Bible has to say about DM. The results are presented in Figure 3.1.

Statement 1 The Bible gives clear instructions on DM.

Statement 6 The Bible makes it clear that everyone is responsible for DM.

Statement 11 Some people are natural-born disciple makers.

Statement 16 Jesus demonstrated the only way to make disciples.

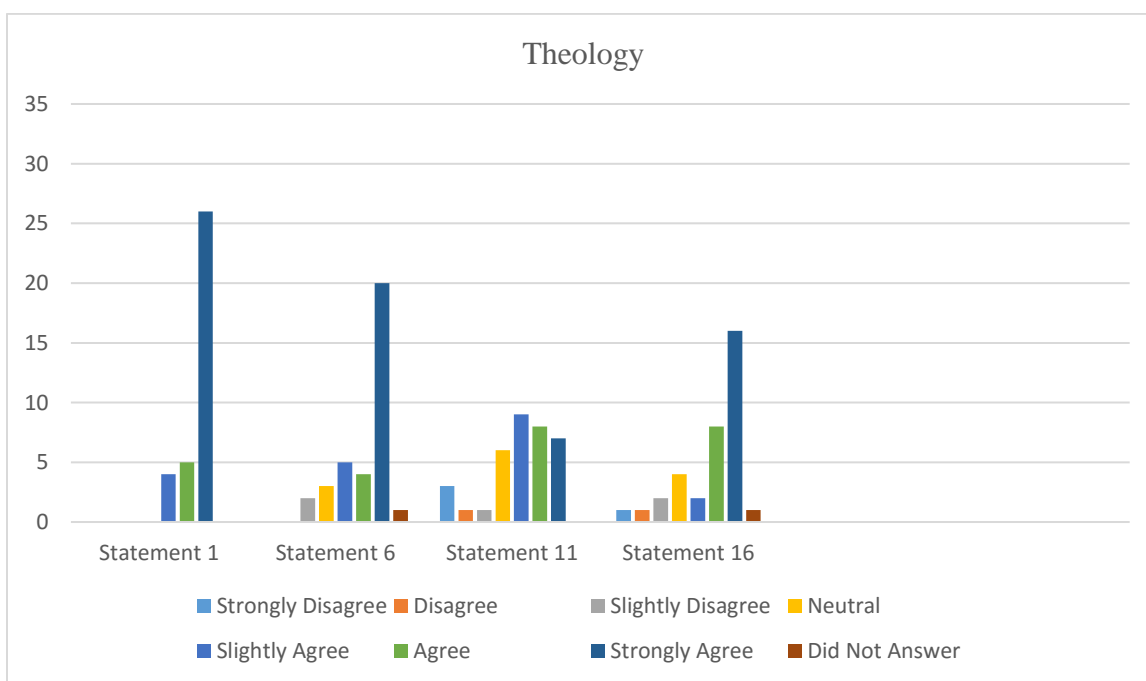


Figure 3.1

**Instruction**

In Mathew 28, Jesus gave the command to make disciples. That command has not been fully emphasized or implemented and the result is that only parts of it are being presented in reference to what it means to be a follower of Jesus. The seventy-four percent of the participants surveyed believe that the Bible gives clear instructions on DM. The challenge is not in whether the Bible speaks to DM but rather what it has to say on the subject.

Recently the church has decided to start a church wide DM ministry. The church is caught between lack of understanding and lack of desire. The Bible provides solid principles for DM; however, the surveyed church has not been diligent in demonstrating the need and purpose for DM. The pastor has verbalized his desire to have every member in a disciple making relationship however most church members don't see it as a part of their duty. DM is hardly spoken of in the church and when it is, it is only in the abstract, as a result the principles and purposes of DM have not been internalized by the believer in the pew.

Another part of the challenge in this area is to get people to do what they know they are supposed to do. Many believers, while admitting that the Bible has given commands, also admit that they do not apply everything that the Bible requires. As a result, they have never given much thought to whether or not they are fulfilling their purpose in this area. While 100% of the participants believed that the Bible gives clear instructions on DM only 75% of them said they strongly agreed. This demonstrates how it is possible to believe something and not act on that belief. Until believers fully invest in everything that the Bible instructs them to do, this lack of commitment will continue to exist. Most believers need to be taught exactly what it means to be a disciple of Christ. Some believers have been conditioned to believe that salvation is enough.

There is no push to go deeper, and no push to help others go deeper. Unfortunately, the church is left with a group of people who have salvation knowledge and not much more. The church needs to do a better job of helping people understand their true spiritual condition.

The more a person learns about themselves, the better equipped they are to help others. It is important to understand that all people are born sinners and without the grace of God and the work of the HS, no one will be able to make disciples. Jesus informed the people that apart from Him, they could do nothing. Before any DM can take place, there needs to be a relationship developed with the ultimate disciple maker.

### **Application**

While the numbers vary, the majority in the test sample believe that people are natural-born disciple makers. Only 15% disagreed with the statement that some people are natural born Disciple Makers. This demonstrates that the church does not have a biblical view of DM and what it takes to be effective. There is a lack of understanding in how to be and make disciples as well as a lack of understanding concerning who is responsible for the execution. Today's Christians hear very little about making disciple and as a result totally exclude it as a part of their Christian walk. DM is view as a church ministry and not a responsibility for all believers.

The belief that everyone is responsible for DM was a little more diverse. In the area of the responsibility to make disciples, the majority agreed with the statement but 5% felt that everyone was not responsible. Believers say that everyone is responsible for DM; however, when asked, very few are involved in a DM relationship as presented by Jesus.

Jesus knew that if He was going to have the church survive, there would have to be a process of DM that could be reproducible through the ages.



Jesus invested His life in the lives of a few men on a personal level and He knew that the disciples were going to have to invest their lives in others. “The great commission is not just getting out the message it is creating more messenger.”<sup>36</sup> The formula for effective DM is to learn to be a disciple and then look for others to disciple. If a person has never been disciplined, it is impossible for them to effectively disciple someone else. It is impossible to give to someone that which one does not possess. And the only way to learn what a disciple should be is to look at the example Jesus set for the church.

Another area looked at was is the biblical model of DM used by Jesus the only way to make disciples. 75% of the respondents felt that Jesus demonstrated the only way to make disciples but they were not following the example. Jesus knew that personal time was important to relationship building and lived that out with His disciples. The surveyed church rarely comes together outside the Sunday service. The members have few personal relationships with others in the church. The church is currently looking at DM models that are being sold on the market. The plan is to establish a DM ministry that will have the result that Jesus requires.

DM takes place through commitment, the church leaders must be willing to invest themselves in the lives of those they serve. The leader-follower relationship cannot end when the benediction is given. There must be an intentionality about investing in the lives of others. If a person is going to go deeper in God, they need to be able to bring others along with them. People need to see the gospel lived out in the lives of the believer. The life lived out in the eyes of the world is the only life there is.

---

<sup>36</sup> Joel Rosenberg and Dr. T.E. Koshy, *The Invested Life: Making Disciples of All Nations One Person at a Time* (New York, NY: Tyndale House 2012), 54.

It is important that those who say they are disciples of Jesus actually look like Him to others. God intended for the kingdom of God to be presented to the world through one-on-one relationship building. The plan was presented and executed by Jesus with the understanding that the disciples will continue that work.

The surveyed church offers what is called the invitation at the end of the service, but that invitation often only has to do with salvation, baptism, or church membership. Salvation should lead to a lifestyle change and a desire to see others come to Jesus. Baptism is mentioned as the logical next step in the life of a believer. DM should be given the same level of importance. Rarely does the church require from its members a commitment to DM. The church has done a good job in the area of expressing the importance of baptizing new believers, but not so good a job in the area of making disciples. In the command of Jesus both of these things are mentioned as a part of the mission. The Jesus that people are saying they believe in had a mission and so should His followers.

The church has spent so much time trying to make Jesus attractive that they have not presented Him biblically. According to Hull the glory of Christ has been diluted in the lives of His followers and as result He has lost His attractiveness to the world.<sup>37</sup> Jesus has become just another spiritual leader for people to choose from. Jesus was the great disciple maker and has commissioned His followers to do the same. Being a follower of Jesus means that you do what He did. Jesus explained that it would be His disciples that would be responsible for the expansion of His kingdom on earth.

---

<sup>37</sup> Hull, *Jesus Christ Disciple Maker*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books 2004), 41

### Challenge Two: Tradition

The church was asked to rate the following statements. The intent was to discover how the church believed DM had been done in the past and what the church felt was a good way to make disciples going forward. The results are presented in Figure 3.2.

Statement 2 DM can be done more effectively in large groups.

Statement 7 DM can be done more effectively in small groups.

Statement 12 DM can be done more effectively in a one-on-one setting.

Statement 17 DM should only be done by licensed clergy.

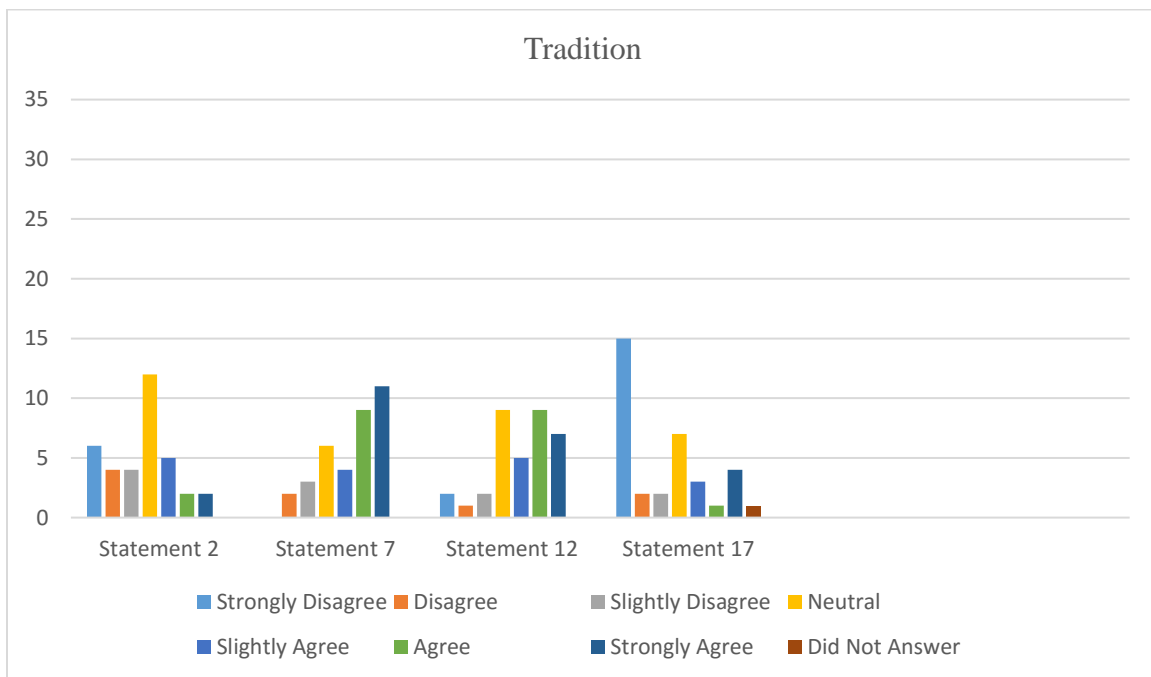


Figure 3.2

## Focus

One of the challenges in this area centers on what is being done and what is not being done to create a culture of DM. the surveyed church's mission-and-vision statement addresses the need to develop a DM culture in the church. When a church says that they are committed to making disciples they must be committed to a specific plan of execution. If the church leaders have not made DM a priority for their church than the church will remained in spiritual infancy. In an attempt to be biblically correct and to execute the great commission as presented by Jesus the surveyed church has started to develop disciple makers and establish a process for those disciple makers to reproduce themselves throughout the church.

DM includes everything from pre-evangelism to leadership development.<sup>38</sup> The church may be growing in numbers but that does not necessarily equate to growing in disciples. The lack of attention to DM can lead some believers to view DM as optional. They may feel that if they attend church and give their tithes and offerings, they have done what is required. Being a believer is sometimes reduced to what is done in relationship to the building of the church rather than the building of the kingdom. This creates a culture of believers without the desire and determination to make disciples.

The majority of the church members have been Christian for many years but very few have been involved in DM relationships. Some of the church members have gone their entire lives and have never been part of a DM relationship. The surveyed church identified a need to focus on making sure every member was involved in some type of DM relationship. The pastor reviewed several programs to determine which one would meet the needs of the church.

---

<sup>38</sup> Hull, *Disciple Making Church*, 64.

Another challenge is where DM takes place. When asked about the best way to make disciples, thirty-four percent of those surveyed had no opinion on whether DM is more effective in a large group. It is not clear if this response is as a result of lack of interest in disciple making or lack of experience in a disciple making program. Church members need to determine what type of believers they are going to be.

Currently, DM is done in the classroom or in formal meetings; this eliminates one of the things that is vital for effective DM and that is relationship building. Forty-percent felt that being in large groups was not an effective way to make disciples. Group or classroom discipleship does not make it possible for effective relationship building and personal confessions. It needs to be understood that any environment that does not allow a person to be open and honest eliminates the possibility for relationship building to take place and without the relationship, DM is impossible.

The Great Commission has several parts to it but the church has only focused on getting them to the step of baptism. Many end-of-year reports document how many converts, the number of baptisms, the amount of giving, but very few count how many members are in a DM relationship with another person.

In some cases, that information is used to determine if a church is successful or not. DM needs to be just as important as those statistics if the church is going to fulfill the mandate set down by Jesus. Jesus was focused on making disciples and his churches need to do the same.

Congregations tend to follow the lead of the church's leadership team therefore it is up to the church leaders to clear up the misunderstandings that persist in this area. When the church leaders focus on DM the congregation will see it as important.

## **Function**

DM is sometimes seen as a separate part of church. There is no connection between the mission of the church and the Great Commission. Only about 20% of the surveyed church have ever been in a DM relationship. DM is seen as another ministry to be performed rather than a lifestyle to be lived out in front of other believers. They attend classes and receive knowledge without being taught how to use that knowledge. Knowledge without application does very little for the people receiving it. The countless number of manuals that are available only add to the misconception.

Christianity was always supposed to be a lifestyle. Jesus was always with His disciples setting the example, living out the model. There needs to be the establishment of a DM process in every church regardless of size and location. The surveyed church is in the early stages of creating a culture of DM. The sooner the people understand that DM is not optional, the sooner the church will begin to mature.

Another part of this challenge is the belief that DM is only for a select group of people. Some believe that DM is a gift and that only certain believers receive it while others do not. This belief has led to the church creating a separation in roles and responsibilities especially in the area of DM. 75% of the respondents felt that DM should not be restricted to licensed clergy.

Traditionally, there has been a separation between the clergy and the laypeople which has left the work of DM to a few people while the world at large continues to disintegrate. The belief that DM is the work of the clergy has no biblical foundation. Everyone is called to make disciples but not everyone has answered the call.

### Challenge Three: Training

The church was asked to rate the following statements. The intent was to discover what the church believes about how believers are taught to disciple and how the church should be conducting DM.

Statement 3 DM should be completed in a specific time period.

Statement 8 DM can be done effectively in 13 weeks.

Statement 13 DM should continue indefinitely.

Statement 18 DM requires formal classroom training.

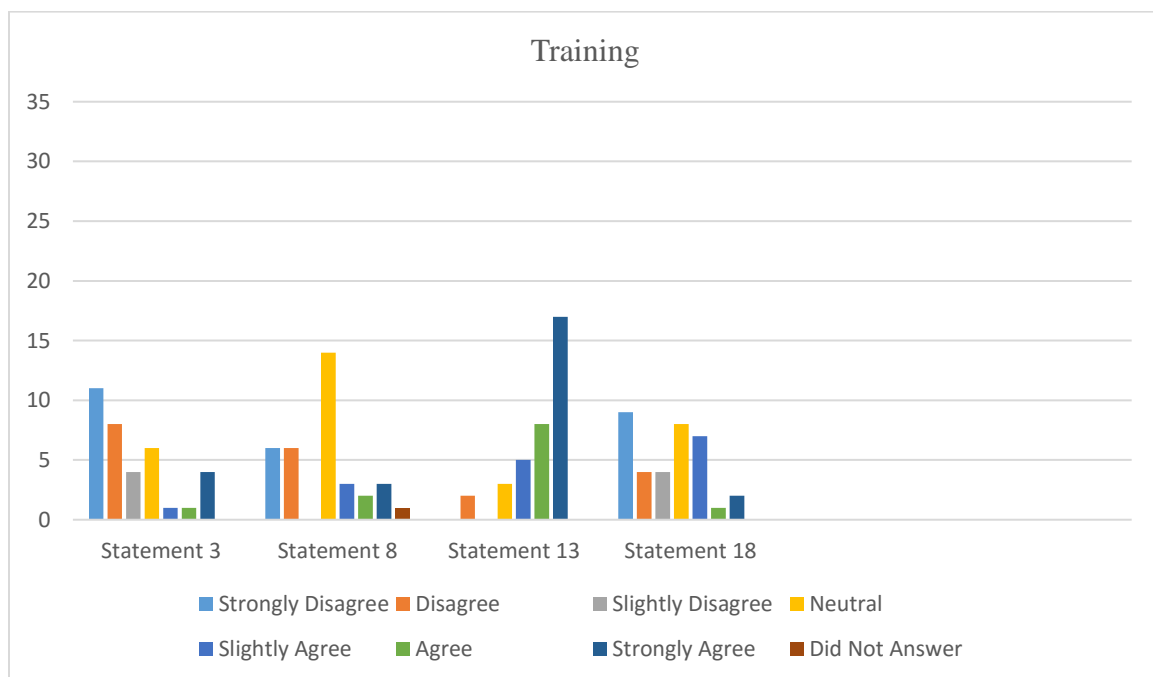


Figure 3.3

**Execution**

Most churches have some type of Sunday school class either before the first service or between services for those churches that have multiple services. Other churches have what has been known as a midweek service of Bible study. These classes normally focus on either books of the Bible or some type of topic that the church feels are important and last around thirteen weeks. It is in the topical classes that a person can most often find a class on discipleship. Most of these classes are conducted over a set period of time and at completion, a certificate is given to the attendees.

As a result of this type of structure, many people have come to believe that DM is a class that you attend and where you receive the information needed to be a disciple of Jesus. The problem that this presents is that Jesus never equated discipleship with knowledge alone. Jesus knew that to make disciples, He would have to invest His life. Jesus knew that if He was going to get the disciples to commit to Him, He would have to commit to them. Therefore, DM needs to be a lifelong process and every person needs to be committed to it.

This church was asked about the time needed for an effective DM ministry. Forty-percent of the participants had no opinion on whether 13 weeks would be sufficient for DM. Again this could be a result of lack of DM experience. Thirty-four percent of the people surveyed felt that 13 weeks was not effective and that the relationship needed to be a more flexible. All churches are unique in makeup and function; therefore, any DM ministry needs to be church-specific. Not all churches can afford to follow a set guideline for DM. The surveyed church has set aside an hour for classes in the morning. Some members have used this time to meet in their discipleship relationships.



One the challenges in this area is the belief that you can buy a book on discipleship and create disciples. While books may be a good reference, they cannot give the individual church the information necessary to have an effective DM ministry. The mission to make disciples apply to all churches but the number of different denominations and church structures can influence the execution. Resources are great at keeping the DM process moving forward, it often turns into making sure all the lines are filled in in the book.

An example of this type of material is a resource titled *The Purple Book: Biblical Foundations for Building Strong Disciples*.<sup>39</sup> One of the authors encourages believers to go through the book. He goes on to say that it will help increase knowledge of God in the world. This book has 12 sections that are designed to help a person become a strong disciple.

One of the sections is titled “Discipleship and Leadership.” While the information may be good for the building up of the person completing it, there is no talk about relationship building with other believers. The entire book is a collection of spiritual areas with blanks to be filled out by the person or people working through it. This book is just a sample of the many discipleship books that are available to the church as a resource. The use of this book was not intended to express any problems with the information; it was used to demonstrate that no matter how good a book is, if it does not make relationship building a priority, it is missing a vital part of DM. Eighty-Three percent of the people surveyed felt that DM should not be attached to a specific amount of time. This reinforces the belief that DM has nothing to do with the time spent, but rather with the depth of the relationship.

---

<sup>39</sup> Rice Brooks, Phil Bonasso, and Steve Murrell. *The Purple Book*, (Pasig City, Phillipines: Every Nation Productions 2004).

The disciple-making program put together by Billy Hanks is another type of DM curriculum that has been used at times by churches. The curriculum is set up to model the relationships that existed between Barnabas and Paul and later between Paul and Timothy.

This model requires that two people spend months getting to know each other and growing in the things of God. There are two different workbooks that are used throughout the process as well as evangelistic activities that are to be conducted during this time.

The meetings are weekly and are considered vital to the success of the relationship. This curriculum also uses the multiplication model presented by Jesus. The surveyed church has decided to develop what has become known as Paul and Timothy relationships. This is intended to model what it means to invest in the lives of others. Once a relationship has ended formally, the participants are encouraged to continue that relationship informally but at the same time establish new relationships with other people to continue the DM process. Again, this information is only mentioned to show an example as should not be seen as an endorsement by the researcher.

### **Emphasis**

The challenge in the area of training is not the information; it is the way the information is being presented and the environment in which it is being presented. Biblical DM cannot happen outside a relationship. Forty-nine percent of the people surveyed feel that formal classroom training is not required for effective DM. This belief makes the DM modeled selected by the church a good choice. The church members should be able to establish the needed relationships.

Any training that does not take into account the need for life investing on the part of the discipler will only produce biblically-smart people and do very little to motivate the believer to reproduce themselves in the lives of others. Forty-three percent either slightly agreed or were neutral when it came to Classroom training. This church feels that focus should be the training but the relationships.

Knowledge only is not the answer; a life lived in fulfillment of the Great Commission is the only thing that will be effective. No amount of training alone can do for the kingdom what relationship building and education can accomplish together. DM needs to be about relationship building, as well as education.

The world is fond of the term *mentor* and looks for opportunities to mentor people whom they feel are at risk or in need of guidance. The church has an obligation to do the same thing for the people of God. The church often advertises the fact that they offer a wide variety of programs for its members. However, “a program seems to be something that the church tries to get people to come to for their good.”<sup>40</sup>

If the church is going to be effective, DM needs to be more than a program that is offered to the church on specific occasions or as an alternative to other things. 86% believed that DM should be an indefinite process. This reinforces the belief that DM is a part of the life of every believer and as a result it needs to be a responsibility that is lived out in the lives of the people. Commitment to DM can and will give the church the ability to impact society from a biblical perspective.

---

<sup>40</sup> Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 126.

### Challenge Four: Time

The church was asked to rate the following statements. The intent was to discover what the church believes how much time is needed for DM.

Statement 4 DM should only be done when time permits.

Statement 9 DM session should last no more than 60 minutes.

Statement 14 DM session should last no more 90 minutes.

Statement 19 DM sessions should last no more than 30 minutes.

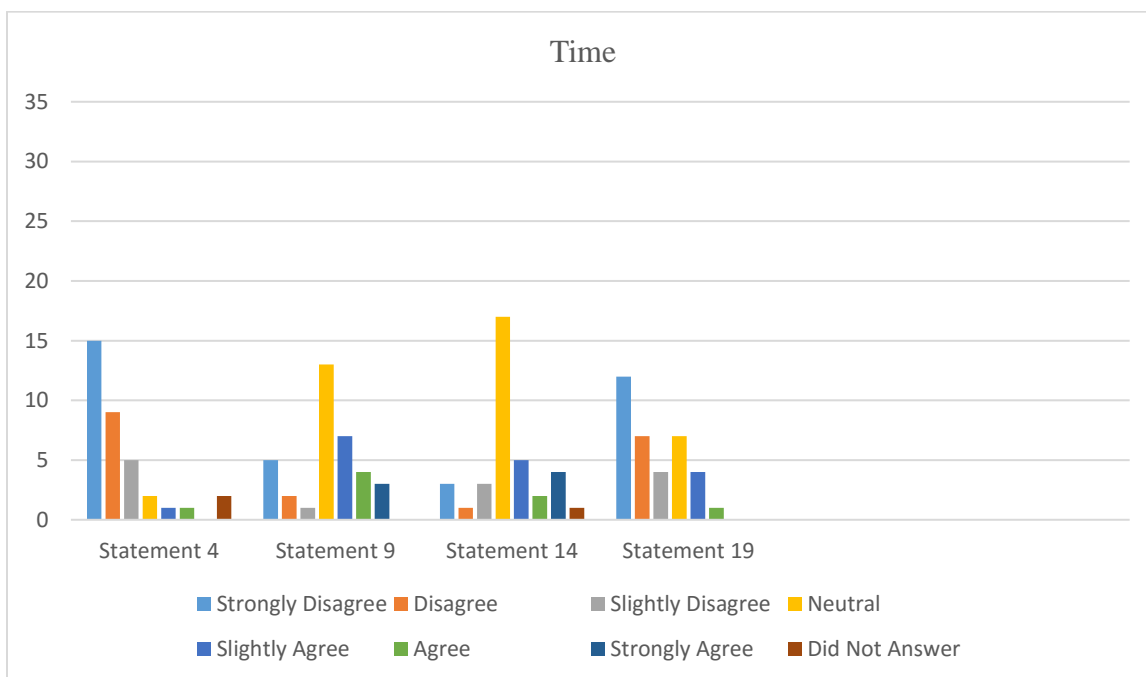


Figure 3.4

The church surveyed expressed a belief that DM is necessary and must be accomplished regardless of challenges. Eighty-three percent of the people surveyed felt that having the time to for DM should not determine whether or not it takes place. The challenge of time has at its core two components. The first is the challenge of trying to fit DM into the already busy lives that are evident in most people. The second challenge is deciding how much time is enough to effectively disciple another believer. Until these two are dealt with, the church will continue to struggle with the amount of true biblical disciples.

### **Internal**

The busyness of life and the lack of focus in this area have led to countless numbers of people never being a part of a DM relationship. People are working longer and relaxing less. Sunday mornings have been turned into a time to relax and prepare for the week to come. Those who attend church rush home to do other things as soon as the service is over. The world is constantly coming up with new things that compete for the time of people.

The reasons for the lack of time vary between believers but ultimately, it involves the believer seeing other things as more important than being a disciple of Jesus and making disciples. Experience shows that a person will make time for the things they feel are important and will neglect the things that are not. Being a disciple maker forces the discipler to go deeper in the things of God and that could never be seen as a negative. The more a person learns of God, the more they trust Him in their everyday lives. Having time to study the word of God and to be able to invest in others does not appear to be an option for most people. This is not to say that people are not committed to Jesus but rather that in a list of priorities DM is not number one.

Until the believer rearranges his or her priorities, DM will continue to be something talked about as important but never really acted upon. The issues of family life also reduce the amount of time a person has for DM.

It is difficult to determine how much time should be devoted to DM and how much time should be devoted to family. Children have activities that require parental support, which again reduces the time available. Schools and other organizations have invaded Sundays with practices and rehearsals. Parents today have to weigh the options and choose what they feel are in the best interest of their family.

### **External**

Another challenge is scheduling time to meet with each other, but it is not a challenge that cannot be overcome with a little planning and determination. If both parties are committed to the DM process, they will find the time to make the sessions happen. The things that are important to a person are the things that get the priority. It is up to the church and to the followers of Christ to move DM to the top of their list of priorities.

The survey revealed that 37% of the church members felt that 60 minutes was the acceptable amount of time for DM. Although, when the members were asked to consider 90 minutes the number increased to 49%. Oftentimes, a person's day is full of things that he or she feel is necessary and it is difficult to carve out 60 to 90 minutes a week to spend with another person.

When choosing the time that will be set aside there are several things that need to be taken into consideration.

The schedule must account for the fact that sometimes the parties may be delayed, or may have an issues that requires time to work through. Another consideration should be if the sessions will be done as a part of the churches' weekly schedule. It should also be noted that almost half of the people disagreed with the statement that DM should only be done when time permits. This response bolsters the belief that while believers feel that DM is important, they don't feel that it is important enough to be a priority compared to everyday life. Some believers have very little interest in DM regardless of amount of time presented. It has been said that few Christians can point to a single person that they have discipled over their lifetime.<sup>41</sup>

Once the commitment is made to get involved in the DM process, a new set of challenges arise. One of those is where the sessions take place. Using the home as the setting has pros and cons. While it would allow the parties to be free to share personal stories, it would also present the opportunity for disruptions from family members. The church could provide for a more private and intimate setting depending on what else is happening in the church at the time. Meetings can also take place in a public setting such as a coffee shop or restaurant but privacy will be limited.

With that being said, it is important to get involved in a DM relationship regardless of where the meetings take place. Jesus took every opportunity to disciple His people and those times happened wherever He could fit them in not according to His schedule. Jesus took the time to meet the needs of sinners along the journey, but He never lost focus on what the priority was and He never allowed the business of life to derail His mission.

---

<sup>41</sup> Rosenberg and Koshy, *The Invested Life*, 7.

### Challenge Five: Transparency

The church was asked to rate the following statements. The intent was to discover what the church believes concerning how much personal information should be revealed.

Statement 5 Disciple makers should share their personal stories when discipling others.

Statement 10 Disciple makers should share their personal struggles.

Statement 15 No subjects should be off-limits in DM.

Statement 20 Disciple makers lose credibility if they discuss their personal struggles.

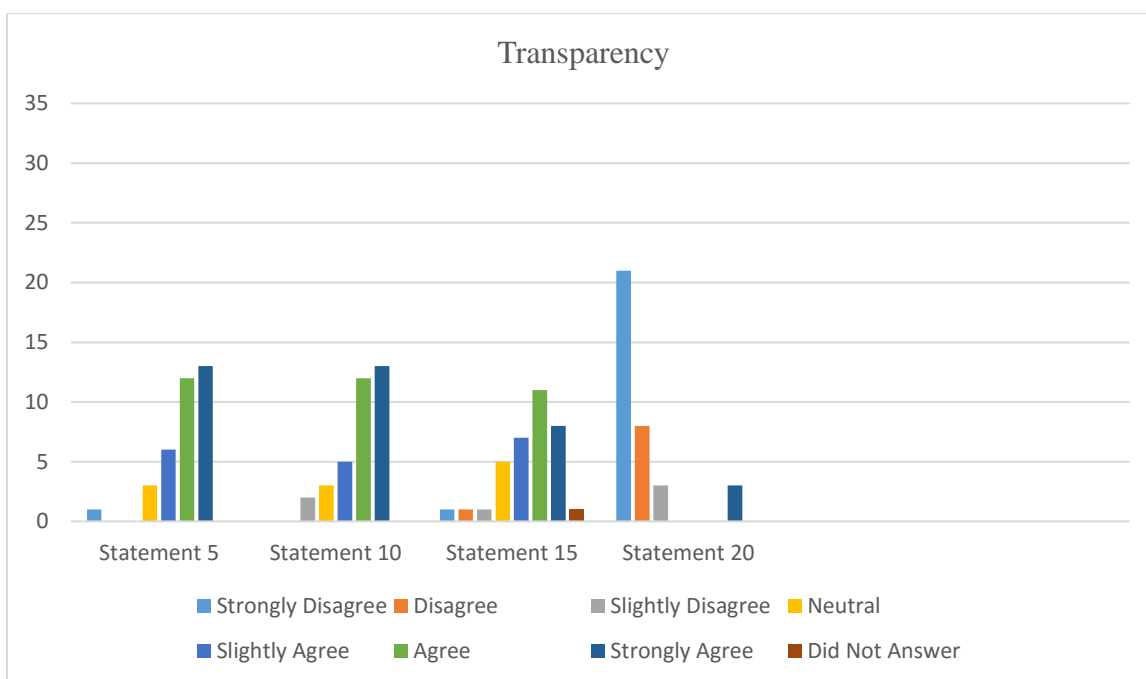


Figure 3.5



## **Exposure**

The answers to these statements demonstrate why this is a challenge in the church. The participants, almost to a person, (89%) said that it is important to share your personal life with those whom you are trying to disciple; however, time after time, people are seen to be something other than what they present in church. They profess to be living the word of God but are found to be a Christian in name only. The believers bear more of a resemblance to the world than they do to Jesus.

Another challenge in the area of transparency is how much information to share. Seventy-four percent of the participants felt that no subject should be off limits, On the other hand, sharing too much information could be detrimental in a DM relationship. The disciple must believe that the disciple maker can help him or her.

The surveyed church also felt that it was okay to include personal struggles in the DM relationship. Eighty-six percent of those surveyed believe that sharing personal struggles would improve effectiveness of the relationship however very few people actually discuss their personal struggles in church. It is encouraging to see that the church believes that it is important to share personal examples of how God has delivered the disciple maker. This allows the person being disciplined to see that God is not just a God in the sky. He is involved in the lives of His people and is concerned about their lives.

People who have made a habit of being seen as a good Christian fear that if people learn that they struggle, it will diminish their status in the church. The appearance of having it all together can sometimes cause those who struggle to feel that there is something wrong with them and can lead to even more people not being authentic.

Some believers think that if they admit they have problems, people will not want to listen to them. Every person goes through things from time to time; it is the people who are honest enough to admit that they struggle who have the biggest impact on others. Sadly, non-Christians have trouble understanding what Authentic Christianity is because few born again believers actually model the lifestyle<sup>42</sup>

Another challenge is to get people to understand that you cannot be an effective believer if you never participate in the lives of others. The percentage of respondents that disagreed with the statement that a disciple maker would lose credibility if they discussed their personal struggles during the disciple making session was ninety-one percent. Any genuine DM includes exposing oneself to risk.<sup>43</sup> Disciple makers have to make an impact on the people and the things they come in contact with; they are called to be salt and light. Both of these things affect what they touch. People are created for relationships and believers are called to influence the world in which they live.

## **Experience**

Another challenge to transparency is the countless number of church leaders who have been exposed for unbiblical behavior in recent years. The fall of countless church leaders has given some validity to the thought that people are one way in church and another way outside church. When the church leaders are exposed for ungodly behavior, they are saying to the world that the God that they talk about is willing to allow them to live a life contrary to His word.

---

<sup>42</sup> George Barna, *Growing True Disciples* 75.

<sup>43</sup> Rosenberg and Koshy, *The Invested Life*, 5.

In other words, God has rules for the world but not for the church. The larger the church figure, the greater the damage done to the kingdom. The world has grown accustomed to stories of pastors and church leaders being found in sinful relationships and ungodly behavior. The lack of transparency does not rest only with the church leaders; the churchgoers suffer from the same condition. Oftentimes people will come to the church and ask for help but will never reveal what the true issue is.

Regardless of the reason for the lack of transparency, it must be reversed if the church is going to be what God has called it to be. The challenge here is to get people to practice what they preach. The sense of privacy has overruled the sense of honesty. God is a God of truth and he cannot operate in an environment where truth does not reign supreme. If the goal is to help people believe in Jesus, they need to see a realistic picture of what it means to be a believer.

If DM is going to be effective, the disciple makers must first be disciples. They must be able to live a life that clearly presents the gospel and be willing to have their lives exposed and inspected by anyone with a desire to know more. While it would be foolish to share everything, it is also foolish to spread dishonesty to cover the lack of spirituality in the way in which they live their lives.

The belief that the personal lives of the leaders should be off-limits is not biblical. Jesus lived His life open before the world and was the same way with the thousands that He was with the 12. The true believer must always be ready, willing and able to be used by God whenever the need arises. Being a believer does not end when a person leaves the church building, the real work is done in daily living out of the scriptures.

### Research Conclusion

The survey church responded to 20 questions relating to the Disciple making and how it is being performed in the church. The results of the survey show that there is a discrepancy between what is said and what is actually taking place in the area of DM.

In the area of theology, the church believes that the bible gives clear instructions on disciple making as well as the belief that everyone is responsible for DM, however this church does not have everyone involved in a DM relationship that resembles the model demonstrated by Jesus in the scriptures.

In the area of tradition, the church believes that large groups are not effective in establishing DM relationships. The church believes that small groups can be effective but that one on one relationships are the better choice. Unfortunately, not many of the members have relationships outside of the church.

In the area of training, the church believes that the classroom has no relevance to DM. They also believe that DM is not about a structured set of instructions that are to be followed but rather it is about investing in the lives of people. It is believed that the process should be done in a controlled environment.

In the area of time, the church also believes that DM sessions should last between 60 and 90 minutes if it is going to be productive. This will allow for more people to be involved in DM while at the same time making the sessions beneficial for growth. If the time is too short there is not enough time to deal with difficult issues. If the time is too long the people may not be able to commit to the relationship.

In the area of tradition, the church believes that everyone should be open and transparent in their relationships with others. Yet the church members continue to share very little of their lives outside the church with others.

Sadly, the amount of DM does not match the profession of its necessity. If the church was performing DM at the level they profess it is needed, the church would be in much better shape. This is not to say that the church is purposely neglecting the work of DM. It is, however, an example of how the church can think one way about an area and not put those thoughts into action.

The areas addressed in this chapter are only a few of the challenges that plague the church and the sooner the church addresses them, the better the church will be. The next chapter will attempt to develop strategies to address the challenges presented in the research. The Bible states that if a person knows what the right thing to do is and does not do it, that is sin (Jas. 4:17). Prayerfully, as a result of this research, the church will not be guilty of sin in this area.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Strategies for Effective DM**

DM is the vehicle used by God to carry His plan for humanity. This vehicle has been rendered less than effective through the lack of focus by the church. Almost every church would tell you that DM is important but there is very little evidence to support that statement. Churches continue to develop classes that have *discipleship* in the title, but a closer look reveals that often that means discussing discipleship and not actually making disciples.

Effective DM requires a reeducation of the church when it comes to the importance of actually living out the Great Commission. The devil has tried to destroy the human race from a spiritual perspective ever since he met Eve in the garden but Jesus came to help people live the life that God intended. “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

This chapter will focus effective DM and it will also provide strategies that will help the church deal with the challenges that present themselves today. If the church is going to be successful, it must have a biblically based philosophy on DM. The church must also have a purpose-driven ministry as well as a solid process for conducting that ministry. If the process is going to work, the church leadership needs to make it a priority for the church and the people need to have a personal commitment to God and to each other.

For many churches, this will be a new concept; however, it is the plan that God presented and modeled for the church in the life of Jesus and His disciples. As the years come and go the church tends to respond to what it sees as the issues of the day. If the church plans to have any lasting impact it must make disciples that have the power to reproduce themselves.

## Philosophy

“Biblical principles require application, which results in methodology, which allows for production in the life and reproduction in others. But biblical principles not applied results in activity without productivity, which precludes both production in the life and reproduction in others.” — David Dawson

## Education

This church must take the time to develop a sustainable and biblically sound philosophy of DM. One of Webster’s many definitions of philosophy is “the general laws that furnish the rational explanation of anything.”<sup>44</sup> And the church is in desperate need of rational thinking.

In the area of philosophy, the first thing that needs to be decided is the validity of scripture. If a person does not believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of the God, then there is little chance of them committing themselves to what it has to say about making disciples. The Bible is the standard of living for all believers. It provides the church with everything it needs to change the world. “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

Another thing that needs to be understood is that DM is a God-ordained expectation for all believers and not just for a motivated few. Throughout the Bible, God has tried to get humanity to return to Him. Jesus was constantly telling the disciples what the kingdom of God was like and what was required for anyone that desired to enter. DM was God’s plan, modeled by Jesus and passed on to the disciples.

---

<sup>44</sup> *Webster Comprehensive Dictionary, International Edition*, Volume Two (Chicago, IL: J.G. Ferguson Publishing Company, 1986), 949.

When Jesus left, He commanded the disciples to continue what He had started and He assured them that He would be there to help them (Matt. 28:18–20). The kingdom of God will go as far as the disciples take it. The model has been given and it is up to Jesus's followers to carry on the example.

Church members, while believing that the Bible is true, have not really settled on what it means to be a genuine believer. The world is full of confessing Christians but very few live what they talk about. Some do it out of disobedience but some do it out of ignorance or lack of understanding. Believers must develop a commitment to reading and understanding the word of God if they expect to live according to it. Being a Christian does not end at conversion. With conversion comes the requirement to share the gospel with others and that is accomplished through DM. This requirement compels the believer to develop relationships with others just as Jesus did.

Another change in philosophy needs to focus on how to disciple believers. The church has a responsibility to God and to believers to present the gospel in its entirety and that includes the responsibility to be a disciple of Jesus and to help others become disciples also. Making disciples requires a specific strategy that is unique to the congregation that it is intended to reach. Therefore, each church needs to develop its own process for DM and be able to communicate that to the church. People are different and therefore any discipleship program needs to be tailored to the people involved.

### **Emphasis**

Once the people of God develop a sound biblical understanding of the Great Commission, they will be able to do the work that God called them to.



DM is the only plan given by God to increase the kingdom; there is no plan B. DM needs to be a part of everything that takes place in the church and every believer needs to be actively engaged in the accomplishment of that mission for the church to have the impact it is supposed to have on the world.

A look at the church of today shows that the Jesus model of DM did not continue as the generations passed. The commandment is often quoted but rarely executed. If the people of God are going to get busy in the work of God, their thought process needs to be changed and DM must be seen as part of their Christian duty rather than an add-on for those who want to go deeper in the things of God. Jesus made it a point to say that a person should not only hear the word of God but that they should also obey it. “But He said, ‘On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it’” (Luke 11:28). Obedience is a requirement for everyone who wants to be a follower of Jesus.

In the commandment to make disciples, there is no distinction as to who would or would not be responsible for DM. Every church member must view DM as a part of their responsibility to God and to the advancement of the kingdom. Every believer is a minister and every minister is required to make disciples for the kingdom.

To be a Christian, you have to be like Christ both in your relationship with God and in your relationship with others. If true DM is going to take place, there needs to be a push on relationship building. Jesus spent His life introducing people to God and then teaching them how to introduce others to God. Paul told the church in Thessalonica that they are determined to give them not only the gospel but also their lives (1 Thes. 2:8).

The goal is to develop believers who can live by faith, demonstrate their faith to others, and be able to produce more believers as a result of their efforts. This is the job of all who say they follow Him.

DM needs to be viewed as a vital ministry within the church. This ministry, as with all ministries, must have an impact on the people whom the ministry is intended to reach. You can find the word *disciples* in almost every church mission statement but rarely in the ministries being conducted. If effective DM was taking place in the church, there would be a bigger distinction between the professing Christian and the rest of the world.

Church leaders have not placed the same level of importance on DM that they have placed on other areas of the church. Many have it listed as a priority in the list of values but lack the execution in the everyday life of the church. You can find it listed as a class that can be attended by church members but there is little mentioned about the DM that should be taking place outside the church. The relationship building aspect is not as prominent and as a result many believers go through life without ever participating in true biblical DM.

If DM is going to be successful, there needs to be a shift from the group setting to the personal setting. Therefore, the church needs to develop clear and rational guidelines surrounding the role of DM. The guidelines must be biblically based and grounded in the teaching of Jesus Christ. The church must be intentional if it plans to transform people for the kingdom of God.

## Purpose

### **Advancement**

The Bible provides the blueprint as well as the instructions needed for effective DM. What it cannot provide is the desire needed to be successful followers of Christ. It is impossible to be effective without a sense of purpose. The church is overrun with programs and activities that do very little to move the believer from being a baby to being mature. When believers are called to make disciples, it is assumed that they are disciples themselves and that they understand the responsibility that comes with that distinction.

Some people attend church their entire life and never mature beyond salvation. As a result, there are countless numbers of confessing believers who have never done anything to advance the kingdom. The desire to serve God comes when a person realizes that it is God who gives them their purpose as well as an opportunity to make their life count for the kingdom. Without a sense of purpose, people will not have the amount of dedication necessary to continue what God has started.

As Jesus approached the end of His earthly ministry, He told the disciples to do for the world what He had done for them. Jesus was very clear in His instructions to the disciples when He gave them their marching orders. He personally disciplined them and as a result He had confidence that they could do what He was telling them to do.

Jesus longs to have an intimate relationship with His followers. This can only happen through a personal and purposeful relationship with Him. Satan tries everything within his power to come between the believer and Jesus but every believer must make up in his or her mind that they are going to do whatever it takes to develop and maintain a personal relationship with Jesus.

Purposeful DM must concentrate on the discipler as well as the person being disciplined. The purpose must be to become more like Christ. Jesus called a few because that was the only way to internalize His message and mission and to multiply himself.<sup>45</sup> To effectively disciple others, a person must be a genuine follower of Christ. It is impossible for a disciple to teach someone something that a person has not learned themselves. Therefore, the church must make a concerted effort to reverse the trend or the church will be of no help when it comes to the deep things of God.

Another purpose of DM is to help the believer restore their relationship with God and to enable the believer to live the life God intended. It is through DM that the believer can and should advance the kingdom of God. As believers continue to see the effects of the gospel, they feel compelled to support it and their fellow believers. Fellowship is the natural outcome of a love relationship (Acts 2:42–47). When a person becomes a believer, they develop a desire to spend time with other believers.

Disciple makers must understand that they are the instrument used by God to restore the broken relationship. DM is about bringing people to saving knowledge and them moving into a position where they can reproduce themselves in the lives of others. Therefore, every disciple maker should look for opportunities to share with others what God has done for them. Over the centuries, the focus on DM has not been given the priority that it deserves. As a result, several generations have been lost as a result of watered-down messages being presented in the church and by the people in the church not accepting their role in the advancement of the gospel.

---

<sup>45</sup> Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 117.

## Action

“God is looking for faithful men and women who are willing to carry out His plan in His way.”<sup>46</sup>

The purpose of DM needs to be clearly defined if the people are going to take it seriously. If the church is not totally committed to making disciples, the church members will not be committed. The people in the congregation look to the church leaders for vision and direction. The purpose needs to be clearly defined if the people are going to take it seriously. When the church is focusing on DM, the people will follow.

In the past the leaders set up a class or two and waited for the people to get involved. Creating classes just for the sake of creating classes not only minimizes the reason for DM; it also reduces the amount of effort needed to be successful. The last thing the church needs is another class. While having a variety for the church classes to choose from can be good, it can also be a sign that the church is not focused. A lack of focus leads to a lack of commitment.

The introduction of what has become known as spiritual disciplines has enabled the believer to develop a sound and organized way to grow in their relationship with God. The deeper the personal relationship with the God, the stronger the desire becomes to share God with others. It is only after that relationship has been established and the believer has matured that they can effectively move others in that direction. It is at this point that a personal relationship is established with new believers to move them toward maturity in Christ (Heb. 10:24–25).

---

<sup>46</sup> Christopher B. Adsit, *Personal Disciple-Making: A Step by Step Guide for Leading a Christian from New Birth to Maturity* (Orlando, FL: Campus Crusades for Christ, 1996), 29.

Jesus said that believers should be in the world but not of it, which means that it is not enough to live without having an impact. It is the role of the discipler to help the individual become a more mature believer. This is done by modeling what it means to be a disciple. Being a follower of Christ means being a disciple maker. Every believer needs to look for people in their life that they can establish deep, meaningful relationships with. Once the relationship is established, the opportunity for purposeful DM exists and must be acted upon.

Many people when asked will say they are Christian; however, very few can explain what that means. The phrase “I believe in Jesus” is also heard but again the definition is not clear. When a person claims to be a Christian, they should fully understand the requirements that come along with that distinction. Until society can differentiate between those who say they are Christian and those who live the Christian lifestyle, the church and the kingdom will continue to be damaged.

As the world continues to drift further away from God, many believers start to separate themselves from the world in an attempt to stay faithful. The separatist approach has positive and negative results. While it may allow a believer to deal with less temptation, it also limits the amount of opportunities there are to change others for the kingdom. Every time a believer does something that is contrary to scripture, they say through their actions that the Bible does not have the power that the believer says that it has. While everyone is capable of sinning, it is a lot more difficult for those who focus on the things of God in their lives and are living according to the scriptures. God is calling His people to influence the world, not to retreat from it. Being a disciple does not happen by accident; it takes a sense of purpose and a dedication to God.

## Process

“DM is seeking to fulfill the imperative of the great commission by making a conscientious effort to help people move toward spiritual maturity – drawing on the power and direction of the HS, utilizing the resources of the local church, and fully employing the gifts, talents and skills acquired over the years.” – Christopher B. Adsit

### Develop

In effective DM, there needs to be a process in place to ensure that what the church intended is actually what is being done. It is also important to understand that DM cannot be something that happens occasionally; it must be consistently done if it is going to have the impact desired.<sup>47</sup> Before any discipling can take place, there must be a focus on what the end result will be. Once the goal has been established, there needs to be a strategy developed to achieve the desired result.

DM needs to be planned and performed with the same amount of commitment that is given to the things of the world. Not everyone is ready for solid food at first, so it is important to develop disciple makers at a rate that is comfortable for them. Moving people through the DM process requires a major commitment of time and a desire to see others mature.

Discipleship is not an option for the church; it is a requirement. There needs to be a clear strategy for creating a culture of true discipleship.

It is also important to realize that the DM process does not work if God is not in it. It is through the work of the HS that people are transformed. Success or failure belongs to God.

---

<sup>47</sup> Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is . . . : How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2013), 166.

There is a push in churches of today to gain followers and that push has led to some misplaced allegiances within the body. DM is not about how many people you can get to look up to you. Sometimes men take credit for the work that God accomplishes in the lives of His people.

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. (John 15: 5–8)

The DM process must establish a culture of selfless devotion to God and others. Being a disciple needs to be just as important in ministry as Bible study. It doesn't matter how much you know if you never put it into practice. Private devotions should lead to action.

Salvation is not the end of a walk with God; it is the beginning of the walk. Salvation is not enough if we are going to have an impact on the world for Christ. Once salvation has been obtained, the process of growing in the faith becomes vital. DM is the process of helping Christians grow and develop spiritually. The method has a lot to do with spending time with people and being an example of what true Christianity looks like.

Using the approach used by Jesus will close the DM gap. Jesus used self-initiation and reproduction;<sup>48</sup> by taking the first step, the discipler is telling the disciplee that they are important both as a person and as a child of God.

Jesus knew that each disciple was different and used their differences when He needed to get them to understand what He was trying to teach them. The way of introduction is not as important as the need for discipleship.

---

<sup>48</sup> Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 74.



## **Deploy**

Jesus spent time with His disciples and in turn the disciples had firsthand knowledge of what it meant to be a disciple and how they should reproduce that process in the world after Jesus went back to the Father. The process begins with the identification of the person that will be discipled (Mark 2:14). Once the culture has been created and the disciple makers are trained, they need to be empowered to go and make disciples. It is not enough to equip people without giving them the opportunity to grow. There is enough wasted training going on in churches already. Everyone needs to be presented with opportunities to develop themselves and other church members in the area of discipleship.

The execution of the DM process must have two components. Without these components, things can only get more confusing and the kingdom less effective. The first component is to train the discipler and the second component is to send the discipler out to train others. The last thing that needs to happen is to give a person a mission without giving him what he or she needs to accomplish that mission. Just as damaging is when a person has been given the necessary tools and they are never asked to put those tools to use. The church is full of smart, ineffective, and apathetic believers.

DM helps believers understand their role in the advancement of God's kingdom. When a person finds a good thing, they want to share it with their family and friends. Salvation is no exception. The gift of salvation is free and should be given to as many people as possible. Once the disciple has been developed, the next stage in the process is the deployment stage. It is about leading them to Jesus. "A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40).

Jesus sent the disciples out to spread the gospel but He did not leave them to their own efforts. He informed them that He would send them out with the same peace that God sent Him out with. “A person can do great things when they have a sense of peace about what they are doing” (John 20:21). With that being said, it is important for the discipler to be able to maintain their Christian walk in the midst of the turmoil that they will encounter. It is difficult to convince someone of the power of God if that power is not evident in the life of the discipler.

When a person cannot demonstrate what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, they lose the ability to convince others of the reality that Jesus can bring. Being sent out for service means that they are being exposed to the evil that is present in the world. Disciple makers have to sure that they can maintain their walk once they have been released for service (Phil. 2:12). Jesus needed to make sure that the disciples understood how to be effective when He was not with them.

Sharing the good news is crucial to the DM process. What good is having the knowledge that Jesus can save if it is never passed on to others? Every person should be viewed as a potential disciple. Every believer has a part to play in the advancement of the gospel and it is important to make sure that everyone is doing their part (Eph. 4:16).

In *Disciple Shift*, the authors explain that “[g]rowing together with the people of God is also vital to the success of the DM process.”<sup>49</sup> DM is about relationships and relationship are nurtured and developed through spending time with others. These relationships need to be more than superficial, they require an open and honest relationship that is focused on Christian maturity.

---

<sup>49</sup> Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington, *Disciple Shift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 146.

### Priority

If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? (Luke 14:26–28)

DM takes time and effort and a commitment to the development of others. Sometimes, the belief that there is not enough time can hinder the ability of the church to make disciples. Many people believe they don't have time needed to be a part of biblical DM. However, the availability of time is often tied to what a person feels is important to them. With that being said, if being a disciple of Jesus and making disciples for Jesus is important, the time will become available. The most important thing in a person's life is where they dedicate most of their time. Everything else takes second place. The same needs to be said when it comes to making disciples. Advancing the kingdom of God should be a priority for all believers. A person must be willing to give up everything if he or she wants to be true disciple of Jesus (Luke 14:33).

It is only through following Jesus that a disciple really understands the depth to which God is committed to them. "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him" (John 12:26). Therefore, if true DM is going to happen, disciples need to be committed to the mission before them. The mission for every disciple as well as for the church is to make more disciples.<sup>50</sup> Every action and thought should be with that in mind.

---

<sup>50</sup> Francis Chan and Mark Beuving, *Multiply: Disciples Making Disciples* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2012), 31.

## **Kingdom**

The disciple must be committed to the kingdom above all else. God has promised to provide for those who seek Him (Matt. 6:33). Anyone who decides to follow Jesus must be willing to sacrifice the things of this world. This includes relationships that hinder the disciple's ability to do what God has called him to do. The average believer lives as if they are in control of their time. The Bible is clear that God is in control and the sooner believers get with His plan the sooner they can do what they were created to do.

Being a disciple cannot be obtained without making the things of God a priority; as a result, the disciple must be committed to study, meditation, and scripture memorization. These practices are sometimes referred to as spiritual disciplines. Believers use spiritual disciplines to give a place for the HS to speak and use God's word in their lives.<sup>51</sup> These things not only prepare the disciple for ministry; they also help develop the disciple on a personal level. The more time a person spends with God, the more of God gets in them. It is through the filling of the HS that a disciple gets what is needed to do the work of DM.

DM is about maturing the believer in the things of God. God does not expect the believer to stay at the level of infancy. Scripture speaks about the need for the new believer to grow in maturity. Paul often spoke about the believer being fed milk until they are able to eat solid food. Maturity can only be developed through a concerted effort to not only demonstrate what it means to be a disciple but to also give believers the opportunity to walk out their faith.

---

<sup>51</sup> Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation, *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2012), 119.

When a believer has matured, the transformation is evident both in word and in deed. People will be able to see the change as well as be attracted to it. If a person does not love God, they will not have the heart needed to love others. God is a God of love and the Bible emphasizes how much God loves His people. When the church demonstrates this, the world will be able to see the love of God in action. If the church is going to affect people for the kingdom, it is going to have to go out of its way to make contact with people and establish a relationship that can lead to discipleship.

## **Community**

The devotion to Jesus did not end when He returned to the Father. The disciples set out to do what they were called to do. The church of today would not exist if those disciples had not done what Jesus told them to do. The believers today have the same mandate; however, very few are taking action. The kingdom of God will only go as far as the disciples of today take it. Year after year, the number of dedicated God-fearing disciples dwindle while the number of professing Christians continue to climb. Jesus made it clear that what a person says has very little to do with their true spiritual condition.

The church will not be able to reach the world until it has competent workers in the field. It is not enough to create disciples; those disciples need to be able to go out and reproduce themselves. The power of God can only be demonstrated through a lifestyle that confirms what is being said. It is not what the believers say; it is what they do especially when they are trying to convince others to believe what they have to say about Jesus. The mark of a true disciple is the life that he or she lives. The word of God is true and the disciple must allow that truth to govern how they live (John 8:31–32).

In a world where being Christian is frowned upon, it is important for the genuine believers to take on the challenge. Jesus told the disciples what they would encounter to give them assurance when they saw it (John 16:33). Jesus told them not to worry; He would be with them and He makes the same assurance to the disciples of today. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). If He was there with them, then He will be with the disciples of today. If the church is not growing, it is because the disciples of today have dropped the ball.

Believers need to change how they view the mission of DM. How a person manages their priorities says a lot about what they view as important. The things that get put on the back burner are the things that have the least importance. There is always enough time to do the things that are viewed as essential. DM should be viewed as essential. When DM has become a priority for the believer, the church will be able to attract and keep those people who are truly searching for something in this world.

DM is about living the life God intended and being able to reproduce that in the lives of others. According to scripture, older people are supposed to disciple younger people with the understanding that when they are older, they will repeat the process (Titus 2:1–3). This cannot take place unless people spend time mentoring and counseling each other in the things of God.

The church has separated the commandment to make disciples from the commandment to evangelize the world. A close look at the Great Commission shows that it is through the making of disciples that evangelism takes place. The church needs to reexamine its priorities and help the believers do the same thing. DM is the mission, not an addition to the mission.

## Personal

DM from a biblical perspective is about how a person internalizing what they have learned and being able to help others come to that same position. DM has very little to do with how much a person knows about God or how well they can relay a truth. Being a disciple is more about doing than saying. The way a person lives speaks louder than the words they say. Effective DM can only take place when the disciple has a firm grasp of what it means to be a disciple.

### **Authenticity**

Being authentic is the key to having an impact on others. Christians are looking for people who are the same during the week as they are on Sunday morning. When a person gives their life to Jesus, it changes how they look at everything including Jesus.<sup>52</sup> The relationship between the believer and Jesus must be so intimate that they listen to Him and follow Him every waking moment. An effective disciple is sacrificial in his or her approach to the things of God. That means that they must be willing to give up anything that would hinder their devotion to God.

Disciples must be sure that they are constantly working to develop themselves spiritually. Their lives need to reflect their beliefs both in how they govern themselves and in how they respond to others (2 Pet. 1:5–10). It is through a personal devotion to God that they are able to draw others. If people are going to be influenced, they need to see that those claiming to be disciples of Jesus practice what they preach.

---

<sup>52</sup>Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 118.

A true disciple must ensure that their life reflects the words that they speak. Teaching people to obey Jesus is a never-ending process that requires us to intertwine our lives with the people around us.<sup>53</sup>

Christ-centered DM results in a transformation that is rarely seen today.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, a disciple must be transformed if he is going to fulfill the Great Commission. This transformation includes both who they are internally and who they are to the rest of the world. The world competes with God for loyalty and will try to distract the believer, but the true believers know when Jesus is talking and they respond to His leading (John 10:27).

In the area of DM, it is important to share personal struggles with the person that is being discipled. The purpose is to establish trust, not to expose personal circumstances just for the sake of disclosure. Any disclosure of personal information should be done with the desire to help the situation. This reinforces the fact that everyone has struggles and it also shows that Jesus can help if He is allowed to do so. That is not to say that a discipler should be privileged to every detail of the discipler's life. It is up to the discipler to determine how much information is enough.

When a person is totally in love with Jesus, they are able to rejoice regardless of the situations in which they find themselves (Acts 13:52). It is that sense of contentment that enables them to be effective in relationship building. Being able to rejoice in all situations helps to validate the words that being spoken by the people in the relationship.

---

<sup>53</sup> Chan and Beuving, *Multiply: Disciples Making Disciples*, 52.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.



## Availability

There is no substitute for time when it comes to developing a mature disciple.<sup>55</sup> Salvation is instantaneous but DM is doing in the context of growing together over time. Once a person has been transformed by the word of God and the guidance of the HS, they begin to show evidence by how they live their lives. Not only are they committed to the gospel; they also become committed to the task of bringing others to a saving knowledge of Jesus.

People view their time as precious and are reluctant to share their time with anyone with whom they do not have a personal connection. Relationship building takes time and commitment and few people are willing to make that investment. When the people of God share their lives with others it demonstrates to the world that believers are committed to helping others. This reinforces the need for the family of God to behave like a family when interacting with people they are in relationship with.

Another trait of a true disciple is the love they show for others. “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). God is a God of love and His disciples need to be disciples of love. They must model God before a sinful world. If a believer does not engage the world, he or she will never be able to influence it. It is not enough to say we love God. Jesus said they will know us by our love one for another. These relationships also allow for accountability in the life of the believer. Many people are afraid to expose themselves to others for fear of how they will be perceived. Honest relationships remove the need to be guarded.

---

<sup>55</sup> Hull, *Jesus Christ Disciple Maker*, 62.

### Summary

If the church of God is going to be successful in the area of DM, it is going to have change the way it views and executes it. DM needs to be the goal of all those who claim to be followers of Jesus. DM is not running a program; it is investing in people.<sup>56</sup>

Too often, the church treats DM like the next class in a Christian growth curriculum. This not only minimizes the importance of DM to the individual; it also limits the level of personal commitment to the Great Commission. As long as the class is going on, the people are engaged but as soon as the class ends, so does the focus.

DM involves helping believers mature in their spiritual lives. Using the spiritual disciplines, a believer can grow deeper in the things of God. Once a person has grown spiritually, they are ready to help others mature.

The only way to effectively help others is to develop a personal relationship with them and this is the essence of DM. Biblical DM is about sharing your life with the lives of others with a focus on creating solid believers. Jesus modeled true DM and instructed those who claim to be disciples to do the same for others.

---

<sup>56</sup> Earley, Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is . . .*, 148.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusion**

When Jesus ascended back to the Father, He left instructions for the apostles (Matt. 28:18–20). Those instructions have come to be known as the Great Commission and were the blueprint for DM; they were to be used to establish the church.

Jesus not only told them to make disciples, He also demonstrated for them that the key to success was the ability for them to reproduce themselves in the lives of the people with whom they come in contact. It is clear that the apostles understood their mission but it is not as clear that the church of today have the same sense of clarity. As the generations passed, the commandment was carried out in many different ways. Each generation seemed to modify how it was done to some extent. The result was that after years of modifications, the original blueprint was no longer being followed. The church has become so divided they cannot even agree on how to worship God let alone how to fulfill the Great Commission.

Jesus's entire life was the blueprint for effective DM. Even though the church still believes that the Great Commission is the mission, it has not fulfilled it using the method taught by Jesus. This lack of focus has caused many in the church today to misunderstand what the original commandment intended.

The church has been plagued over the years with a lack of spiritual maturity and a genuine commitment to God and the Great Commission. These problems range from lack of sound biblical teaching to lack of commitment to anything that interferes with a person's right to live without accountability. Many people attending church today do so out of tradition and not because they have a genuine desire to serve God.

James tells us not only to be hearers of the word but to be doers also. “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves” (Jas. 1:22). If the church of God is going to do the things of God, it needs to follow the plan of God. The first step is to make disciples use the model demonstrated in the life and ministry of Jesus. Jesus selected and trained a few men and then told them to repeat in the world. The disciples began the process and every believer is instructed to ensure that process continues until Jesus returns.

### Biblical DM

To create a practical and successful model of DM in today’s culture, the church is going to have to admit that it has been doing it wrong for years. The time for change is now.

All DM must have a threefold aspect: a relationship with God, a relationship with other believers, and a willingness to get involved in the lives of unbelievers. Unfortunately, the church has been lacking true disciples for some time now and if the church does not change, it is only going to get worse.

DM is about living out the commandment that Jesus gave the disciples and ensuring that that work carries on from generation to generation. If true DM is going to take place, the disciple maker needs to have certain characteristics. This is not intended to be an inclusive checklist for identifying disciples. However, it is important to know what type of people are being successful in the area of DM.

### **Relationship with God**

God must be a part of the DM process if it is going to be effective. It is impossible to do the work of God without knowing who God is.

God has made Himself known both in creation and through the life and ministry of Jesus. Jesus demonstrated what it means to be in fellowship with God and to be committed to God's plan for the world. A disciple maker must have an intimate relationship with Jesus. Being a disciple of Jesus involves the surrender of one's whole life to the master in absolute submission to His sovereignty.<sup>57</sup>

### **Kingdom Mindset**

If a person is to become a disciple, he or she must be willing give up their own agenda. Many people in the church today struggle with who will have control of their life. It is impossible to serve God and serve the self at the same time. Believers are called to be kingdom builders and that means evangelizing and discipling a fallen world.

DM in the evangelical arena is centered on Jesus Christ.<sup>58</sup> Jesus has called all those who claim to be Christian to die to self to live for Him. This type of mindset can only happen when a person realizes that apart from Jesus, they have nothing anyway. Everything in this world will eventually fade away.

### **Biblical Foundation**

There are numerous homes today with Bibles that sit on a table in a place of honor. There are many people who say they believe that the Bible is the word of God, but there are far fewer who live their life as if they believe what they say. The world has shown that it is possible to read and believe the Bible but still miss the purpose and the calling that is evident in the book.

---

<sup>57</sup> Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1964), 52.

<sup>58</sup> Thomas V. Frederick, "Discipleship and Spirituality from a Christian Perspective," *Pastoral Psychology* (2008), 558.

Being a Christian means living the life of a disciple of and for Jesus. This mandate requires that everything said and done has the Bible as the standard.

### **Clear Plan**

DM involves introducing people to Christ, building their faith, and sending them out to reproduce themselves.<sup>59</sup> There must be a strategy for DM and the objectives must be clear. If it is not planned, it is not effective and the people are left frustrated. Jesus trained the disciples and told them to make other disciples. Jesus did not ask the people to do anything that He had not done Himself. He decided whom to disciple and how they would be disciplined long before He made contact. It is important to remember that DM is not the end; it is the beginning. People who are disciples make other disciples.<sup>60</sup> The disciple needs to be as committed to the details as Jesus was.

### **Christian Lifestyle**

Being authentic is the key to Christian credibility. “The real obstacles to becoming fully devoted, zealous Disciples of Christ are not money, time, methods, or knowledge. The major obstacle is the human heart.”<sup>61</sup> Not everyone who claimed to be Christian has lived a life that bears that out. People are far more interested in a person’s lifestyle than they are in what the person has to say.

---

<sup>59</sup> Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010), 56.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>61</sup> Barna, *Growing True Disciples*, 166.

## **Personal Connection**

To disciple someone there must be relationship. A person must be or become a close and trusted friend. The Bible talks about the characteristics of a believer and the fruit that should be produced. Love is and should always be the number one characteristic. Remember that love is a distinguishing mark of all those who call themselves disciples. The Bible states that they will know you by the love you show one another.

Unless the disciple maker incorporates these characteristics into a lifestyle that can be reproduced, the church will continue to struggle with making authentic disciples. Poor Christianity is just as dangerous as no Christianity. The world needs to see the impact of Jesus in the life of the believer if they are going to accept the gospel.

The purpose of this research was to focus on the Great Commission and to see how Church X was doing in the area of fulfilling that commission. The Great Commission has several parts and each part builds on the part preceding it. A look at the church shows that while the church is aware of the commission, it has not been committed to fulfilling all parts of it. DM, while listed as the starting point, has not been given the level of commitment needed to ensure that the church is strong enough to be effective as the world moves toward judgment.

This researcher only examined five of the many challenges to effective DM that are at work in the church. After selecting five challenges, the researcher then developed strategies to address those challenges. This is not intended to be a fix-all but it should be used to help develop an effective process for the church. The following pages present the research in a challenge-and-strategy format. Each challenge is followed by a strategy that can be used to deal with the challenge.

## Challenges and Strategies

### **Challenge One: Theology**

There is no shortage of people that identify as Christian. The disconnected is seen in the amount of people that profess to be Christians but have no evidence in their lives. Basic knowledge of the bible and its requirements are not optional for believers. Two-thirds of Americans believe that the scriptures are God's word but only half can tell you one of the gospel writers.<sup>62</sup> This lack of depth has contributed to the lack of DM in the church.

The challenge in the area of theology doesn't focus on whether or not the church believes that the bible speaks to DM. The challenge is how to get the church to make disciples in light of the great commission. Jesus made it clear that the mission of the disciples was to make disciples. The surveyed church understands the command of Jesus to make disciples but it has not been executing. The results of the survey showed that 100% of the people believe that the Bible gives clear instructions on how to effectively make disciples. The church must now act on what it knows to be true.

The Bible provided the mandate and the model for execution but the church has not taken that on as a personal responsibility. The results of the survey show that in the area of theology the church does not have a biblical view of DM and what it takes to be effective in that area. Seventy-five percent of the respondents felt that Jesus demonstrated how to make disciples but they were not following His example. This response reveals the fact that it is not enough to know the mission, a believer must also be willing to live out that mission through biblical DM.

---

<sup>62</sup> David Wells, "Christian Discipleship in a Post Modern World". Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 51, no. 1 (03, 2008): 29.



**Strategy One: Philosophy**

In order to overcome the challenges that exist in the area of Theology the church must help believers understand that having a knowledge of what the Bible says on a subject is not the same thing as living it out. Many people say they believe the Bible is the Word of God, but there are far fewer who live their life as if they believe that to be true. The world has shown that it is possible to read and believe the Bible but still miss the purpose and the calling that is evident in that book. Being a believer means that a person is not only a follower of Jesus they are also fully committed to demonstrating what that means to an unsaved world.

The church must understand that being a believer does not end at conversion. Believers have to not only represent Jesus in their own life, they have to be able to teach others how to do the same. Jesus used relationship building as His form of DM. He invested His life the life of others. The church must do the same if it is going to do what it was created to do. The church must be intentional if it plans to transform people for the kingdom of God. DM does not happen by accident everyone has to be willing to make sacrifices in order to see the kingdom of God advance.

The church must also understand that DM is the responsibility for everyone not just a chosen few. The term DM ministry could lead people to believe that if they are not a part of that ministry than they are not required to make disciples. It is up to the leadership to help the church understand the biblical mandate. In the commandment to make disciples, there is not a distinction as to who would or would not be responsible for DM. Jesus made it clear that all believers have the same mission.

**Challenge Two: Tradition**

The challenge in the area of traditions center around how things were done in the past and how the church has continued to use a system that is not having the desired results. The surveyed church did not have an established DM program and as a result had no definitive position on what the church should do in this area. The fact that there is not an established program means that this church should be open learning to duplicate the model used by Jesus.

Sixty-nine percent felt that small groups were a more effective way to make disciples. Currently, DM is done in the classroom or in formal meetings; this eliminates one of the things that are vital for effective DM and that is relationship building. True DM requires a relationship that allows the participants to learn and grow together. Their needs to be an investment of both time and emotions if the process is going to be successful.

The traditions of the church have also done a lot to create the lack of spiritual maturity that is prevalent in the church today. Believers think that the duty for DM rests with the pastor and his staff. Relying on the pastor for spiritual maturity can leave the church with believers who aren't able to stand on their own. DM is often seen as another ministry to be performed rather than a lifestyle to be lived out in front of other believers. The church needs to be able establish and articulate a DM model that resembles the model used by Jesus.

Jesus told the Pharisees that their traditions were nullifying the word of God: "And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition" (Matt. 15:6b). Holding on to traditions seems to be part of the problem in the area of DM. Tradition should never over ride scripture when it comes to the things of God. God has given the church the mandate and the church must carry out the mandate as set forth in scripture.

**Strategy Two: Purpose**

When creating purpose two things need to be addressed, the purpose of the believer and the purpose of DM in the life of the church.

First, the believer needs to understand that he or she was uniquely created by God and they have a role to play in the advancement of the Kingdom. Every believer must understand how they fit in God's plan and what their role is in the life of the church as well as the life of other believers. Without a sense of purpose, people may not be willing to invest the amount of time necessary to continue what God has started. The believe needs to invest in their own spiritual growth and be willing to invest in the spiritual growth of others.

Jesus has called all His followers to sacrifice their lives for the advancement of the kingdom. It is through the willingness to give up personal desires that makes DM effective. When Jesus called His disciples, He told each of them to follow Him, that calling required them to give up the lives they were currently living. They would have to sacrifice everything if they were going to fulfill their purpose. The same is true for His followers that are active in the world today.

Second, the church needs to understand its role in the DM process. For the church it is not enough to create DM programs or opportunities. Just having classes for the sake of having classes does very little to create a culture of DM. The goal is not to have classes but to have DMs. Everything that takes place in the church must center around making disciples. If the church is going to fulfill the great commission it is going to have to a DM church. Any church that does not make disciples is missing the point of its existence. Any church that focuses on conversions without focusing on DM has not fully understood the mission.

**Challenge Three: Training**

It is important to have some type of DM training program if the church is going to make disciples. The challenges come when the church tries to determine what DM will look like and how the church will move from training to execution. The church is going to have to commit to the belief that DM has to be lived out in the life of the believer, not in the classroom. There are a number of things that can be done in the classroom but DM is not one of them. There is no correct amount of time that will produce disciples, this commitment needs to be a lifelong process and every disciple of Jesus needs to be committed to it.

The surveyed church believes that true DM has to be done outside the context of a structured class. Creating a DM ministry that can be done through an organized training program will not give the desired results. Eighty-three percent of the people surveyed felt that there is no time limit to DM. Making disciples has to be done in the context of lifestyle living and relationship building. To try and fit DM into a Sunday school quarter only show the lack of understanding concerning DM and the mistaking belief that the classroom is enough. Any training that does not take into account the need for life investing on the part of the discipler will only produce biblically smart people.

Another challenge is the belief making disciples can be done by reading a book and learning formulas. Disciples of Jesus not only know about Jesus; they know Him on a personal level too. Disciples must have the ability to live what they have learned and be committed to teaching others to do the same thing. The classroom can never prepare the believer for the challenges that come with DM. No amount of training can do for the kingdom what relationship building can do when it comes to making disciples.

**Strategy Three: Process**

Bible based DM is a process that starts at the time of conversion and continues indefinitely. If the church allows people to stop growing after salvation they stifle the process. DM is about the constant developing and reproducing of disciples in the church. In order for this to be successful the church must develop and communicate how DM will be accomplished.

Curriculum can be used to standardize what the church would like to convey during the DM process but that can never be a substitute for the personal connection that is required in a DM relationship. It is important to make sure that the information being shared is sound to ensure that people are not led astray. However, there is no one way to relate to people and disciple makers need to make sure they are meeting the needs of the disciplee.

Jesus spent three years with His disciples and He told them to repeat the process with other believers. That process has been demonstrated time and time again over the centuries. The key to any successful DM relationship is the amount of time that is spent developing the believer. All believers mature differently and that needs to be considered when deciding whether or not to get involved. Sadly, some people look at the level of commitment and decide that they are able to make that type of sacrifice.

Moving people through the DM process requires the church to articulate to everyone what is required of them. Being a disciple maker means that the discipler has an intimate relationship with a Jesus as well as the person being discipled. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer that actually does the work in the life of the disciple, but it is through the time spent in relationship that helps the disciple see what it means to be a genuine follower of Jesus.

**Challenge Four: Time**

One of the time challenges arises when the discipler tries to fit DM into the an already busy life. Jesus demonstrated that to truly make disciples a person has to be willing to spend whatever time is needed to have the desired impact. Jesus showed that making an invest means being available when called upon. It is up to the church and to the followers of Christ to move DM to the top of their list of priorities.

Almost half of the people disagreed with the statement that DM should only be done when time permits. This response bolsters the belief that while believers feel that DM is important, they don't feel that it is important enough to be a priority compared to the cares of everyday life. For people with families this can be even more difficult. The demands that families place on people can hamper the ability to spend time in a disciple making relationship without sacrificing family time.

The second challenge is deciding how much time is enough time to effectively disciple another believer. The surveyed church understands that how much time is spent with the disciple also place a part in the effectiveness of the relationship. The amount of time spent with the disciplee can be just as important as the information being shared. The surveyed church felt that 60 to 90 minutes would be the correct amount of time spent in the DM sessions.

The busyness of life and the desire to be used by God is a challenge that everyone faces. It is important for the discipler to be able manage his or her life in such a way that everyone can get the most out of the relationship. Jesus has demonstrated that with a little dedication it is possible to be successful. Time is a challenge but it can be overcome with a little planning and commitment.

**Strategy Four: Priority**

The business of the world and the commitment to those things have lead the believer to believe that there is not enough time for DM. Many things are competing for the time of believers and it difficult to decide what should take priority. If the church is going to accomplish its mission, then it is going to have to make DM a priority. Jesus left two commands and DM was one of them. The church knows what is required and must get started regardless of the obstacles.

When trying to decide what is important the believer must allow the scripture to provide direction. Matthew states that a believer should seek first the things of God and the other things will be added (Matt. 6:33). God has promised to meet the needs of those that are committed to Him. God is in control of all things to include the things that could interfere with DM. If believers are going to be DMs, they are going to have to make the commitment to do despite the things that compete for their time.

Being a believer is a lifestyle and decisions need to be made in the context of lifestyle. DM is about living the life God intended and being able to reproduce that in the lives of others. That requires a selfless commitment and sacrificial love for others. Those who follow Christ must take up their cross and follow him. The mark of a true disciple is in the life that he or she lives. People need to see that a person is living what they are talking about.

The church of today would not exist if those disciples had not done what Jesus told them to do. The believers today have the same mandate; however, very few are taking action. There is always enough time to do the things that are viewed as essential. History shows that with a little planning, it is possible to do all those commands and still have time for other things.

**Challenge Five: Transparency**

Transparency is an issue in the church that is rarely talked about but is always just below the surface. Many people go to church on Sunday and never really spent time with church members outside of the church. This behavior makes it possible for people to go to church for years and never have to expose themselves emotionally to others. This allows people to present themselves as something other than what they are. The lack of personal relationships hampers the ability to pour into the lives of others. This is especially true in the area of DM.

In order for a person to effectively disciple another he or she must be willing to expose themselves personally. Authenticity is not only about being true to ourselves it is also about being true to who we are in Christ.<sup>63</sup> If the goal is to help people believe in Jesus, they need to see a realistic picture of what it means to be a believer. Any person that is not willing to be open and honest will have trouble developing an effective DM relationship. The most important thing in DM is to openness and honesty between the people involved.

The surveyed church clearly believes that in order to be effective in a DM relationship the disciple needs to be totally transparent with the disciple. Eighty-nine percent of the people surveyed felt that the discipler should share personal stories, however they were not in DM relationships at the time of the survey.

Ninety-one percent disagreed with the statement that a discipler would lose credibility when sharing personal struggles. It appears that the church believes that transparency is vital to the DM relationship. This goes a long way to building lasting and effective DM throughout the church.

---

<sup>63</sup> Wells, "Christian Discipleship in a Post Modern World", 31.



**Strategy Five: Personal**

If transparency is going to become a part of the Christian lifestyle, every believer will need to place authenticity above stature or status. The Bible states that man looks at the outward appearance but God looks at the heart (1 Sam. 16:7). This be a reminder that what people think of you should not be a determining factor in how you live your life.

The world is full of examples of how not to live as a Christian. Not everyone who claims to be a Christian has lived a life that bears that out. Today's society it is possible to affirm the Bible is the word of God and never understand the implications of that belief.<sup>64</sup> If a person talks Jesus but Jesus is not evident in the walk, they are wasting their time and the time of the person that they are trying to reach.

Another way to deal with the lack of transparency would be to demonstrate a genuine love for one another. The Bible talks about the characteristics of a believer and the fruit that should be produced. Love is and should always be the number one characteristic for the believer.

Jesus invested His life in the lives of a few men on a personal level and He expects His followers to do the same thing. People view their time as precious and are reluctant to share their time with anyone whom they do not have a personal connection with. Therefore, to convert someone, you must be or become a close and trusted friend. No one wants to listen to someone whom they don't feel have their best interest at heart.

It does not matter how much biblical knowledge you have if you cannot get anyone to listen to you. Jesus demonstrated that any DM relationship requires a personal investment on behalf of the people involved.

---

<sup>64</sup> Wells, "Christian Discipleship in a Post Modern World, 28.

### Summary

The church of today must take a fresh look at the Great Commission and ensure that they are meeting all the elements, not just a few. When Jesus return to the father he gave the disciples the mission of making disciples. Jesus gave the command and the disciples started the process. As the years progressed, the church had the responsibility to ensure that the process continued.

Through the years the church has grown in numbers however it is debatable whether it has grown in disciples. Sadly, the church has lost some of its effectiveness and influence in the world. This in some part has to do with the fact that the church is more concerned about having members than having disciples. DM has always been the mission and needs to be in the forefront of any work the church is doing in the world. The disciples of God need to get back to making disciples.

The research presented only focused on five challenges that currently effect DM and how those challenges influence the DM being done in the church today. The research also provides strategies for dealing with the challenges presented. The information is in no way intended to be considered authoritative in the area DM.

DM in the church has many more challenges that could be the basis for additional research. Hopefully, as a result of this research, the church can get back to making biblical disciples and return the church to its rightful place in society.

### Appendix A: Disciple Making Survey

Complete the survey based on your understanding of Disciple Making in the local church.	1 = Strongly Disagree 7 = Strongly Agree						
The Bible gives clear instructions on disciple making	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disciple making can be done more effectively in a large group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disciple making should be completed in a specific time period	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disciple making should only be done when time permits	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disciple makers should share their personal stories when discipling others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The Bible makes it clear that everyone is responsible for disciple making	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disciple making can be done more effectively in small groups	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disciple making can be done effectively in thirteen weeks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disciple making session should last no more than 60 minutes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disciple makers should share their personal struggles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Some people are natural born disciple makers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disciple making can be done more effectively in a one on one setting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disciple making should continue indefinitely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disciple making session should last no more 90 minutes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No subjects should be off limits in disciple making	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Jesus demonstrated the only way to make disciple	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disciple making should only be done by licensed Clergy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disciple making requires formal classroom training	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disciple making sessions should last no more than 30 minutes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disciple makers lose credibility if they discuss their personal struggles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### Appendix B: Disciple Making Survey Results

Complete the survey based on your understanding of Disciple Making in the local church.	1 = Strongly Disagree 7 = Strongly Agree						
The Bible gives clear instructions on disciple making	0	0	0	0	4	5	26
Disciple making can be done more effectively in a large group	6	4	4	12	5	2	2
Disciple making should be completed in a specific time period	11	8	4	6	1	1	4
Disciple making should only be done when time permits	15	9	5	2	1	1	0
Disciple makers should share their personal stories when discipling others	1	0	0	3	6	12	13
The Bible makes it clear that everyone is responsible for disciple making	0	0	2	3	5	4	20
Disciple making can be done more effectively in small groups	0	2	3	6	4	9	11
Disciple making can be done effectively in thirteen weeks	6	6	0	14	3	2	3
Disciple making session should last no more than 60 minutes	5	2	1	13	7	4	3
Disciple makers should share their personal struggles	0	0	2	3	5	12	13
Some people are natural born disciple makers	3	1	1	6	9	8	7
Disciple making can be done more effectively in a one on one setting	2	1	2	9	5	9	7
Disciple making should continue indefinitely	0	2	0	3	5	8	17
Disciple making session should last no more 90 minutes	3	1	3	17	5	2	4
No subjects should be off limits in disciple making	1	1	1	5	7	11	8
Jesus demonstrated the only way to make disciple	1	1	2	4	2	8	16
Disciple making should only be done by licensed Clergy	15	2	2	7	3	1	4
Disciple making requires formal classroom training	9	4	4	8	7	1	2
Disciple making sessions should last no more than 30 minutes	12	7	4	7	4	1	0
Disciple makers lose credibility if they discuss their personal struggles	21	8	3	0	0	0	3

## Appendix C: Figures

Figure 3.1 Theology Survey Results

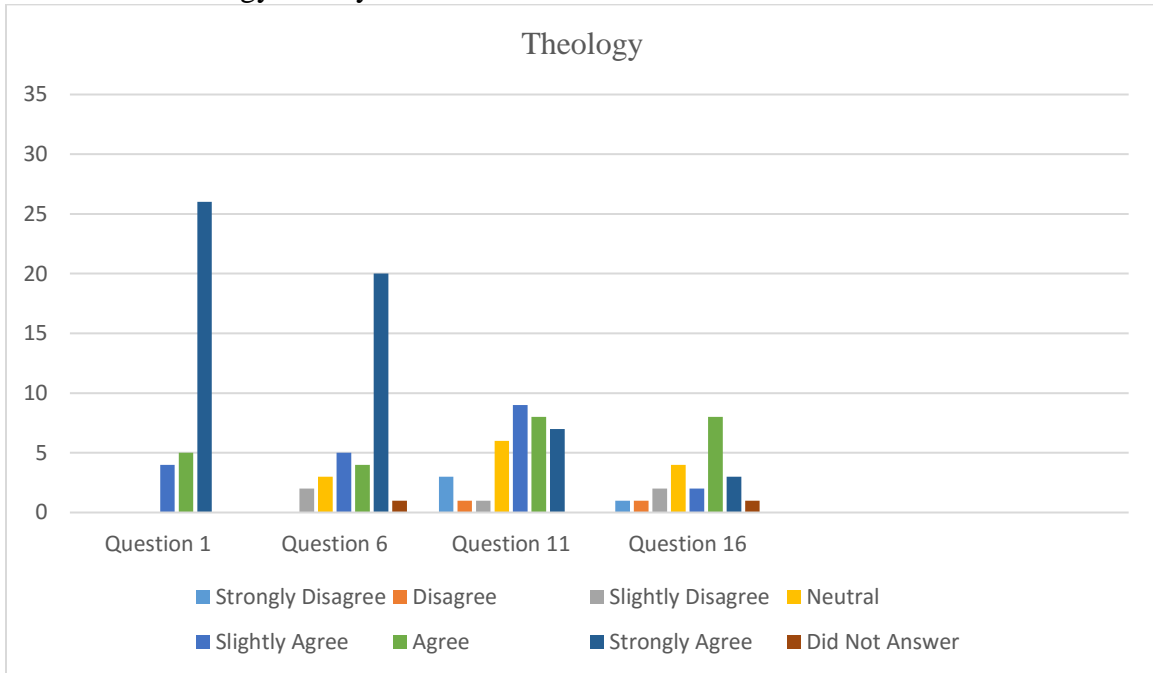


Figure 3.2 Tradition Survey Results

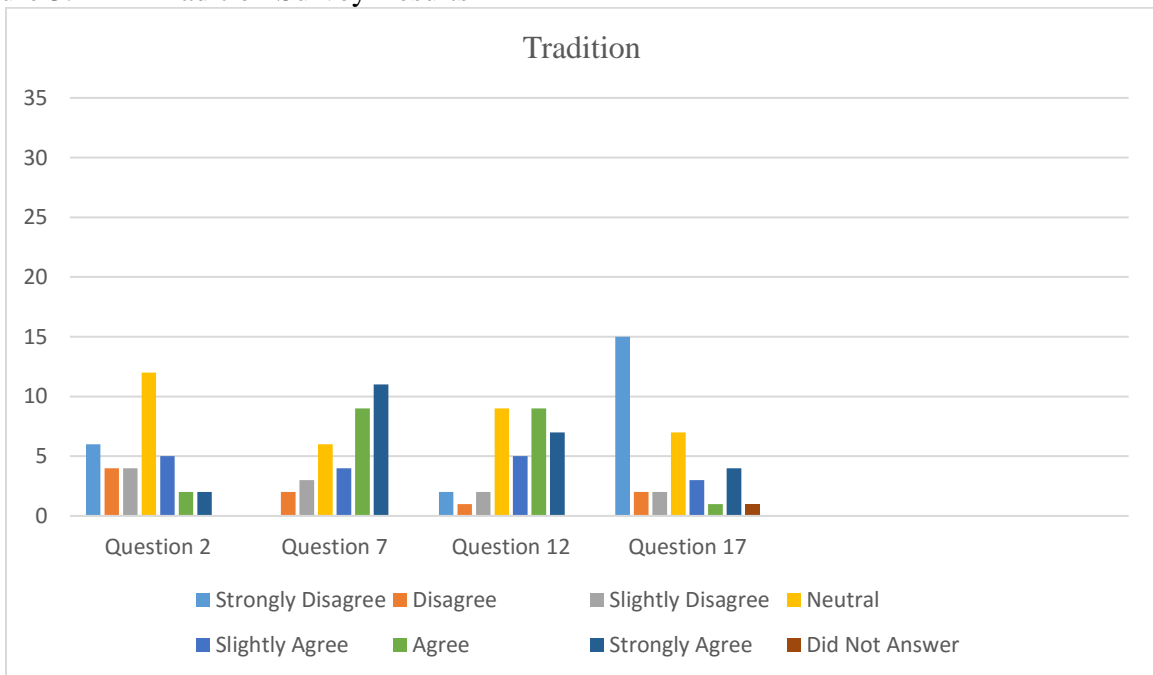


Figure 3.3 Training Survey Results

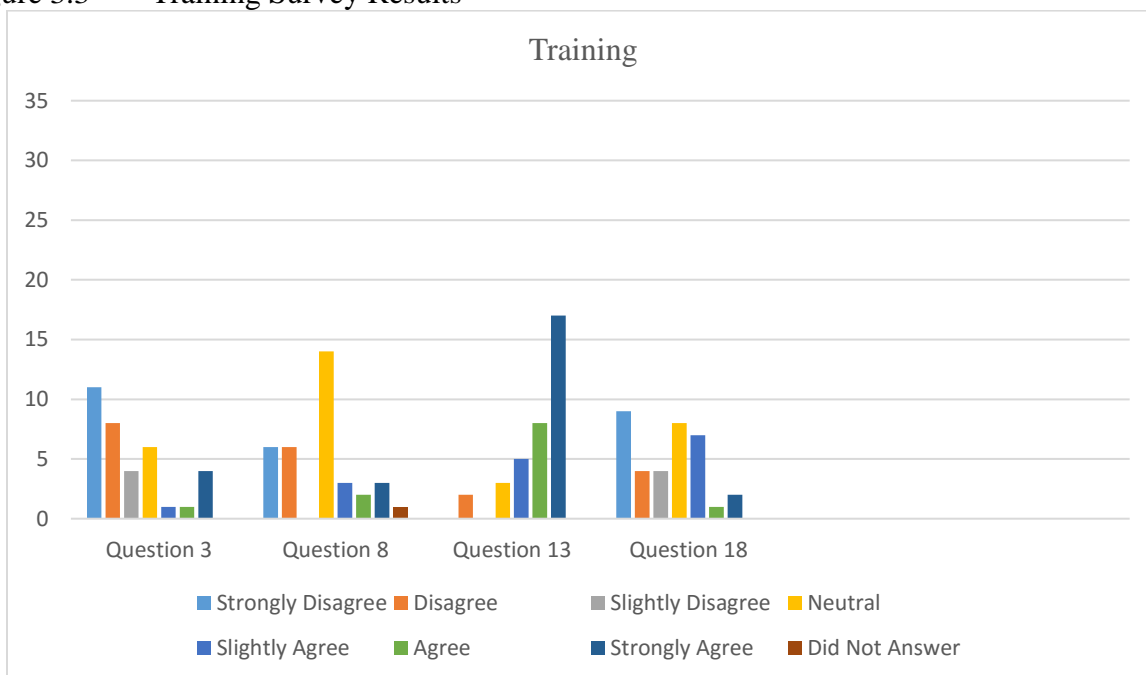


Figure 3.4 Time Survey Results

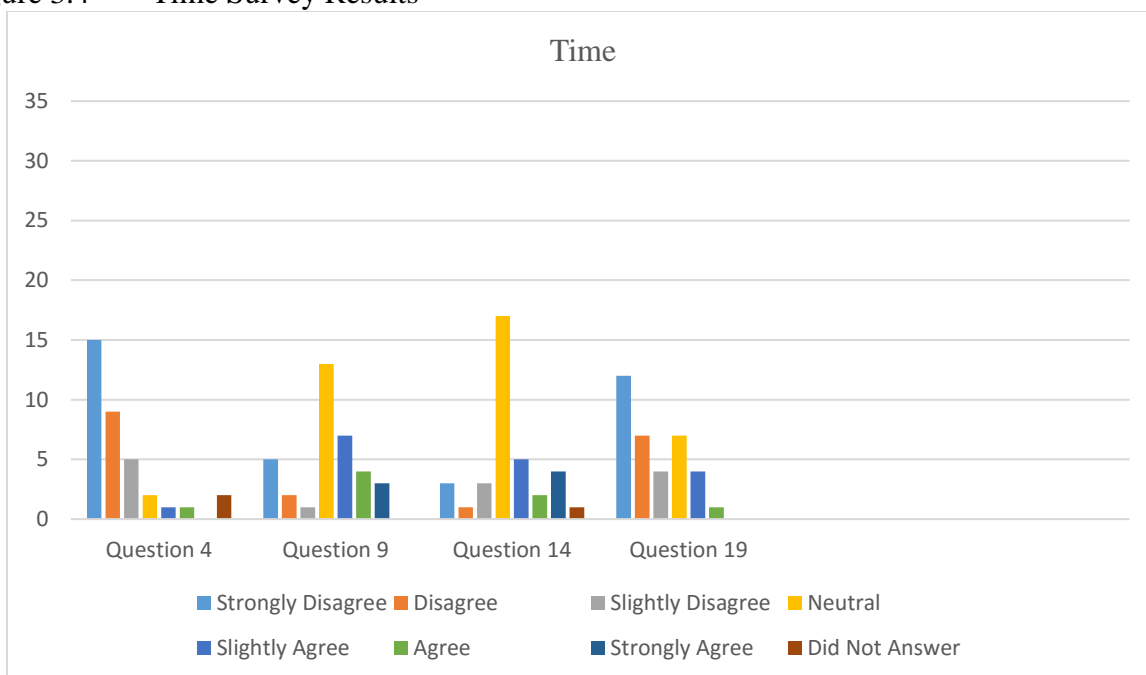
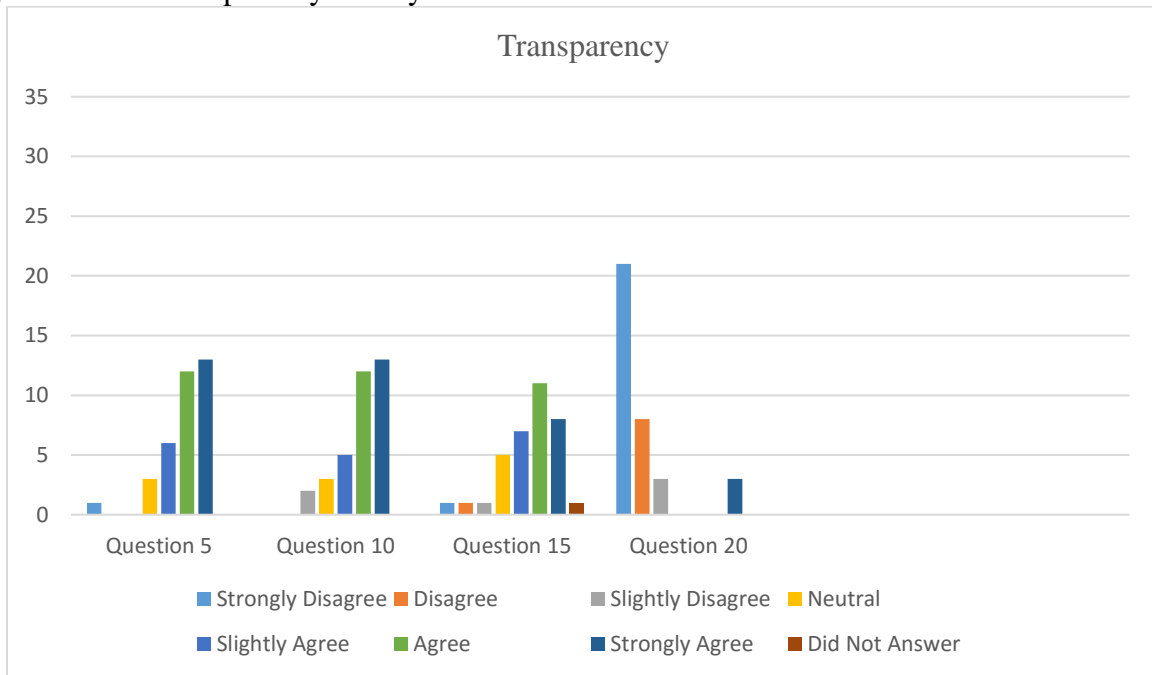


Figure 3.5 Transparency Survey Results



### Bibliography

- Adsit, Christopher B. *Personal Disciple-Making: A step by step guide for leading a Christian from new birth to maturity*. Orlando, FL: Campus Crusades for Christ, 1996.
- Alcorn, Wallace Arthur. "The Biblical Concept of Discipleship as Education for Ministry." DMin diss., New York University, 1974.
- Anderson, Leith. *The Jesus Revolution: Learning from Christ's First Followers*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2009.
- Arterburn, Stephen, and John Shore. *Being Christian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Bethany House Publishers, 2008.
- Barna, George. *The Frog and the Kettle*. Ventura, CA: Baker, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Growing True Disciples: New Strategies for Producing Genuine Followers of Christ*. Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Second Coming of the Church*. Nashville, TN: Word 1998.
- Barry, A.L. *To the Ends of the Earth: A Journey Through Acts*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1997.
- Bell, Anthony L. "Increasing Discipleship Commitment: Building a Firmer Spiritual Foundation for Leading to More Active Ministry Involvement." DMin diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2007.
- Blackaby, Henry T., and Richard Blackaby. *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People On to God's Agenda*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2011.
- Blair, William C. "Revitalizing a Small Plateaued Church through the We Build People Discipleship Model." DMin diss., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, 2005.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1995.
- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *Kate L. Turabian-A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*. 8th ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Boren, M. Scott. *Difference Makers: An Action Guide for Jesus Followers*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013.



- Broocks, Rice, Phil Bonasso, and Steve Murrell. *The Purple Book*. Pasig City, Philippines: Every Nation Productions 2004.
- Burley-Allen, Madelyn. *Listening the Forgotten Skill: A Self-Teaching Guide*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995.
- Burns, Bob, Tasha D. Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie. *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving*. Downers Grove, IL: IV Press, 2013.
- Butler, Trent C., ed. *Holman Bible Dictionary*. Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991.
- Byrd, Nathan C. "Narrative Discipleship: Guiding Emerging Adults to 'Connect the Dots' of Life and Faith." *Christian Education Journal* 8, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 244–62.
- Cairns, Earle E. *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996.
- Carbonell, Mels. *How to Solve the People Puzzle: Understanding Personality Patterns*. Blue Ridge, GA: Uniquely You Resources, 2008.
- Chan, Francis, and Mark Beuving. *Multiply: Disciples Making Disciples*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2012.
- Clarke, Holt A. "The Discipleship Art of Biblical Mentoring: A Christian Discipleship Curriculum Design for Fashioning a Great Commission Church." DMin diss., Drew University, 2005.
- Cole, Neil. *Church 3.0: Upgrades for the Future of the Church*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass; 2010.
- Coleman, Robert E. *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1964.
- Comiskey, Joel. "Cell Based Ministry: A Positive Factor for Church Growth in Latin America." DMin diss., Fuller Theological Seminary. 1997.
- Cordeiro, Wayne. *The Divine Mentor: Growing Your Faith as You Sit at the Feet of the Savior*. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House, 2007.
- Coutta, Edward. *A Practical Guide for Successful Church Change*. Universe, 2008.
- Davis, Steven Brent. "Pastoral Perceptions of Critical Thinking in the Process of Discipleship in the Local Church." EdD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002.

- Donahue, Bill, and Russ Robinson. *The Seven Deadly Sins of Small Group Ministry: A Troubleshooting Guide for Church Leaders*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.
- Drew, Charles. *A Public Faith: Bringing Personal Faith to Public Issues*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2000.
- Dunmire, Steven L. "Growing Disciples in the Pattern of the Twelve: The Ecclesiola in Ecclesia as a Model for Spiritual Transformation and Local Church Discipleship." DMin diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2012.
- Earley, Dave. *Turning Members into Leaders: How to Raise Up Your Group Members to Lead New Groups*. Houston, TX: Touch, 2003.
- Earley, Dave, and Rod Dempsey. *Disciple Making Is . . . : How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence*. Nashville TN: B&H Publishing, 2013.
- Eims, Leroy. *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980.
- Elwell, Walter A., ed. *The Hendrickson Topical Bible: A Survey of Essential Christian Doctrines*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1991.
- Elwell, Walter A., and Robert W. Yarbrough, eds. *Encountering the New Testament. A Historical and Theological Survey*, 2nd edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker books, 2005.
- Engstrom, Todd Randall. "Missional Community as a Model for Integrated Discipleship in an American Context." DMin diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014.
- Erskine, Eric Richard. "The Relationship between a Church's Discipleship Practices and the Development of Maturing Disciples." EdD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004.
- Everist, Norma Cook. *Church Conflict: From Contention to Collaboration*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004.
- Foster, Richard Novel. "The Great Invitation: A Call to Discipleship." DMin diss., Liberty University, 2007.
- Frederick, Thomas V. "Discipleship and Spirituality from a Christian Perspective." *Pastoral Psychology* 56 (2008): 553–560.
- Geiger, Eric., Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation. *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow*. Nashville TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2012.

- Goleman, Daniel. *Leadership: The Power of Emotional Intelligence*. Florence, MA: More than Sound, 2011.
- Green, John Thomas IV. "An Analysis of the Discipleship Strategy of Robert Emerson Coleman." EdD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999.
- Hearn, Phillip W. "The Three-Strand Church: Understanding the Scriptural Values and Structural Venues of a Three-Strand Approach to Discipleship." DMin diss., Regent University, 2006.
- Heckaman, Christopher Todd. "Using the Jesus Narrative for Discipleship." DMin diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2002.
- Hinkle, Brent Nathan. "Discipleship in the Age of Whatever: Becoming Better Disciples of Christ While Living in a Postmodern World." 3164864, DMin diss., Anderson University, 2005.
- Holesapple, James Charles. "A Study of the Correlation Between Pastoral Theology of Discipleship and Selected Practices in the Local Church." EdD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005.
- Holley, Betty. "Small Group Discipleship Program: Training and Preparing the Laity for Christian Ministry Services and Evangelistic Outreach." DMin diss., Drew University, 2005.
- Hurlbut, Jesse Lyman. *The Story of the Christian Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970.
- Hull, Bill. *The Disciple Making Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Jesus Christ Disciple Maker*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *New Century Disciple Making: Applying Jesus' Ideas for the Future*. Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1990.
- Johnston, John (Jay) G. "Discipleship: Stepping Stones to Developing Your Church's Strategy." DMin diss., Liberty University, 2009.
- Keinath, Thomas Wayne. "The Barnabas Discipleship Method and Model: A Quest for True and Effective New Testament Discipleship." DMin diss., Regent University, 2001.

- Koessler, John. *True Discipleship: The Art of Following Jesus*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2003.
- Kreider, Larry. *Authentic Spiritual Mentoring: Nurturing Younger Believers Toward spiritual Maturity*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 2008.
- Lawrentz, Mel. *Spiritual Influence: The Hidden Power Behind Leadership*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.
- Lewis, Robert. *The Church of Irresistible Influence*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.
- Lucado, Max. *Just Like Jesus*. Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1998.
- Malphurs, Aubrey. *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Strategic Disciple Making: A Practical Tool for Successful Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009.
- Mangeni, Fredrick Charles. "An Analysis of Robert E. Coleman's Concept of Evangelism and Discipleship: A Model for Mentoring Spiritual Leaders." EdD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011.
- Maxwell, John C. *Everyone Communicates, Few Connect: What the Most Effective People Do Differently*. Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010.
- McCallum, Dennis, and Jessica Lowery. *Organic Discipleship: Mentoring Others into Spiritual Maturity and Leadership*. Columbus, OH: New Paradigm Publishing, 2012.
- McPherson, Miles. *God in the Mirror: Discovering Who You Were Created to Be*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013.
- Mills, Kathleen Elizabeth. "The Kinship of Jesus: Christology and Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark." 3607592, PhD diss., Texas Christian University, 2013.
- Moore, Ralph. *Making Disciples: Developing Lifelong Followers of Jesus*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 2012.
- Morales, Charles Stanley. "A Systematic Discipleship Module in Evangelism: Training and Inspiring Christians to Fulfill the Great Commission." DMin diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013.
- Ogden, Greg. *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples A Few at a Time*. Madison, WI: Intervarsity Press, 2003.

- Ogundiran, Victor. "Making Disciples of Jesus Christ: Implementing an Effective Discipleship Strategy for Churches in American." DMin diss., Liberty University, 2013.
- Olewski, Michael Wilson. "An Assessment of the Implications of the Discipleship Emphases of the Pastoral Epistles for the Modern Church." DMin diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1995.
- Ortberg, John. *The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God's Best Version of You*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. 2010.
- Perkins, Pheme. *Reading the New Testament*, 2nd edition. New York, NY, Paulist Press.1988.
- Putman, Jim. *Real Life Discipleship: Building Churches that Make Disciples*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010.
- Putman, Jim, and Bobby Harrington. *Disciple Shift: Five Steps that Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013.
- Rahn, Dave, and Terry Linhart. *Evangelism Remixed: Empowering Students for Courageous and Contagious Faith*. 2009.
- Rainer, Thom S., and Eric Geiger. *Simple Church*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2011.
- Rosenberg, Joel C., and Dr. T.E. Koshy. *The Invested Life: Making Disciples of All Nations One Person at a Time*. New York, NY: Tyndale House 2012.
- Scazzero, Peter. *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship That Actually Changes Lives*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.
- Seifert, Vanessa M. "Discipleship as a Catalyst to Personal Transformation in the Christian Faith." 3645112, PhD diss., University of the Incarnate Word, 2013.
- Sensing, Tim. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011.
- Servant, David A. *The Disciple Making Minister: Biblical Principles for Fruitfulness and Multiplication* (2005). Kindle.
- Sorrells, William Lyn. "The Use of a Small Group Experience Based on John Wesley's Class Meetings as a Means of Enhancing Christian Discipleship." DMin diss., Drew University, 1991.
- Stark, Rodney. *The Triumph of Christianity—How the Jesus Movement Became the World's Largest Religion*. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2011.

- Stearns, Richard E. *Unfinished: Believing is Only the Beginning*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2013.
- Sweet, Leonard. *I Am a Follower: The Way, Truth and Life of Following Jesus*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2012.
- Swenson, Richard A. *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2004.
- Tanner, Paul. "The Cost of Discipleship: Losing One's Life for Jesus' Sake." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 56, no. 1 (03, 2013): 43–61.
- Thurston, Bonnie. *Spiritual Life in the Early Church: The Witness of Acts and Ephesians*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993.
- Vyhmeister, Nancy J. *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology*, 2nd edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.
- Walters, Joshua Adam. "A Proposal for Construction and Implementation of a Focused Approach to a New Member Discipleship Program." DMin diss., Liberty University, 2011.
- Wan, Siu Fai. "Death and Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark." 3362955, PhD diss., The Chinese University of Hong Kong (Hong Kong), 2009.
- Warren, Rick. *Purpose Driven Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.
- Weems, Lovett H. Jr. *Church Leadership: Vision, Team, Culture and Integrity*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1993.
- Wells, David F. "Christian Discipleship in a Post Modern World". *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 51, no. 1 (03, 2008): 19-33.
- White, Strunk, E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*, 4th edition. New York, NY: Longman, 1998.
- Wilkes, C Gene. *Jesus on Leadership: Timeless Wisdom on Servant Leadership*. Carol Stream IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1998.
- Willard, Dallas. "Discipleship." *Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology*, 2010.  
<http://www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=134>.
- Wilson, Len, and Jason Moore. *The Wired Church 2.0*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008.

Wyrostek, Joe. *Discipleship Based Churches: How to Create and Maintain a Church of Disciples*. Chicago IL: MPI Publishing, 2012. Kindle.

Youngblood, Ronald F., ed. *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995.