

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY  
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE DISCIPLESHIP  
PRACTICES OF SELECTED MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST  
CONVENTION PASTORS AND CHURCHES

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Robert David Haynes

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this qualitative, interview-based-study was to explore the personal discipleship practices of pastors and compare those practices to the personal discipleship practices of Mississippi Baptist Convention churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400 by collecting qualitative data from pastors, other staff members, and church members. This qualitative research design called for research to be conducted for the purpose of describing the personal discipleship practices of pastors through interviewing pastors and then comparing those practices to the practices of the two interviewed staff members and the two interviewed church members of those same pastors. This study collected data and compared the data to see if any commonality of responses existed between the personal discipleship practices described by pastors and the discipleship practices of the churches in the sample group, thus better understanding the pastors' roles in discipleship.

*Keywords:* discipleship, personal discipleship practices.

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**Dedication**

To

April, my loving wife

and

Taylor, our dearest daughter

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### **List of Abbreviations**

Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC)

Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB)

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)

## **CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN**

### **Introduction**

God has a plan for the maturation process of every Christian. Ephesians 2:10 states that “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.” Discipleship is an instrumental part of God’s plan for the development of his children. Discipleship is best understood to mean the process of creating “healthy spiritual leaders in Christ’s likeness to reach the world for Christ” (Kim, 2010, p. 104). Healthy spiritual leaders will be the disciple-makers for the next generation.

In the omniscience of the Lord, the establishment of his plan happened before the world began, including this maturational process of discipleship. Thus, it might be logically asked, are contemporary Christian leaders still following God’s plan? Are pastors still making disciples, and if so, how are they doing that, and how effective are the results? From the perspective of individual personalities and spiritual gifts, every pastor is different. It is reasonable to assume that pastors will use the discipleship method which serves them best over the history of their ministries. But, that could also mean the pattern of discipleship modeled by pastors may simply be reproducing the same pattern and results in their church members, whether effective or ineffective. Within this study, a standardized measurement of discipleship effectiveness was not utilized, therefore, then each pastor was responsible to identify their individual perception of effectiveness. As a result, there were no specific numbers or unbiased assessment that could be used to measure spiritual or discipleship effectiveness. Rather, each pastor’s perceptions were instrumental in observing this phenomenon. As pastors are to be models to those they lead, it follows that the discipleship practices of pastors may have an influence on those of their church members. This research explored that possibility.

## **Background to the Problem**

### **The Pastor's Responsibility for Leadership**

The Bible says in James 2:24 “You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.” On this passage, Davids (1989) comments that “there is the word **faith** (*pistis*), which James uses in three ways himself, for true commitment, for Christianity, and for intellectual belief” (p. 78). A true commitment to Jesus Christ is seen when a person undergoes discipleship and, in turn, disciples another person. The discipleship ministry of a church can place only “reasonable pressure” on a person to follow through with discipleship, as Barna (2001) states that “Most highly effective ministries encourage people to put reasonable pressure on themselves to grow” (p. 125). True growth, one might say, comes from a personal, inner desire for discipleship. The pastor must lead the congregation to a desire for discipleship.

Coleman (2010) states that “about half of those who make professions and join the church eventually fall away or lose the glow of [the] Christian experience, and fewer still grow in sufficient knowledge and grace to be of any real service to the kingdom” (p. 47). If this is true, is this because pastors are zealous to see souls saved while discipleship is not met with a similar zeal? Coleman (2010) seems to dispel this notion by stating “in time obedient followers invariably take on the character of their leader” (p. 49). This statement was true in the time of Jesus, and this research model was established to see if it is true in current traditional churches.

Discipleship plays a very important role in both the lives of pastors and churches. Colebank (2017) states that “discipleship is the church’s training ministry of reviving and training people to live a Spirit-directed life” (p. 1). This statement brings into view the fact that discipleship is not just for people who have been recently saved. Discipleship is for every Christian because every Christian should seek a life directed by the Holy Spirit. Colebank goes

on to say “this researcher hypothesizes that a major cause of spiritual immaturity is the emphasis on studying the Bible with the goal of knowing information instead of a goal of obeying Christ’s commands” (p. 4-5). Resulting from his research Colebank says that “greater fruitfulness is the anticipated result of obedience-oriented discipleship training that helps Christians understand their identity as an ambassador for Christ with a ministry and a message through whom the Spirit of God is working to transform the people around them in their sphere of influence at work, in their community, and at home” (p. 173). With this being the case, the culmination of discipleship is not limited to mental knowledge as it unites knowledge with functional obedience. The goal of discipleship is to point a person’s actions toward the likeness of Christ. After conducting the research for his dissertation, Colebank notes that “only a third of survey respondents recognized their churches as doing well in equipping members to serve God with their gifts” (p. 154). There appears to be a great failure in matching people with their spiritual gifts and helping them to mature. Colebank would go on to say that “churches need a plan to measure spiritual progress and clearly defined next steps for members to take in spiritual growth” (p. 167).

To have the mindset of a disciple-maker, one should be concerned with the spiritual formation of others. First Peter 2:1-2 says: “Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that you may grow up into your salvation.” In this passage, “Peter implies that ‘putting away’ unloving practices is necessary for spiritual growth” (Grudem, 2010, p. 198v). All believers begin in the infant stages of faith, and because of that, no one is born a spiritual giant. Each individual Christian must grow in his or her faith. Pastors assist church members in the growth of their faith through the preaching ministry, but preaching alone is not the sole practice which leads to discipleship. “God does not bring us into fellowship with him and make us part of his

people to function in isolation” (Petit, 2008, p. 104). It is difficult, if not impossible, to experience discipleship with others when one is in isolation. There needs to be interaction and fellowship with other believers. “Christians today [do not] always enjoy a close sense of community” (Petit, 2008, p. 81). The camaraderie which exists through discipleship revolves around shared beliefs.

Smith (2014) believes that the decline in church growth is due to “the different approaches to discipleship that leaders (pastors) are taking both corporately and personally” (parenthetical word belongs to the researcher) (p. 1). One might ask if it is possible that discipleship has become so varied between organizations, denominations, and individual churches that it has lost its effectiveness. Smith (2014) suggests that “the biblical understanding of discipleship defines it as, ‘the formation, transformation, and application of the word of God within the believer’s life’” (p. 3). Smith goes on to suggest that the church does not simply need another program to be initiated within its walls. Rather, Smith would argue that “discipleship is not just a program; it is something far deeper than a program” (p. 79). A church must do what it takes to be faithful in discipleship, which is “the process of producing disciples” (Smith, p. 84).

### **Leadership which models Discipleship**

Powell (2015) mentions that “leadership begins with the pastor modeling service and releasing ministry so others can utilize their spiritual gifts (p. 135). A foundation has been laid that pastoral leadership, including discipleship, is best when it is exemplary. If a pastor previously served as either a youth minister or an associate minister, then he may have looked forward to the pastorate as being a time of leadership control. However, Powell puts forth the thought of the need to be a pastor who discipless others in the ministry for the purpose of other people fulfilling the gifts and calling of God in their lives. Powell (2015) goes on to say that



“church members desire to serve in their churches but they struggle with finding the right areas to invest their time and talents” (p. 135). The prompting of the Holy Spirit of God may lead to a desire to serve the church. As the Lord leads people to invest in the ministry of a church, the church’s ministry can grow. “Ministry was never intended to be a singular, one-person show” (Powell, 2015, p. 137). Discipleship begins with the idea of shared ministry and can benefit many people and many families. Education and worship cooperate together in the Christian community toward discipleship. As previously mentioned, Kim (2010) states that discipleship is the process of creating “healthy spiritual leaders in Christ’s likeness to reach the world for Christ” (Kim, 2010, p. 104). Smith (2009) builds upon that by stating that the goal of discipleship is to “form radical disciples of Jesus and citizens of the baptismal city” (p. 220). This work is supported by the Holy Spirit of God. If the forming of radical disciples is going to happen, discipleship must invade a person’s life.

Since discipleship is spiritually transformational by nature, pastors must focus on highlighting the work of Christ in the presence of new believers. Geiger, Kelley, and Nation (2012) state that discipleship which is “apart from Jesus is non-transformational” (Geiger et. al, 2012, p. 8). Therefore, pastors should be motivated to strengthen people’s lives through the example of Jesus. The goal of the gospel is to permeate every aspect of a person’s life. Strengthening the abilities of others is essentially everything Christian disciple-makers are called to do. For the strengthening of one’s abilities to be persistent in disciple-making, new leaders must be raised up. Kim (2010) says that “multiplying leadership is the process of developing multiplying leaders” (p. 100). Kim’s work was based on looking at the dimensions that exist within cell churches. Cell churches may not be considered traditional Baptist churches; therefore, their reproducible rates may be higher. The author instructs his readers to be leaders who

produce leaders who will produce more leaders. The discipleship of leadership should be an example for others to follow. The skill set of a disciple-making pastor can be duplicated in the lives of his learners. Kim (2010) states “The ultimate goal of the cell church is to develop healthy spiritual leaders in Christ’s likeness to reach the world for Christ. The slow process of raising up healthy spiritual cell leaders is the fastest way to fulfill the mission of God for glorifying God” (p. 104). Effective discipleship is seen in the number of effective disciple-makers which the discipleship process produces. As it was previously stated in this study, each pastor was responsible for their individual perception of effectiveness thus allowing each pastor to gauge the number of effective disciple-makers.

### **Discipleship with unique Contributions**

The biblical passage of Isaiah 28:23-29 paints a picture of the progressive work of a disciple-maker. Isaiah asked the question “Does the plowman plow every day to plant [the] seed? Does he continuously break up and cultivate the soil? (Isaiah 28:24).” This rhetorical question is answered by saying that eventually, the plowman plants the field by scattering seed. The farmer in this picture does not do the same thing over and over and over again. He does one thing completely, and then he moves on to the next step in the process. If a pastor is going to make disciples, then he must continually cover new concepts and ideas. Neither every sermon nor every biblical lesson should wind down to the same principle. Every Christian is uniquely gifted, which understandably means some things come easier to different people depending upon their gifts. The pastors’ “identity, filled out by gifts and abilities, indicates what we uniquely contribute” (Pettit, 2008, p. 183). Just as gifts are unique, so is the contribution. The message of disciple-making never strays from the biblical explanation of God, yet the methods progressively change generationally for the purpose of reaching new groups of people over time.

It was the intent of this research to assist churches, pastors, and people in matters of discipleship. The struggle of discipleship must be addressed for a true solution to be found. Hopefully, as pastors are able to read the results of this study, they will focus on certain aspects of their personal ministries which need to be enhanced. As they become more like Christ in the disciple-making efforts, pastors will, in turn, train the next generation of disciple-makers.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Is there a misunderstanding among pastoral leadership with regards to discipleship? Throughout Scripture, the church was blessed when she was unified and served together (Acts 2:44-47). It appears that spiritual formation is the goal of both discipleship and corporate worship. Discipleship and corporate worship lead to the product of spiritual formation through different avenues. Discipleship appears to rely more upon the interaction between individuals, while a formal worship service appears to rely more upon the interaction of the Holy Spirit through the singing, teaching, and preaching of God's word. According to Erickson (1998), worship is "an activity of the church" and happens when "the church centers its attention on who and what God is" (p. 1066). The lives of maturing believers are enhanced greatly through both corporate worship and personal discipleship. Although different from one another, each meet needs in the lives of Christians and work together. Hardison (2019) specifies that "church programs (sermons, large group gatherings, worship events, retreats, and the like) are great platforms for building and growing faith. However, producing authentic dedicated believers of the faith requires intentional relational discipleship in conjunction with existing church programs" (p. 6). Pastors are essential to the worship services of their churches, but are they also essential to the discipleship processes of their churches?

Christian leaders should never stop learning, so the educational process of discipleship should never stop. “Paul expected the church to play a role in accomplishing the maturational aspect of his apostolic commission” (Samra, 2006, p. 152). Shortly after establishing a church, through the sharing of the gospel with a group of new believers, Paul was whisked away by the Spirit to another territory. Paul’s influence was often short in time but large in meaning. The only way for his ministry to extend beyond his presence was for the group of believers which remained at that location to be active in discipleship. Paul wanted the impact of the remaining believers to be used by God. The impact of one’s discipleship ministry should shift the spotlight of emphasis on the work and person of Jesus Christ. Most likely, discipleship is happening in MBC churches and among MBC pastors, and this research design discovered what pastors were doing concerning discipleship.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative, interview-based-study was to explore the personal discipleship practices of pastors and compare those practices to the personal discipleship practices of traditional MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400 by collecting qualitative data from pastors, other staff members, and church members.

### **Research Questions**

**RQ1.** What are the common factors which are consistently found in MBC churches which offer personal discipleship groups?

**RQ2.** What are the common factors which are consistently found in pastors who have personal discipleship practices in the sample group?

**RQ3.** What, if any, perceived influence is there between the personal discipleship practices of pastors on the discipleship practices of the MBC church representatives in the sample group?

**RQ4.** What, if any, are the commonalities between the discipleship practices being employed among MBC church representatives in the sample group and the discipleship practices of their pastors?

### **Assumptions and Delimitations**

#### **Research Assumptions**

1. This researcher assumed that MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400 will have established discipleship practices.
2. This researcher assumed that pastors of MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400 will have established discipleship practices as well.

#### **Delimitations of the Research Design**

1. This research was delimited to only traditional MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400. According to the 2017 MBC statistics, there were 42 MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400.
2. This research was delimited to traditional MBC churches with at least two staff members in addition to the pastor.
3. This research was delimited to traditional MBC churches whose pastors accepted the terms of this study and provided two staff members, one male church member, and one female church member for participation in this study (see Appendix B for the Participants' Rights disclosure and see Appendix C for the Church Members' Selection Guide).
4. This research was delimited to traditional MBC churches whose pastors had at least three years of tenure with that church.
5. This research was delimited to traditional MBC churches whose selected staff members had at least eighteen months of tenure with that church and that pastor.
6. This research did not study the personality traits of the participating pastors.
7. This research did not study the theological traits of the participating pastors.
8. This research did not study the communication styles of the participating pastors.
9. This research did not study the leadership structure of the participating churches.
10. This research did not study the polity of the participating churches.

### Definition of Terms

1. *Common factors*: For the purpose of this study, common factors were defined as themes consistently found in the interview transcripts.
2. *Completed church study*: A completed church study consisted of transcribed data containing five interviews (one interview of the pastor, two interviews of staff members, and two interviews of church members).
3. *Discipleship*: For the purpose of this study, discipleship was defined as the process of developing “healthy spiritual leaders in Christ’s likeness to reach the world for Christ” (Kim, 2010, p. 104).
4. *Discipleship practices*: Discipleship practices were defined as “intentionally equipping believers with the word of God through accountable relationships empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to replicate faithful followers of Christ” (Gallaty, 2015, p. 155).
5. *MBC church representatives*: MBC church representatives were defined as other staff members and selected church members within the church.
6. *Pastors*: Pastors were defined as those designated individuals whose primary role involves leading the church through preaching and helping “contemporary listeners to understand how God wants them to change to be more like Christ” through times of public proclamation (Pettit, 2008, p. 255).
7. *Perceived discipleship effectiveness*: Perceived discipleship effectiveness was defined as the individual pastor's awareness, observations, and interpretation of disciple-making effectiveness as seen in others.
8. *Spiritual gift of teaching*: For the purpose of this study, the spiritual gift of teaching was defined as “the ability to clarify God’s truth” (Robinson, 1997, p. 108).

9. *Staff member*: For the purpose of this study, a staff member was defined as a person who holds a full-time, non-secretarial, ministerial role at a church.
  
10. *Sunday school*: For the purpose of this study, Sunday school was defined as “classes separated by age ... to have a developmentally appropriate lesson, with peers, where they learn specific biblical teachings and practices” (Wade, 2019, p. 5). Synonyms for Sunday school may include, but were not limited to, terms such as Bible fellowships, community groups, life groups, and small groups.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study was found by looking at how contemporary pastors approached discipleship. Are the experts’ works on discipleship actually working? As previously quoted, Hardison (2019), details that “producing authentic dedicated believers of the faith requires intentional relational discipleship in conjunction with existing church programs,” but the author did not detail the role of the pastor (p. 6). When Christian leaders have their “boots on the ground,” are they following through with discipleship? Through personal Bible study, corporate worship, and the leadership of the Holy Spirit, discipleship is understood, and it results in obedience. The application of discipleship goes beyond the simple head knowledge of knowing what to do and the heart knowledge of knowing why to do it. The application is the primary tool of engagement in a Christian’s life. This is where the head and heart meet the hands. When discipleship is understood (as well as sinful humans can understand it), it defines a person’s actions. Vaughan (1969) looks at the biblical importance of applying knowledge to one’s own self as he says “genuine faith produces an obedient life” (p. 60).

Learning after others or “gleaning” is an important part of discipleship. In Ruth chapter 2, a heartbreaking story of loss and relocation turns into a story of God’s sovereignty. Ruth follows God’s will “to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz” and she begins to glean (Ruth 2:3).

The gleaning process is essentially picking up the grain which was left behind by the harvesters. Wisdom would say that spiritual growth happens by gleaning behind other spiritual leaders. In the New Testament, Paul instructed the Corinthian believers to be imitators of him (1 Corinthians 11:1). Paul knew that he patterned his life after the example of Jesus Christ. Paul's encouragement to imitate him would only work if he portrayed Christlikeness. A pastor's speech must be supported by a godly lifestyle. It is even mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 2:14 that churches can be "objects of imitation" (Samra, 2006, p. 126). Godliness in the lives of pastors can be gleaned by maturing Christians. Just as the development of a plant requires many factors, so does the development of a Christian. In modern culture, this gleaning process may be described as a mentor/mentee relationship in discipleship.

This study helped reveal how this gleaning process works in the practice of discipleship. It also added to the literature on discipleship by considering the possible role of the pastor in demonstrating the practices of discipleship to those they lead.

### **Summary of the Design**

This qualitative, interview-based research design called for a naturalistic design to the research to be conducted for the purpose of being descriptive concerning the discipleship practices of pastors, staff members, and church members. This qualitative research was for the purpose of describing the personal discipleship practices of pastors through interviewing pastors via telephone, and then comparing those practices to the practices of two staff members, and two church members of those same pastors. Common patterns and themes emerged throughout the coding of the interview transcripts. Similar telephone interviews were conducted with church representatives and were again coded for the identification of patterns and practices. Finally, the



results of the two samples were compared to determine if the discipleship practices of pastors are similar or different from the practices of the church representatives.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview**

Even the most elementary of classes have periods of testing. A period of testing provides insight to both the teachers and the students and determines the overall comprehension of the class. First John 4:1 reminds believers to “test the spirits to see whether they are from God.” If the spirits are to be tested to see whether they are from God, then the practices of modern pastors and churches should also be tested to see whether they are from God. The precise practice which was tested through the research was the practice of Christian discipleship. The following related literature and rationale served as a point of testing for the dissertation theory of this researcher. “A theory is a conceptual model or understanding of some phenomenon, one that not only describes, but explains, that phenomenon – that clarifies *why* the phenomenon is the way it is” (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2014, p. 21). The sampled testing came through the following sections of theological framework, theoretical framework, related literature, rationale for the study, and an identified gap in the literature.

### **Theological Framework for the Study**

Second Timothy 3:16 reports that “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for proof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” The theological framework of this dissertation was the fuel that drove the research and the findings. This theological framework section focused upon the biblical authority for discipleship, the impact of “the image of God” upon discipleship, diversity within discipleship, Paul’s model of discipleship, and the results of discipleship. The purpose of this section was to discover the theological framework concerning the discipleship practices of ministry leaders.

## **The Biblical Authority for Discipleship**

Bredfeldt (2006) writes that “Biblical leadership begins with a commitment to biblical authority” (p. 67). The authority of the Bible is the primary determining factor concerning discipleship, and the Bible works as an agent of freedom in the lives of Christians. Galatians 5:1 states “For freedom, Christ set us free. Stand firm then and don’t submit again to the yoke of slavery.” Each believer is set free from all previous bonds and is free to be discipled for Christ. A heart willfully committed to Christ and to God’s plan concerning discipleship is found within the structure of every biblical disciple-maker. The practice of discipleship has a firm foundation of biblical support.

First, as previously stated, in the New Testament book of 1 Corinthians, Paul instructed the believers to be imitators of him (1 Corinthians 11:1). Wisdom would say that spiritual maturity happens by gleaning behind other spiritual leaders. It is evident through this passage that Paul hoped the Corinthian believers would pick up Christian traits from imitating him. Paul knew that he patterned his life after the example of Jesus Christ, and his encouragement to imitate him would only work if he portrayed Christlikeness. It is even mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 2:14 that “God’s churches” can be “objects of imitation” (Samra, 2006, p. 126). This childlike process of discipleship is essentially unfolded in two steps which are one, see and two, repeat.

Second, what type of portrait does Scripture paint concerning biblical leadership? Much of Paul’s ministry of discipleship is seen through his epistles which were often written to individuals or groups of people which Paul had seen converted. “Paul’s spiritual concern for his converts is inseparable for his love for them as people” (Thiselton, 2010, p. 92). Paul loved his friends within the Christian community and wanted to see them mature through the efforts of

discipleship. He did not see the explanation of salvation as the end of his ministry, however, he saw it as the beginning. As Thiselton points out, the converts were not simply a notch on Paul's Bible. Paul spent much time encouraging the people to support each other during times of hardship, and he was persecuted heavily for that encouragement.

Third, as previously stated, the biblical passage of Isaiah 28:23-29 paints a picture of the progressive theological work of a disciple-maker. Isaiah asks the question "Does the plowman plow every day to plant [the] seed? Does he continuously break up and cultivate the soil? (Isaiah 28:24)." This rhetorical question is answered by saying that eventually, the plowman plants the field by scattering seed. The farmer in this picture doesn't do the same thing over and over and over again. He does one thing completely, and then he moves on to the next step in the process. If a spiritual leader is going to disciple others, then he must continually cover new theological concepts of maturity as the previous concepts are understood. The farmer cannot move to scattering the seed until the field is completely plowed. That being said, the disciple-maker must continue to grow theologically. Each Christian is uniquely gifted, which understandably means some things come easier to different people depending upon their gifts. A leader's "identity, filled out by gifts and abilities, indicates what we uniquely contribute" (Pettit, 2008, p. 183). Just as gifts are unique, so is the contribution to discipleship. The message of discipleship never strays from the biblical explanation of God, yet the methods progressively change generationally for the purpose of the maturity of new groups over time.

Lastly, the Bible says in James 2:24 "You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone." Concerning this passage, Davids (1989) comments that "there is the word **faith** (*pistis*), which James uses in three ways himself, for true commitment, for Christianity, and for intellectual belief" (p. 78). Both works and faith play a large role in a Christian leader's life. In

this biblical passage, James mentioned that justification and works go hand in hand. Also, works that show the justification process of someone's soul is the result of the maturing aspect of discipleship. If a person's works were either ungodly or immature, then those works would not rightly show the justification written about in this passage. Further concerning Davids comments about faith, one could see that placing faith in Jesus and his teachings calls for a "true commitment" for everything concerning Jesus (Davids, 1989, p. 78). The commitment is not on-again-off-again; however, it is a prolonged commitment to the process of discipleship. The "intellectual belief" of faith may have a great impact on one's behavior. Within the mind, decisions are made in which the body follows. Therefore, an intellectual commitment to being a disciple-making leader will assist in a Christian's purpose of walking beside the Lord Jesus. The biblical account of discipleship has its basis in the work of Christ and is continued in the work of modern Christians.

### **The Impact of "the Image of God" upon Discipleship**

The greatest words ever stated about humanity comes from the word of God. Genesis 1:27 says "So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female." Humanity was created in the image of God according to the Creator of all things. Since the fall of humanity, God's image in humanity has been marred due to sin. Christian leadership which is highlighted by disciple-making truly shows the image of God within humanity.

The dimensions of the image of God concerning discipleship began in the Old Testament, but it extends to the New Testament. Erickson (2008) points out, in his treatise on Christian doctrine, that both Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11:7, and James, in James 3:9, reference humanity being created in the image of God (p. 172). Erickson (2008) goes on to say that simply being

made in the image of God is not enough but according to Romans 8:29 a person should be “conformed to the image of the Son” (p. 172). Humanity finds its call to disciple-making in the conformity to the person of Jesus Christ.

Every aspect of human history has been shaped either by the conformity to discipleship displayed in the image of God or the rebellion of being reshaped in God’s image. Kilner (2015) writes that “humanity’s existence in God’s image is particularly important for understanding who people are” (p. 5). There is much of the human nature which is ungodly, but when humanity acts in godly ways it brings glory to God. Even though sin is a part of every human’s life, what God expects from humanity never changes. On the other hand, sin’s effect on the image of God is of maximum consequence when it distorts humanity’s comprehension of God’s attributes and qualities. Tidwell (1996) writes that the “image of God is reflected in human personality, in the capacity and responsibility for being moral – for discerning what is right, and with God’s help, doing right” (p. 37). The actions of fallen humanity lead to “no hint of any damage to God’s image” (Kilner, 2015, p. 145). God is holy, righteous, and concerned about humanity. Humanity is at its best when making others in the likeness of Christ.

The concept of Christian discipleship seen through God’s image helps humanity to better understand one another and it also helps humanity to better understand God. God was extremely gracious to create humans in his image and to deal with us according to grace. “Christ as God’s image is the standard to which people still need to conform” (Kilner, 2015, p. 89). The image of God may be fully seen in Jesus Christ, but is the fullness of the image of God only found in Christ? Kilner (2015) assists with answering that question as he says humans “are intimately connected with God because God’s image is a very blueprint for humanity” (p. 92). God’s ancient design for humanity has current discipleship implications. God’s design for humanity

includes showing a lost world that people can be conformed to the image of God through the process of discipleship.

### **Diversity within Discipleship**

Is a call to discipleship a call to complete personal uniformity? For the purpose of answering that question, a passage which speaks to unity existing in areas of diversity is helpful. First Corinthians 12:12-31 states that a human body has many parts and, in like manner, so does the body of Christ. The individual members of the human body should function in the roles they were created and should not become jealous of the task of another part of the body. Phillips (2002) says “each one of us is different from everyone else, we all have our place and purpose, and who ensures that although we all come and go the body itself continues on, generation after generation, as the perfect vehicle through which Christ can express His own life on earth” (p. 271). Christian individuals may find themselves as members of the church universal, members of a local body of believers, and members of a discipleship team. First Corinthians 12:27 says “now you are the body of Christ and individual members of it.” Phillips (2002) states that a Christian’s place in the body of Christ is both “personal and positive” (p. 278). Christians have specific roles in the church, and they should have specific roles in the discipleship ministry. A point of the modern application of this ancient passage is each person’s role changes to meet the required ministry outcome of discipleship.

As previously mentioned, Galatians 5:1 states “For freedom, Christ set us free. Stand firm then and don’t submit again to the yoke of slavery.” The freedom found in Christ and through discipleship means that one should be conformed to legalism. Note a passage which speaks of three ministry journeyman named Paul, Barnabas, and Titus. In Galatians 2:1-10, the scriptural scene includes a long-awaited journey to Jerusalem. Titus was an uncircumcised man who was

journeying with two circumcised Jewish men (Galatians 2:3). This small detail allows readers to understand the intricate dynamics of this ministry team. Phillips (2004) states that this ministry team “had gone to force the issue and to fight for Gentile independence from Judean and the Mosaic Law” (p. 62). Even though difficulties came during this trip to Jerusalem, the ministry team stayed true to the work of the Lord in their lives and did not give in to the nonbelievers (Galatians 2:5). Titus did not have to conform to circumcision. The three previously mentioned men were successful in proving that the grace of God was with them, and the accepted ministry leaders, who were James, Peter, and John, extended the brotherly bond of fellowship to them (Galatians 2:9). Phillips (2004) notes that before the ministries of both Peter and John were completed, they too would serve in primarily Gentile areas which Paul and his ministry team had previously evangelized and matured (p. 70). A point of the modern application of this ancient passage is that ministry teams concerned with discipleship lay the groundwork for both the future and further ministries.

Continuing with the thought of diversity existing within discipleship groups, Colossians 3:11 says “In Christ, there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all.” This passage points to the fact that diversity exists under the umbrella of Christ. In a similar fashion, unity is predicated upon similarity in spite of differences. Disciple-makers will have the opportunity to lead people who are similar to themselves and people who are very dissimilar to themselves. Religious customs, education, independence, and wealth have no distinction for a person who is in Christ. Paul shows disciple-maker styles which can be gleaned from New Testament patterns. Paul writes for the purpose of instructing leaders like Timothy and Titus on how to effectively make disciples (Beck, 2010). Effective discipleship must meet people’s spiritual needs. To meet a person’s spiritual needs, a



disciple-maker must be trusted by that person. As Paul instructed his young servant protégés, Timothy and Titus, he trained them through love and kindness. Love and kindness are common bonds in the discipleship aspect of ministry.

Paul's leadership concerning discipleship may have never come to fruition had it not been for a disciple-maker of a different name: Peter. In Acts chapter 15, the initial movements of the Jerusalem Council were set to make waves. The early leaders of the Christian church gathered for the purpose of discussing Gentile salvation. The Bible says that "after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and" began to speak (Acts 15:7). The result of Peter's speech was the acceptance of Paul's ministry. While others were standing around wondering what to do, Peter paved the way for Gentiles to place faith in Jesus and to be discipled.

### **Paul's Model of Discipleship**

Paul was a brilliant disciple-maker whose achievements are recorded in Scripture. In the biblical passage of 1 Corinthians 3:5-9, Paul highlights the role of disciple-making team members who are working for the Lord. Paul says "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth" (1 Corinthians 3:6). This passage highlights the multifaceted effort of discipleship. Every Christian minister needs to be involved in a discipleship team which sets goals of seeing others mature in Christ. Paul and Apollos labored together in the work of the ministry. Essentially one man did one thing, the other man did another thing, and God blessed their work as he gave the increase. "We are connected with Christ to God and to others" (Lowe & Lowe, 2018, p. 141). Just as truly as Christian discipleship teams are connected to God with Christ, they are connected to others through the people they see to maturity. First Corinthians 12:26 says "if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." Therefore, as new people mature in Christ, the disciple-makers are growing as well.

In the New Testament, Paul is a great example of a disciple-maker. Through examining passages written through his pen (or the pen of his amanuensis), modern-day leaders can learn from his example. In Philippians 2:3, Paul says to “do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves.” This passage points to the role of humility in a disciple-makers life. A biblical model of discipleship does not draw attention to the person, but it gives attention to Jesus Christ.

### **The Results of Discipleship**

The first result of discipleship is the strengthening of abilities. In Galatians 2:11, the Bible calls to attention a strange result of discipleship. In that passage, Scripture says that Paul “opposed [Peter] to his face” over the matter of keeping the Jewish regulations in a hypocritical way. This confrontation led to their abilities being strengthened and their individual conformity to Christ continued. This may be a biblical portrait of two dynamic people who may or may not have been the best of friends, but they made a combined effort for the glory of God’s Kingdom to strengthen each other’s abilities for the elevation of the gospel.

The second result of discipleship is a shared workload. In Exodus 18:1-17, the story of Moses’s father-in-law Jethro is told. Jethro, who became the initial disciple-maker in this passage, came to visit Moses, and he found Moses too busy with menial work. Moses had taken on work which diminished his role as a leader. In this passage, one might argue that Moses, who was one of the most gifted visionaries in Scripture, had simply become a manager of disgruntled people. After Jethro’s realization of Moses’ problem, he states “what you’re doing is not good” (Exodus 18:17). Jethro advises Moses to place other people in positions of authority so that the other people could handle the smaller problems and only the larger problems would appear before Moses. Freedom came into the life of Moses after his discipleship of others for the

leadership of Israel. Jesus surrounded himself with twelve disciples who, to some extent, shared the workload of ministry. A New Testament similarity may be found in 2 Timothy 2:2, where Paul instructs Timothy to take “what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses [and] entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” The other faithful men would be able to share in Timothy’s workload.

In conclusion, the theological framework of this dissertation topic was the fuel that drove the research of the project. This theological framework focused on the biblical authority for discipleship, the impact of “the image of God” upon discipleship, diversity within discipleship, Paul’s model of discipleship, and the results of discipleship. The purpose of this implementation was to discover the theological framework concerning the discipleship practices of ministry leaders.

### **Theoretical Framework for the Study**

In Luke 14:27, Jesus says: “Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” The previous verse comes from the heart of the passage (Luke 14:25-35) in which Jesus shares his theory regarding discipleship. This theoretical framework, though it uses scriptural authority, focuses upon the concepts which are driving the actions of contemporary Christians concerning discipleship. Many modern discipleship theorists’ work will be leaned on for practical use. Those ideas were looked at through the lenses of transformation, obedience, personal preparation, a point of privilege, and empowerment. The purpose of this section was to discover the active theories concerning the discipleship practices of ministry leaders.

## **The Idea of Transformational Discipleship**

Johnston (n.d.), who wrote for LifeWay Christian Resources and his writings were distributed for the use of state conventions, such as the MBC, said “Christian discipleship is a lifelong journey of obedience to Christ and spiritually transforms a person’s values and behavior and results in ministry in one’s home, church, and the world” (p. 5). The transformation of which Johnston wrote changes a person’s life from the inside out. The transformation of discipleship is not instantaneous as is one’s salvation, however, discipleship is an influential excursion through the remaining years of a person’s dedication to Christ. In Ephesians 2:2, Paul states that the recipients of his letter “previously lived according to the ways of this world, according to the rulers of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient.” Due to the truth of that scriptural passage, discipleship must be transformational in the lives of believers.

As previously mentioned, Kim (2010) states that discipleship is the process of creating “healthy spiritual leaders in Christ’s likeness to reach the world for Christ” (Kim, 2010, p. 104). Gallaty (2015) builds upon that by stating that “discipleship is intentionally equipping believers with the word of God through accountable relationships empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to replicate faithful followers of Christ” (p. 155). The equipping process parallels preparing oneself with the word of the Lord. As a believer in Jesus Christ becomes acquainted with the Bible, he or she becomes equipped for discipleship. The key to Gallaty’s statement appears to be the segment concerning accountable relationships. Of course, those accountable relationships would fall flat without the benefit of the work of the Holy Spirit in reproducing people who follow Jesus Christ. With that being stated, the accountable relationships aspect of this notion is the merging point between a private Bible study and a social outing with friends.

Interesting enough, Gallaty mentions that not all ministry leaders believe in the intentional aspect of his definition for discipleship. During a discipleship devising time, another ministry leader said “Discipleship should be organic and not intentional. It should not be planned or prepared” (Gallaty, 2015, p. 101). Gallaty disagreed with the other ministry leader and appears to identify with the old adage of “if you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time.” If transformational discipleship is going to happen, then it will be the result of a strategic plan.

With discipleship being defined thoroughly two times in the opening of this theoretical framework, the page must turn to ministry leaders or pastors being engaged with the idea of transformational discipleship. Coleman (1998) specifies that “pastors were overseers and shepherds of the flock, an office closely associated, if not identical to, that of teacher” (p. 67). Coleman’s thoughts concerning pastors are directly associated with biblical passages concerning the same subject. He states that a pastor’s identity is not only associated with the art of preaching, but it is also closely associated with teaching. In Jeremiah 3:15, the Bible says that God “will give you shepherds who are loyal to me, and they will shepherd you with knowledge and skill.” The shepherds in Jeremiah 3:15 appear to be in direct opposition to the unfaithful Israelites who are mentioned in the overall passage. For God to move in the lives of the shepherds (pastors), a work of transformation is needed. The same is true in the lives of contemporary pastors. Therefore, if Coleman is correct about pastors being teachers and if God transforms the pastor/teacher, then the pastor must be a teacher of transformation. One who was transformed should be able to disciple others in a common transformational way.

What is the ideal way for transformational discipleship to happen? While writing of Paul living with Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth, Coleman (1998) specifies that “the spiritual life of the Christian community clearly is interwoven with their continuous interpersonal association” (p.

58). Basically, Paul spent time with his hosts Aquila and Priscilla. This biblical trio became an early example of a team relationship built around the idea of transformational discipleship. Bonhoeffer (1998) states that “human beings do not exist ‘unmediated’ qua spirit in and of themselves, but only in responsibility vis-a-vis an ‘other’” (p. 50). When describing one such relationship, MacMillan (2001) chooses “the word *solid* to define effective team relationships because they must be able to withstand the jolts and turbulence of day-to-day interaction.” The key to building a solid relationship geared toward discipleship is time. Gallaty (2015) states that “what works in Chattanooga, Tennessee, may not work in San Francisco or in Quito, Ecuador,” but time is beyond both regional and cultural barriers (p. 17). Transformational discipleship takes time, relationships, and intentionality.

### **The Idea of Obedient Discipleship**

In Coleman’s (2010) treatise on evangelism, he states that “in time obedient followers invariably take on the character of their leader” (p. 49). Gallaty (2015), who is one of the leading experts in the field of discipleship, states “Personally, I have found Robert Coleman’s book *The Master Plan of Evangelism* to be one of the most helpful resources in understanding the timeless principles we find in the example of Jesus” (p. 154). In a similar fashion to an excellent seam in a movie prequel or sequel, there should be a smooth transition from evangelism to discipleship. The key to a smooth transition from evangelism to discipleship is continued obedience. If a prospective disciple has recently placed faith in Christ, then that person is freshly acquainted with a relationship of obedience. The obedience simply shifts from a focus of salvation by grace through faith to a relationship of discipleship for the purpose of spiritual maturity. Vaughan (1969) looks at the biblical importance of applying knowledge to one’s own self as he states “genuine faith produces an obedient life” (p. 60).

Concerning obedient discipleship, Johnston (n.d.) asks “in your church do believers tend to think of discipleship as knowing facts about Jesus or following Jesus in a personal, dependent, obedient relationship” (p. 5)? Once again, the idea of obedience is brought to the forefront of an idea connected with discipleship. Johnston’s question deals with the general tendency toward the discipleship of a church’s members. If a person were to merge Johnston’s question with Coleman’s (2010) avowal that “in time obedient followers invariably take on the character of their leader,” then the average tendency of church members toward discipleship is probably aligned with the pastor’s own tendencies (p. 49). Discipleship is not just the recitation of biblical facts, but it is the personal conformation to the person of Christ. There is a “commission to be carried out in and by the local church,” and it has everything to do with discipleship (Samra, 2006, p. 133).

Coleman (1998) writes that “the ultimate need of a lost society cannot be met apart from supernatural grace and the discipling of men and women in the narrow way of Christ” (p. 82). Where the call for a person to be obedient concerning salvation ends, the call for a person to be obedient in discipleship begins. In the previous quote, Coleman likens discipleship to the gate which Jesus described in Matthew 7:14. Therefore, the call to obedience is not necessarily a call pertaining to a specific denomination, local body of believers, or ministry leadership team. This call to obedience is a call pertaining specifically to Jesus Christ and the narrow way of living presented by his life.

The call of obedience is going forth throughout the ranks of Christians. Since pastors are Christians, they are called to the same standard, if not a higher standard (see Titus 1:5-9), like other Christians. Are pastors making disciples of Jesus Christ? Too often church members feel that the ministry staff are the professional Christians and are paid to do the work of the Lord.

Coleman (1998) feels that “the idea prevalent today [is] that the pastor and the church staff are employed by the congregation to take care of ministry needs” (p. 68). Gallaty (2015) echoes the sentiment as he stated “we will never carry out the Great Commission if only full-time vocational ministers are making disciples. Discipleship wasn’t *a* ministry of the first-century church. It was *the* ministry of the church” (p. 85). Are pastors following the Great Commission command to make disciples or have pastors diluted their calling by thinking that church members should be the primary disciple-makers? Gallaty (2015) sums up the modern apostolic assignment with “Pastors, you can’t expect your people to do something you [are not] doing” (p. 157). The idea of obedient discipleship should be an earmark not only of the pastor’s calling but also of the pastor’s life.

### **The Idea of Personal Preparation and Discipleship**

Since the great commission is for ministry leaders and laypeople alike, a person should prepare for the discipline of discipleship. Coleman (1998) writes that “the Great Commission is a personal matter. How the programs of the church prepare members for the servanthood is the measure of their relevance” (p. 82). Even though the calling of the great commission is personal, the preparation for the calling can be interpersonal. While commenting on 1 Corinthians 12:27 which says “now you are the body of Christ and individual members of it,” Phillips (2002) states that a Christian’s place in the body of Christ is both “personal and positive” (p. 278). God has an individual role for each person to fulfill in a positive way concerning discipleship.

The personal aspect of preparing for discipleship is vividly seen when leading by example. Coleman (2010) reminds readers that “it is good to tell people what we mean, but it is infinitely better to show them” (p. 77). A pastor may be able to preach a fine sermon, but does he lead by example? Ministry leaders are not called to gather people to themselves, but they are



called to gather people to Christ. As John the Baptist stated in John 3:30, pastors are called to decrease while pointing to Jesus as he increases. “It is not who we are, but who [Jesus] is that makes the difference (Coleman, 2010, p. 69). With that being said, pastors must prepare themselves for the continued ministry of discipleship.

If one personally prepares for discipleship, what benefit might that bring? Coleman (1998) calls ministry leaders to the occasion as he stated “here is the opportunity we have every day for fulfilling the Great Commission. When we pray for God to raise up laborers, we can believe that he will answer. We must look for them” (p. 46). If there are people available to the ministry, then there are people available for the ministry of discipleship. It is upon the ministry leaders to personally prepare for the potential prospects of discipleship.

### **The Idea of Privileged Discipleship**

When thinking about the idea of privileged discipleship, the word “privileged” must be examined. In this case, the word “privileged” should not be considered the same as spoiled or lethargic. Gallaty (2015) writes that “many believers – sadly, even many pastors – have never had the privilege of being discipled by another person” (p. 156). One’s personal involvement in the process of discipleship should be considered a privilege because it truly is. God could have chosen any means necessary to make disciples, but Jesus sent out believers to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). Stiles (2010) is involved in a ministry role which focuses on the United Arab Emirates. He is skilled in the area of international mission trips and fixated on the change that the gospel made in the lives of people. Stiles (2010) admits that he spent much of his life “trying to reach people in tough places” (p. 63). Discipleship leads to a change in people’s lives. A change in one’s spiritual nature is only done by God, but God uses ministry leaders to

bring about the change. Everyone involved in discipleship, from the least of these to the greatest of these, are privileged to be in the progression.

An advantage of discipleship is a balanced ministry. “To promote balanced growth, church members must hold one another accountable for lives that are moving in the right direction” (Johnston, n.d., p. 32). Everyone involved in the process is moving toward the common goal of Christlikeness. For the balance of ministry to be consistent throughout the church, church members must see discipleship as the privilege that it is and take ownership in its development. “Believers in effect enrolled themselves in the Master’s school where their understanding could be enlarged and their faith established” (Coleman, 2010, p. 39). Those desiring discipleship should put themselves in the places where they can experience the fulfillment of their need for discipleship. “People are need-oriented,” which means “the greater the need they feel, the stronger their desire to satisfy that need” (Powers, 1996, p. 249). The Holy Spirit of God installs the need in both disciples and disciple-makers.

Paul is a man who learned and grew through the experiences of his life. While writing about Paul’s time in Jerusalem, Coleman (1998) states that “doubtless Paul learned more during these days than the information he got from just knowing the leaders; he received an indispensable lesson in the care of new believers” (p. 60). Paul was cared for as a new believer, and, in a like manner, he cared for other new believers. Gallaty (2015) mentions that he “had [his] first disciple, even though [he] still needed to be disciplined” (p. 140). Early in his ministry, Gallaty found himself on both sides of discipleship: discipling and being disciplined. If a person finds himself or herself in such a privileged predicament, it should be viewed as a double privilege.

## **The Idea of Empowering Discipleship**

Discipleship that is carried out correctly has an agent of empowerment. “Empowering others to do the work of [the] ministry requires trust, but it is essential that we find a balance that equalizes the swinging of the pendulum from the extremes of waiting too long and not waiting long enough” (Gallaty, 2015, p. 137). True discipleship empowers people to lead as they grow spiritually. Lingenfelter (2008) mentions that “leading is inspiring people who participate with you in a community of trust to follow you and be empowered by you to achieve a compelling vision of faith” (p. 19). It is only natural that some people involved in discipleship reach the level of leading sooner than others. Empowered discipleship gives each individual enough leeway to consistently grow. One might wonder what method Jesus used in empowering his disciples. Coleman (2010) thinks that “the method of Jesus “was to conceal the fact that he even had a method. He was his method” (p. 75). Discipleship may not have an exact method in place since everyone develops differently and gauging individual development takes time. “This will require more concentration of time and talents on fewer people in the church while not neglecting the passion for the world” (Coleman, 2010, p. 32). A disciple-maker must keep his or her eyes on the open fields of ministry both locally and abroad.

Gallaty (2015) mentions that “we need to take steps to ensure that discipleship does not become another 40-day study” (p. 159). Discipleship is more than a boxed-in study. Of course, the type of studies that Gallaty mentioned can be beneficial, but they may or may not be discipleship. This researcher found Johnston’s work very interesting. As previously mentioned, Johnston wrote for LifeWay Christian Resources and his writings were distributed for the use in the MBC. In his 36-page work concerning discipleship, Johnston (n.d.) shares 271 programmatic studies which ranged from 1 session to 36 sessions each. With the plethora of multi-week studies

being promoted, one could gather that discipleship could simply fall into the category of another Bible study.

Gallaty (2015) contradicts that notion by specifically stating “do not expect a forty-day study or a twelve-week class to immediately produce mature disciples. Consider investing a minimum of twelve-to-eighteen months into your discipleship group” (p. 135). The stages of development which Gallaty (2015) prefers are as follows: “First, Jesus ministered while the disciples watched. Second, Jesus allowed the disciples to assist him in ministry. Third, the disciples ministered with Jesus’ assistance. Finally, Jesus observed as the disciples ministered to others” (p. 101). The progression of discipleship in ministry which he found to be true in the New Testament empowers believers to serve the Lord.

In conclusion, many theories exist concerning discipleship and many theorists have assisted common Christians in becoming disciple-makers. This theoretical framework focused upon the concepts which are driving the actions of contemporary Christians concerning discipleship. Those ideas were looked at through the lenses of transformation, obedience, personal preparation, a point of privilege, and empowerment. The purpose of this section was to discover the active theories concerning the discipleship practices of ministry leaders.

### **Related Literature**

As previously referenced in 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul instructs his young understudy to take “what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses [and] entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” The process of entrusting the gospel to faithful people for the purpose of spiritual recapitulation is the essence of discipleship. Lemke (2017) states that “since ministry leaders are called to an equipping ministry, it is important to acknowledge that this equipping work involves intentional attention to the assets and work of the Spirit in the lives

of all believers and not just the leader.” This section answered the following questions of what is discipleship, what is a disciple-maker, what is a pastor, what is a disciple-making pastor, and what are the values of discipleship.

### **What is Discipleship?**

Ransbottom-Stallons (2017) experienced difficulty when surveying the exact processes of discipleship for Christians by stating “that most of the survey participants provided very general responses to the survey questions” (p. 136). Ransbottom-Stallons (2017) went on to state that “No one gave specific answers to the discipleship pathway or process they used,” and no person “revealed sequential steps” (p.136). If there are no well-defined processes or pathways regarding discipleship in the lives of survey participants, then the patterns of discipleship must be established elsewhere. First, while merging Kim’s (2010) statement that discipleship is the process of creating “healthy spiritual leaders in Christ’s likeness to reach the world for Christ” with the previous quotes of Johnston and Gallaty, discipleship is the process of being actively conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Kim, 2010, p. 104). Crook (2007) brings into view that the pattern of discipleship is the configuration of the life that Jesus displayed, because “Christ is the solution to the human predicament” of sinfulness (p. 87). The more a person conforms to the image of Christ, the farther away that person will be from the image of sin. In the book of 1 Corinthians, Paul mentions that believers should have the mind of Christ, which Samra (2006) says “indicates that he (Paul) thinks that a mature believer is one whose thoughts and [the] corresponding pattern of behavior conform to their status as having the mind of Christ” (p. 71). The art of discipleship is not only seeking to conform to the image of Christ, but it also seeks to conform to the mentality of Christ. The purpose of the process of discipleship is to mature as a spiritual being, and “to mature is to be like Christ” (Samra, 2006, p. 73).

Second, discipleship is the transformational work of the ministry which is evident in the lives of those involved. Sadly, adequate information must be divulged about the properties of actions which may be deemed to be discipleship, but in reality, is not. Ministry actions which are either non-transformational in nature or transformational in a negative sense should not be considered discipleship. The mark of differentiation between transformational and non-transformational discipleship is that which is “apart from Jesus is non-transformational” (Geiger et. al, 2012, p. 8). Therefore, ministry leaders should be motivated to see the ministry of discipleship transform people’s lives through Jesus Christ. Transformational growth which happens in a person’s life because of that person submitting to Jesus Christ can truly be called discipleship.

Third, discipleship is the work of ministry leaders that begins when a person places faith in Jesus Christ. Gallaty (2015) specifically states that “you [cannot] disciple an unbeliever,” because unbelievers are “people who don’t know Jesus” (p. 163). The beginning point of discipleship in a person’s life may be difficult to clarify, but it appears to be post-salvation. However, “evangelism and discipleship are two oars attached to the same boat” (Gallaty, 2015, p. 165). Robinson (1997) states that “evangelism is the outflow of the overflow of the inflow of the Christ-life in a church body” (p. 145). If the outflow of Christ is evangelism, then evangelism could be the beginning point of a relationship that may extend to the point of discipleship. A relationship which includes the element of evangelism may quickly shift to a relationship which includes the element of discipleship.

Fourth, discipleship is the organized work of assisting people as they mature in their relationship with Jesus Christ. There are many prevalent traditional models which exist for the purpose of discipleship. Cherry (2016) mentions that two fundamental models for discipleship

which exist in the New Testament are “emulating the way of learning of the first disciples” and working toward the “virtues and practices which are expected of the recipients of the [biblical] letters.” The previously mentioned traditional models of discipleship may be the most foundational of any models due to the fact that they look at Jesus’ personal acts of discipleship with the original 12 disciples and the writings of Paul concerning the actions of the people in the early church. Anderson and Skinner (2019) mentions a model of discipleship which focuses on the fruit of the spirit, because “Christ-followers are Spirit-filled Christians who bear fruit.” Many traditional models of discipleship exist within the writings of the Christian community, and most of the models appear to be scripturally based. Viable models of discipleship move believers toward the goal of being like Christ. Perfect models of discipleship may not exist, but discipleship which is biblically-based may be beneficial to everyone involved.

### **What is a Disciple-maker?**

Being a disciple-maker is more than simply understanding critical material regarding discipleship. Powers (2019) focuses on the assimilation of discipleship at Freedom Christian Fellowship which he describes as “a church with two campuses, six pastoral staff members, and a host of ministries, [which] provides outstanding ministry to the community in Jacksonville, Florida” (p. xi). The church which Powers (2019) focuses on was blessed in many ways by a “host of ministries,” but there was a disconnect involving the effective “discipling [of] individuals currently attending the church” (p. xi). If a church with multiple campuses and numerous ministers in a thriving community has difficulty with the making of disciples, then, most likely, several churches face a similar issue. Regardless of the size of the church or its location, what is a disciple-maker?

First, a disciple-maker is one who has a relationship with God through Jesus Christ: a Christian. The biblical word which describes the action of a person who has a relationship with God through Jesus Christ is salvation. Salvation is defined as “God’s activities in bringing humans into a right relationship with God and with one another through Jesus Christ” (McKim, 1996, p. 247). The salvific detail mentioned in this definition shows that salvation not only affects the believer, but it also affects those in contact with the believer. Discipleship builds upon the right relationship of people who identify with each other through faith in Jesus Christ.

Second, a disciple-maker is one who is acquainted with the biblical texts. Disciple-makers often do the initial work of Christian education and “should seek to find ways to bring together the various subjects that are facing their students today” (Anthony & Benson, 2011, p. 93). Upon first entering a discipling relationship, the disciple or learner needs biblical information which parallels the real-life situations of which he or she is dealing. The ministry of discipleship should be more than the recitation of biblical facts. The aim of discipleship is personal the application of biblical truths. Disciples seek to have the biblical truth readily available in their hearts for use in future situations.

Third, a disciple-maker is one who actively promotes obedience. “Paul’s goal for his readers is not merely knowledge, but rather the obedience that faith brings about” (Samra, 2006, p. 124). Paul wanted his readers to grow in knowledge, but he did not want them to grow in knowledge alone. Faith in Jesus Christ results in obedience to Jesus Christ. Throughout the ebb and flow of discipleship, a disciple-maker may be able to pinpoint acts of obedience within the lives of disciples. Obedience is an insignia of the maturity of a Christian. In First Samuel 13:14, the Bible specifies what God looks for as it states that “the Lord has found a man after his own heart.” Bergen (2009) writes that a disciple-maker’s “position” is based on “fateful obedience”



(p. 92). At the heart of each disciple-maker is a person who is obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ and promotes such obedience.

Fourth, a disciple-maker is one who makes a difference in the lives of disciples. Turner (2013) states that there “are many striving to make a difference in someone’s life, no matter the cost” (p. 99). A disciple-maker seeks to make a difference in someone’s life through the gospel. Often the cost of discipleship is the time which it takes to be involved in someone’s life for the purpose of making a difference. Turner (2013) feels that the younger generation of Christians [Millennials] is more open to being discipled and states that “they long to have a mentor” (p. 59). Disciple-makers are called to be difference makers for Christ.

Lastly, a disciple-maker is one who submits to discipleship. The work of God’s Holy Spirit in the act of discipleship extends throughout a person’s life beginning at the point of salvation. “The ‘spirit of the tradition’ provides the unitary aspect of the practice, while this is colored by the personality of the individual engaged in spiritual direction, both the spiritual guide and the disciple, allowing for personal adaptation” (Barbu, 2012, p. 32). During the discipleship journey, both the disciple-maker and the disciple grow throughout the process. Therefore, the disciple-maker submits to the work of discipleship throughout the journey.

### **What is a Pastor?**

Ransbottom-Stallons (2017) states that “somewhere along the line we devolved into the role of pastor as professional Christian” which means that the church members developed the “mindset of a consumer” instead of the “mindset of a citizen with full responsibility in fulfilling the mission” of the Lord (pp. 124 & 135). Ransbottom-Stallons goes on to argue that pastors are not professional Christians and that pastors’ lives are fulfilled as team members serving alongside other believers. Rainer (2017), who studied pastors at Bellevue Baptist in Memphis,

TN, First Baptist Church Dallas, TX, First Baptist Church Jacksonville, FL, and First Baptist Church Orlando, FL, states that at these “four legacy churches” there was a “simplicity of focusing on one senior leader—as opposed to a plurality of leaders— [which] creates a perception of consistency within the congregation” (p. ix). Allowing for the sovereignty of the Lord to place a pastor in one location for many years, the pastor is the consistent leader of the congregation. Tombrella (2017) concludes that “the pastor is the primary influencer of the church in promoting the biblical commands and expectations” (p. 43). Since pastors are not called to be professional Christians but are called to lead the congregations, what are some markers which should be in the lives of pastors?

First, a pastor is a spiritual leader. The mark of a pastor’s spiritual leadership is identified as being one who loves. What type of spiritual leader was Paul in the New Testament? Thiselton (2010) takes an in-depth look at how Paul’s was engaged with his disciples and states that “Paul’s spiritual concern for his converts is inseparable for his love for them as people” (p. 92). Paul loved his friends within the Christian community, and he did not see the evangelism as the end of his responsibility. As Thiselton points out, the converts were not simply a notch on Paul’s Bible, but he was motivated, in spite of difficulties, to sufficiently extend love to his spiritual disciples.

By means of continuing with the thought of a pastor being a spiritual leader, a pastor leads by being a person of character. Malphurs (2003) reminds pastors that church members will follow their leadership “only after they [the church members] are convinced that you [the pastor] are a person of good character who is worthy of leading the mission and vision you espouse” (p. 56). Discipleship is a motivating factor for a ministry which revolves around being a person of

character. Within the small group dynamic of discipleship, a pastor's character may be readily available for a disciple to see.

By means of continuing with the thought of a pastor being a spiritual leader, a pastor leads by being a worship leader. The spiritual formation found in salvation and discipleship leads one to worship the Lord God Almighty. Pettit (2008) states that since "calling on the name of the Lord is at the core of worship," then the work of a pastor includes leading worship (p. 59). The worship of Jesus may include but it is not limited to the singing of spiritual songs with musical accompaniment. Calling upon the name of the Lord happens in times of corporate worship and in times of small-group discipleship. A pastor is one who actively leads others to worship Jesus by calling on the name of the Lord.

By means of continuing with the thought of a pastor being a spiritual leader, a pastor leads by clarifying God's truth. While writing about spiritual gifts, Robinson (1997) mentions the gift of teaching, which he concludes is "the ability to clarify God's truth" (p. 108). The teaching/preaching role of a pastor is undergirded by the ability to clarify God's truth as stated in the Bible. The clarification of God's truth comes audibly through the pastor. "Words are the building blocks for Christian theology" (McKim, 1996, v). Pastors take the building blocks words and turn them into phrases which illuminate the ferocity of Scripture.

By means of continuing with the thought of a pastor being a spiritual leader, a pastor leads by being a model servant. Powell (2015) mentions that "leadership begins with the pastor modeling service and releasing ministry so others can utilize their spiritual gifts (p. 135). In a discipling relationship, the disciple will model the actions which are prevalent in the life of the disciple-maker. The pastor should both model service and allow the disciple to start the process of modeling service as well. Powell (2015) goes on to say that "church members desire to serve

in their churches but they struggle with finding the right areas to invest their time and talents” (p. 135). Where there is a desire, there is the prompting of the Holy Spirit of God. Discipleship can be the area in which someone begins their path to ministry service. “Ministry was never intended to be a singular, one-person show” (Powell, 2015, p. 137). Therefore, the ministry should be shared and distributed across many people and many families. If the forming of disciples is going to happen, then the pastor must model discipleship.

By means of continuing with the thought of a pastor being a spiritual leader, a pastor leads by being a community leader. A Christian community is an area where Christians exercise both their gifts and abilities and are expected to contribute something meaningful. Christian communities are not limited to have a certain point of size, so some pastors may be involved in larger communities while others are involved in smaller communities. The development of Christian integrity happens within the community because “community keeps you humble” and “is essential in the spiritual discernment of [one’s] functional calling” (Pettit, 2008, p. 209). Samra (2006) echoes that notion and states that “participation in the local community [is] essential to the process of maturation” (p. 135). Since the pastor is a spiritual leader, it would only be fitting for his leadership to extend to the Christian community.

Second, a pastor is a doctrinal person. McKim (1996) defines a doctrine as “that which is taught and believed to be true by a church” (p. 81). Doctrine is what a Christian community identifies as true teaching. The true teachings of a church find a resting place in a person of a pastor. Doctrine is to affect the lives of both the disciple-maker and the disciple.

Third, a pastor is a theological person. Biblical perspectives meet personal actions as theology becomes a part of a pastor’s life. Beeley (2009) writes that “theology lies at the center of the work of Christian leadership and [is] the identity of a sound Christian leader.” As a pastor

is walking intimately with the Lord, the pastor's theology will surge because of an increase of biblical knowledge. There is an "interrelation between practical and theological activities" (Beeley, 2009). Often times, the practical meets the theological and the theological meets the practical in the life and person of the pastor. Pastors are called to live lives which match their theology. "Pastoral leaders model for all the baptized the kind of Christian leadership that we are each called to exercise as ambassadors of Christ" (Beeley, 2009). The theology of a disciple-making pastor becomes the example which others will follow. "Christian leadership is theologically centered in the ministry of the word through preaching, teaching, and personal counsel" (Beeley, 2009).

Lastly, a pastor is a slave of Christ. Harris (1999) reminds readers that "a slave's service" is to be "pleasing [to] his master" (p. 97). The actions of a disciple-making pastor are to be pleasing in the eyes of his Heavenly Father. Since slavery consists of "someone whose person and service belong wholly to another," the pastor fully belongs to the Lord (Harris, 1999, p. 25). The freedom of a believer is seen through the resulting willful slavery to Christ. With "the essence of slavery [being] subjection," subsequently slavery and Christianity go hand-in-hand (Harris, 1999, p. 95). When a disciple-making pastor understands God's will, he willfully submits to it.

### **What is a Disciple-making Pastor?**

Lemke (2017) acknowledges that some pastors are "guilty of pastoral malpractice for failing to equip believers to see their Monday work as Christian service." The role of a disciple-making pastor is to fully equip believers for daily living. Pastors should be zealous about this responsibility. When writing about zeal within the life of a congregation, Svajda (2018) states that "If the pastor is not active in the evangelistic life of his church, evangelism will not take

place in his church,” and that “the pastor is the lead undershepherd of his church [who] must model evangelism for his people” (p. 82). Whether the Christian discipline concerns evangelism or discipleship, the pastor must zealously lead the way. Lemke (2017) further states that “it is clear that God is calling ministry leaders to equip believers for ministry impact.”

First, a disciple-making pastor is one who is close to the Lord. Morton (2015) notes that “the leaders’ day-to-day walk with God, characterized by closeness and intimacy, is vital in Christian leadership” (p. 67). Every pastor fills the role of leading other Christians, and that role should be noticeably characterized by his intimate relationship with God through Jesus Christ. A disciple-making pastor is only successful when his walk remains close to the Lord. When times of weakness or rebellion occur, then quick repentance is desired. Prolonged actions and attitudes against the will of God will distance a person’s heart from the work of the Lord. For a disciple-making pastor to lead others in a spiritual way, he must be close with the Lord. Lemke (2017) states that “ministry leadership is not primarily about the assets of the leader, but about the providential work of God in distributing gifts to the entire body of Christ in order to achieve his purposes.” A close spiritual walk with the Lord leads to correct disciple-making actions concerning the Lord’s will.

Morton (2015) goes on to state that “Spiritual practices play a key role in both having and maintaining a holy life and walk. Through spiritual practices, the believer becomes ever closer to God, leading to a full sacrifice of life and self” (p. 139). There are several interesting aspects of this quote from Morton. First, he mentions that “spiritual practices play a key role in both *having* and *maintaining* a holy life and walk” (italics added by the researcher) (Morton, 2015, p. 139). This quote calls question to if a holy life is possible without spiritual practices. Scripture teaches both in the Old Testament and New Testament that spiritual practices help a person’s walk with

the Lord (the Shema in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Colossians 2:6-7 in the New Testament). Now, thinking about the maintenance side of Morton's quote, spiritual practices help a person to uphold holiness. Disciple-making pastors should establish practices that will benefit their spiritual lives. Practices which will maintain a sense of order in the life of disciple-making pastors consist of but are not limited to prayer, scripture study, corporate worship, and accountability. If a disciple-making pastor has no spiritual practices in place, then he should prayerfully consider implementing some. Once a spiritual regimen is in place and enough time has passed to establish habits, the maintenance of a disciple-making pastor's spiritual walk will become easier. Thought must be given to the renewal of a person's walk with the Lord, and periodic evaluations will only enhance a person's determination to be used by God. Morton (2015) also states "through spiritual practices, the believer becomes ever closer to God, leading to a *full sacrifice* of life and self" (italics added by the researcher) (p. 139). Disciple-making pastors are called to be wholly given to the work of the Lord, yet often they are only partially given to the work of the Lord. Spiritual practices remind disciple-making pastors to give themselves daily to the work of the Lord.

Second, a disciple-making pastor is one who informs and forms. The practice of discipleship aims at informing the disciple and forming the actions of the disciple. Where does the issue with spiritual formation exist? It exists in the heart of the person. Smith (2009) is convicted that "Christian education has, for too long, been concerned with *information* rather than *formation*" (p. 219). Since the disciple-making pastor serves in the role of Christian educator, his role is a twofold role. He is to distribute information to the disciple in a way which forms the disciple's life for the purpose of following God. The spiritual formation of a disciple

intensifies when the disciple possesses the Christian information which supports a Christian lifestyle.

Third, a disciple-making pastor is one who uses technology's advantage. Should the disciple-making pastor use technology when making disciples? Yes, and the disciple-making pastor should use the advantages of technology in every way possible. A disciple-making pastor may ask himself if Jesus were here, in this modern age, what would he do and how would he do it? "The Bible provides a useful example of how Christianity has been negotiating with technology and media throughout its history" (Campbell & Garner, 2016, p. 24). Both the writers of Scripture and the followers of Scripture post canonization have used every available technological improvement to aid Christianity. It appears that Jesus would use technology to its fullest. The means of discipleship may change, but the end of discipleship remains the same. Due to the advantages of technology, it is easier to access religious texts and writings than ever before. "With easy online access to religious texts in a variety of interpretive tools, people no longer have to go through established religious teachers or structures for such information" (Campbell & Garner, 2016, p. 69). A disciple-making pastor is available to assist the disciple in the understanding of any religious text. Campbell & Garner (2016) remind the disciple-making pastor that technology gives "the ability to influence the shape, impact, and outcomes of digital technologies in a variety of social spaces" (p. 59). With the delivery of an email or the sending of a text, a message can be delivered around the world in a matter of moments. The use of technology may also enhance the spiritual encouragement aspect of discipleship. With the modernization of text messaging, a message can be sent and viewed at the reader's convenience. A response can also go out in a convenient way. Through technological improvements, a discipling conversation can happen throughout the entire day.



Fourth, a disciple-making pastor is one who is a vision-sharer. Carter (2009) writes and lists, in an article on transformational leadership and pastoral leader effectiveness, many responsibilities of a modern “Christian community pastor,” and the first two responsibilities listed are “spiritual guidance and development” (p. 261). The people within a Christian community view the disciple-making pastor as a person who leads in the spiritual development of the congregation. Carter (2009) mentions that “transformational leaders are those who articulate a vision of the future and share it with peers and followers” (p. 262). Since a disciple-making pastor is to be visionary, he must develop a ministry vision for others to follow. Simply developing a vision for others to follow does not complete a disciple-making pastor’s responsibilities. He must also share that vision in a way which gathers the support of the followers. Powers (2019) states that the “pastor needs to be the champion of small groups in the church, the number one supporter and loudest voice for small group community (pp. 97-98).

Fifth, a disciple-making pastor is one who is a leading leader. Young and Firmin (2014) say that “pastoral leadership involves some elements that are not necessarily identical to other leadership contexts.” There are some aspects of a disciple-making pastor’s leadership which do not fall under the regular responsibilities of a leader. Kim (2010) states that all “leadership principles must be examined in light of scriptural truth” (p. 70). The ultimate authority which a pastor relies upon is the leadership of the Holy Spirit of God as revealed through the Bible. Pastoral leadership may not be solely crafted in accordance to a secular book or a secular leadership workshop. Kim (2010) also states that “secular leadership fails to take into account the will and the guidance of God that He gives to leaders (p. 71). There may be times when a disciple-making pastor feels that he is to lead in a particular way due to the impressing aspect of

the Holy Spirit. With that being said, many aspects of pastoral leadership are similar to secular leadership contexts and secular leadership information can be useful.

Lastly, a disciple-making pastor is one who is a learning leader. Powlison (2007) mentions that disciple-making pastors should be engaged in “learning what [they] can from other models” (p. 279). Even though there are differences between secular leadership and religious leadership, a disciple-making pastor should continue to learn. God can use the knowledge a person learned from a secular environment to build his kingdom, therefore a disciple-making pastor should use every avenue available to learn. Sweet (2018) notes that “a healthy pastor typically leads to a healthy church” (p. 77). Therefore, a disciple-making pastor will, in turn, lead disciple-making church members.

### **What are the Values of Discipleship?**

Discipleship has many values and the first value of discipleship is transformation. “Education must have transformation as its redemptive and salvific element if it is to be Christian” (Estep et. al, 2008, p. 120). Since discipleship is a foundational element of Christian education, it too must have an element of transformation. By having both Christian and educational values intrinsically woven throughout it, discipleship points people in the direction of God. Sadly, Turner (2013) feels that there are fields ready for the harvest of transformation but “the problem seems to be that most men, even believers, are doing little to make a difference” (p. 62). Ransbottom-Stallons (2017) states that “once there is a generation where a process can no longer be named or the steps described, replication becomes increasingly difficult” (p. 137).

The second value of discipleship is a cross-cultural inspiration. Initially, inspiration will be looked at. As previously stated, Lingenfelter (2008) mentions that “leading is inspiring people

who participate with you in a community of trust to follow you and be empowered by you to achieve a compelling vision of faith” (p. 19). When a disciple-maker enters into a discipling relationship with others, there are some disciples who will not wholeheartedly buy into the leadership vision. Are there subtle changes which the disciple-maker can make which inspire others to follow through with discipleship? Lingenfelter (2008) writes of an individual who typically mentioned: “my vision” or “her vision” (p. 42). Later the author specifically states that the goal should be “our vision” and “our outcomes” (Lingenfelter, 2008, p. 101). This mentality of inclusiveness is a dealmaker in terms of disciple-making inspiration. Next, the term cross-cultural will be looked at. Lingenfelter (2008) says that “leading cross-culturally is inspiring people who come from two or more cultural traditions” (p. 21). Multicultural basically means a group of people who represent different backgrounds. Nel (2017) states “to be missional is to be involved in the world.” The multicultural dynamic of discipleship may be seen as people who have different religious upbringings. In most groups of discipleship, there are at least two people who come from different cultural backgrounds. Lingenfelter (2008) specifically writes that cultural division comes from “a clash of worldviews,” however when worldviews do not collide but cooperate, cross-cultural inspiration will result in discipleship (p. 20).

The third value of discipleship is consistency. If a disciple is going to be a true follower of Jesus Christ, there needs to be a consistent disciple-maker in his or her life. The act of disciple-making is compatible with the idea of Christian mentoring. Many disciple-makers have been discipled by others and by the Holy Spirit. Barna (2001) gauges the spiritual growth of Christians through a series of surveys where a person measures their spirituality on a scale from immature to conducting a personal ministry and determines that “most highly effective ministries

encourage people to put reasonable pressure on themselves to grow” (p. 125). Disciple-making leads to consistency springing up in a disciple’s life.

The fourth value of discipleship is a spiritual activity with movement. Discipleship leads to the development of a disciple’s personal philosophy of ministry. “Philosophy is, in part, an activity and an attitude,” therefore, a philosophy of discipleship is not only inward, but it is also an outward expression (Knight, 2006, p. 8). The development of a discipleship philosophy in the mind determines the action of the body in following God’s will.

The fifth value of discipleship is the development of a Christian worldview. The act of discipleship may be viewed through the multicultural paradigm of Niebuhr’s Christ the Transformer of Culture (Carson, 2008, p. 25). Christ has the ability to transform culture through the discipling work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of individuals. Discipleship is the key that unlocks the door of spiritual formation which may revolutionize a person’s life. Carson (2008) states that “a Christian worldview is more than a system of beliefs” it includes one’s actions depending upon the system of beliefs (p. 96). When one’s actions parallel one’s system of beliefs, then a Christian worldview has been developed.

The sixth value of discipleship is relational effectiveness. Myers (2017) writes that “personal experience [which] enhances ministerial authenticity improves the ministers’ ability to relate to members of the congregation and, therefore, makes them more effective in their ministry” (p. 44). According to the previous quote, relational ability and ministerial effectiveness go hand-in-hand. Disciple-making pastors have a wealth of information and experience which can strengthen the relationship with their disciples. It appears that when a disciple-making pastor is relational, the work of discipleship is something in which anyone could participate. “Authentic

leadership has been found to improve follower performance, which is relevant if the role of the pastor is to equip the saints for works of service” (Myers, 2017, p. 44).

Lastly, the seventh value of discipleship is that the work perseveres. No person exists in a vacuum, so discipleship plays a large role in the lives of Christians. Disciple-making pastors are influenced by the Lord, the Bible, and other believers. “Social contagion has to do with our ability to influence others and the ways in which others influence us” (Lowe & Lowe, 2018, p. 19). Each person has outward influences which impact their lives, and, in the same way, each person has an influence on others’ lives. “Each person can make a difference in the circles of influence in which God has placed them (Turner, 2013, p. 62). God, in his sovereign will, places people exactly where they need to be for the purpose of discipleship.

Tombrella (2017), while writing on the life of Henrietta Mears states that “her followers did what she did, and established believers through one-on-one relationships” which saw “them reproduce the process, moving from being established to advancing in an ever-reproducing process of seeing others know Christ and make Him known” (p. 139). Lemke (2017) states that “while there has been a tendency in the past to focus on equipping disciples for specific types of ministry within the church, para-church, or missions context, a disciple-centered leadership approach calls for a broader perspective on this equipping work.” The values of discipleship are to extend beyond the checking of traditional boxes for ministry.

In conclusion of the related literature, the process of entrusting the gospel to faithful people for the purpose of spiritual recapitulation is the essence of discipleship. This section answered the previous questions of what is discipleship, what is a disciple-maker, what is a pastor, what is a disciple-making pastor, and what are the values of discipleship.

### **Rationale for the Study and Gap in the Literature**

As previously asked, is there a misunderstanding among pastoral leadership with regards to discipleship? Hollins (2018) states that “the primary characteristics of a pastor are comprised of preaching, leading, counseling, and [the] administration of the church while noting “that a vast number of pastors acknowledged that congregants held their own expectations regarding the pastor’s role” (p. 2). In the primary features of a pastor’s ministry which were listed above, Hollins does not mention the role which discipleship should play. Hollins (2018) goes on to say that “as the role of the pastor increases in complexity, the wider the difference will be in church members’ understanding of the function of the pastor,” and that “not every member of the church shares the same perspective as the pastor” (p. 3). Furthermore, Hollins (2018) emphatically states that “the role of the pastor in the church has not been defined, and the issues surrounding this role have not been resolved (p.11).

Since God has a plan for the maturation process of every Christian as Ephesians 2:10 states, discipleship is an active part of God’s plan for the development of his children. It appears that a significant gap in the literature concerning discipleship is found in the role of a pastor. Many works concerning discipleship merely look at the role of a Christian engaged in discipleship with another Christian. Can a pastor bring a specific dimension to discipleship which a non-pastor cannot bring to discipleship? Does the pastor’s sermonic work from the pulpit aid in his ministry of discipleship? From the perspective of individual personalities and spiritual gifts, every pastor is different. If pastors are going to be disciplined in the art of discipleship, they may use the discipleship method which serves them best over the history of their ministries. From the standpoint of the overall Christian education venue, is there a useful discipleship model which has yet to be discovered and implemented throughout a larger realm of

churches? The leadership pattern of discipleship models in pastors' lives may simply be reproduced patterns which were previously used in their own personal spiritual maturity.

In conclusion, the preceding work was foundational to the research design of this study. By examining a theological framework, a theoretical framework, related literature, and a rationale for the study, a gap in the literature became evident. This research addressed that gap.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

This chapter introduced the reader to the details surrounding the synopsis of the research design, setting, participants, role of the researcher, ethical considerations, data collection methods and instrumentation, and the data analysis.

### **Research Design Synopsis**

This study employed a qualitative, interview-based-study methodology. The study utilized sets of interview-based questions to compare the responses of pastors to their church representatives. The data drawn from this qualitative, interview-based-study was used to answer the research questions, and the conclusions reached further complemented the discussion concerning discipleship. The telephone interviews were coded producing frequency counts for common themes within the interview transcripts between the groups studied. The resultant data allowed the researcher an opportunity to use comparison to determine if commonalities exist between the responses of the groups.

The researcher investigated the commonality of responses from those involved in the study and compared the data of those reoccurring themes. The two variables were the personal discipleship practices of pastors and the discipleship practices of traditional MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400. The study used a proportionate random sampling technique. This method of sampling was employed because the number of participants from each subgroup will vary. There were 42 MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400 according to the 2017 associational statistics. The researcher attempted to conduct telephone interviews with eight randomly selected pastoral interviewees. The researcher included four representatives from each participating pastor's church which were



two staff members and two church members at large. There may be a variation in the number of participants from each subgroup however, for data comparison purposes, a minimum of four representatives will be interviewed.

### **The Problem**

Is there a misunderstanding among pastoral leadership with regards to discipleship? Throughout Scripture, the church was blessed when she was unified and served together (Acts 2:44-47). It appears that spiritual formation is the goal of both discipleship and corporate worship. Discipleship and corporate worship lead to the product of spiritual formation through different avenues. Discipleship appears to rely more upon the interaction between individuals, while worship appears to rely more upon the interaction of the Holy Spirit through the singing, teaching, and preaching of God's word. The lives of maturing believers are enhanced greatly through both corporate worship and personal discipleship. Although different from one another, each meets needs in the lives of Christians and work together. Hardison (2019) specifies that "church programs (sermons, large group gatherings, worship events, retreats, and the like) are great platforms for building and growing faith. However, producing authentic dedicated believers of the faith requires intentional relational discipleship in conjunction with existing church programs" (p. 6). Pastors are essential to the worship services of their churches, but are they also essential to the discipleship processes of their churches?

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative, interview-based-study is to explore the personal discipleship practices of pastors and compare those practices to the personal discipleship practices of traditional MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400 by collecting qualitative data from pastors, other staff members, and church members.

## Research Questions

**RQ1.** What are the common factors which are consistently found in MBC churches which offer personal discipleship groups?

**RQ2.** What are the common factors which are consistently found in pastors who have personal discipleship practices in the sample group?

**RQ3.** What, if any, perceived influence is there between the personal discipleship practices of pastors on the discipleship practices of the MBC church representatives in the sample group?

**RQ4.** What, if any, are the commonalities between the discipleship practices being employed among MBC church representatives in the sample group and the discipleship practices of their pastors?

## Research Design and Methodology

This qualitative, interview-based-study which was comparative by design explored the personal discipleship practices of pastors and compare those practices to the personal discipleship practices of MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400 by collecting qualitative data from pastors, other staff members, and church members to determine if the personal discipleship practices of pastors influence the discipleship practices of the churches in the sample group.

The pastor of a group of believers “is the key figure to the discipleship process within the local church” (Smith, 2014, p. 1). To have the mindset of a disciple maker, a pastor should be concerned with the spiritual formation of others. First Peter 2:1-2 says “Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, so that you may grow up into your salvation.” All believers begin in the infant stages of faith, and because of that, no one is born a spiritual giant, therefore each individual Christian must grow in his or her faith. Through a ministry of discipleship, pastors assist people in the growth of their faith. Pettit (2008) states that “God does not bring us into fellowship with

him and make us part of his people to function in isolation” (p. 104). It is difficult, if not impossible, to experience the discipleship which God planned when one is in isolation. There needs to be interaction and fellowship with other believers.

Smith (2014) believes that the decline in church growth is due to “the different approaches to discipleship that leaders (pastors) are taking both corporately and personally” (parenthetical word belongs to the researcher) (p. 1). Is it possible that discipleship has become so varied between organizations, denominations, and individual churches that it has lost its perceived effectiveness? There were no specific numbers or unbiased assessment that could be used to measure spiritual or discipleship effectiveness. Rather, each pastors’ perceptions were instrumental in observing this phenomenon. “The biblical understanding of discipleship defines it as, ‘the formation, transformation, and application of the word of God within the believer’s life’” (Smith, 2014, p. 3). Colebank (2017) states “that a major cause of spiritual immaturity is the emphasis on studying the Bible with the goal of knowing information instead of a goal of obeying Christ’s commands” (pp. 4-5). So, does the church simply need another program to be initiated within its walls or does the church need disciple-making pastors?

### **Setting**

The setting of this qualitative study was traditional SBC churches which were affiliated with the MBC and maintained an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400. The researcher collected data concerning the personal discipleship practices of pastors through telephone interviews with pastors, and then the researcher compared those practices to the practices of staff members, and two church members of those same pastors. The specific details surrounding those churches were selected due to the fact that there were 42 traditional MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400 out of over 2,000 total

MBC churches. For churches of this size, the researcher assumed that each of the churches had multiple staff members. Therefore, the organizational structure of the average church selected for this study was the pastor, staff members, and church members. Pseudonyms for both the institutions and the individuals involved are in place. In the judgment of the researcher, the study of discipleship in SBC life is at a highpoint. Due to the increase of importance concerning discipleship, the pseudonyms allowed those being interviewed to be completely transparent concerning their discipleship practices. The researcher both attended and served (as a youth pastor) a MBC church with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400 (the aforementioned church of which the researcher was a member and served no longer maintained an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400). Swaminathan & Mulvihill (2017) question if “qualitative researchers [should] research issues with which they are personally acquainted and have personal experience” (p.24). The researcher had some prior personal experience with the selected subjects of research.

### **Participants**

There were 42 traditional MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400 according to the MBC 2017 statistics. The sample pool of this qualitative research design called for eight to twelve randomly selected churches to participate. Of those selected churches, each pastor, up to two staff members, and up to two church members were interviewed. Theoretical sampling was employed for the purpose of determining if commonalities existed between the personal discipleship practices described by pastors and the discipleship practices of the churches in the sample group. Demographic information was described in Table 1 Demographic Data. See Appendix B for the Participants’ Rights disclosure and see Appendix C for the Church Members’ Selection Guide.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The researcher's role as a human instrument was very important to this situation. The researcher was a pastor of a church with SBC and MBC affiliations. Of the 42 pastors of the potentially selected traditional MBC churches, the researcher knew a majority. The researcher served for eight years on the MBCB and served in that position, at the time of the research, with many of the selected pastors. In addition to those facts, the researcher knew many of the staff members who were involved in the telephone interviews. There was also a high probability that the researcher knew a minority of the church members which were interviewed. The researcher viewed his familiarity with the participants as a positive aspect which enhanced the participation of the interviewees. On the other hand, the researcher also viewed his familiarity with the participants in a negative way which could have shielded certain aspects of transparency. Swaminathan & Mulvihill (2017) state that subjectivism is a "key concept in qualitative research. It centralizes the knowledge of the experiencer and centralizes the concept that knowledge is generated from the mind. It assumes that we cannot separate ourselves from what we know. The researcher and the subject of research are linked and truth is negotiated" (p. 19).

### **Ethical Considerations**

Because of ethical considerations surrounding the participating MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400, pseudonyms were used for the pastors, the staff members, and the church members. Each of the previously mentioned partitions of the subpopulations received letters such as A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H rather than naming them directly. Each participant was treated with upmost respect and dignity, and their voluntary service was shown appreciation. Any participant was free to leave the study or withdraw from the study at any time. The questions for the participant circumvented any type of harm to their

churches, families, and/or ministries. All participants were “offered an advance copy of the current study before it was published” (Rainer, 2017, p. 109). Neither of the previously mentioned partitions of the subpopulations knew the results of the others being interviewed. The researcher submitted to any and all ethical considerations given by Liberty University’s Institutional Review Board.

## **Data Collection Methods and Instruments**

### **Collection Methods**

A simple purposive sample for comparative purposes method was used to draw from the select traditional MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400. Procedures were in place to assure that the collected data was handled in a safe manner and provided complete confidentiality on behalf of the participants. Unrestricted, open-ended questions were asked of the participants by the researcher. Swaminathan & Mulvihill (2017) state that “open-ended questions are questions that elicit descriptive answers, stories, and experiences from participants” (p. 45). The participants’ responses were recorded, with permission by the interviewee, and transcribed by the researcher. “There is in fact no transcription notation system capable of providing to the researcher a completely accurate and comprehensive narrative of the original performance: all transcription is in principle *selective* and entails the inevitable risk of systematic *bias* of one kind or another” (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2014, pp. 65-66). Therefore, the researcher conducted the interviews without partiality and meticulously transcribed the data with accurateness as the goal.

### **Instruments and Protocols**

The instruments used for conducting the research for this qualitative study were the researcher who implemented interview protocol. The questions asked in the telephone interviews

appear in Appendix D. Three sets of questions were used to explore and determine the answers to the research questions posed above.

## **Procedures**

After consulting the 2017 MBC statistics, the researcher called a number of the selected traditional churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400 and asked about the current status of the pastor. If a church met the statistical benchmark but did not have a pastor, then the church was removed from the list of selected churches. After confirming that the church had a pastor, the researcher asked to speak with the pastor. The researcher shared a brief personal profile, the reason for the conversation, and an overview of the dissertation research. The researcher shared that the goal was to interview the pastor, two staff members, and two church members. Once the pastor accepted the invitation to participate in this qualitative study, the researcher requested information concerning selected staff members and selected church members to also participate in this qualitative study. The researcher asked for the pastors' email addresses for the purpose of communication. The dates and times for the telephone interviews were primarily established through email communication. Upon the completion of the interviews and the reception of the data, the information was used for the development of theories concerning the discipleship practices of pastors and the discipleship practices of their churches.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Analysis Methods**

Once the telephone interview data was collected, it was transcribed by the researcher. Court (2017) states that the researcher should "read over and over again all of the data, read everything again, and make notes on similarities, differences, patterns and questions" (p. 63). All of the data was organized into categories depicting a completed church study with five

interviews (one interview of the pastor, two interviews of staff members, and two interviews of church members). Each of the previously mentioned completed church studies received lettered pseudonyms such as Church A, Church B, Church C, etc. rather than naming the churches directly. A content analysis of the data was performed to see if any commonalities existed between the personal discipleship practices described by pastors and the discipleship practices of the churches in the sample group. As noted in Appendix D, questions four through nine were identical for the pastor, the staff members, and the church members. Common themes were identified through comparing questions four through nine of each completed church study. In addition to the comparison of answers within each completed church study, the answers given for questions four through nine were compared throughout the entire subset. For example, the answers for questions four through nine given by each participant were compared to other participants within the same subset.

A panel of evaluators were utilized by the researcher for the purpose of assistance in developing common themes. See Appendix E for the Panel of Evaluators' Inclusion Criteria. Court (2017) states that "Internal reliability, sometimes called interrater reliability, refers to whether, how and to what extent another 'rater', observer or researcher would perceive the same things and understand them in the same way as we do in a particular study. It behooves [researchers] to bring another researcher's eyes and mind to this task" (p. 33). Prior to the period of evaluation, each evaluator completed a period of training which was led by the researcher. See Appendix F for the Panel of Evaluators' Training Standards. Each evaluator on the panel operated under the same analysis system of identifying common themes through comparing questions four through nine of each completed church study. In addition to the comparison of answers within each completed church study, each evaluator compared the answers given for



questions four through nine throughout the entire subset of their focused completed church studies. For example, the answers for questions four through nine given by each participant were compared to other participants within the same subset. As previously stated, the researcher interviewed, by telephone, eight randomly selected pastoral interviewees. Each evaluator reviewed two completed church studies. Each evaluator was referred to as Evaluator 1, Evaluator 2, Evaluator 3, or Evaluator 4.

The common themes brought to light through the work of the panel of evaluators was used to answer the previously stated research questions. Swaminathan & Mulvihill (2017) state that “qualitative researchers often describe their analyses of data in terms of themes emerging from data” (p. 66). After the common themes showed consistent factors found in disciple-making pastors and disciple-making churches in the sample group, the researcher developed visual aids to contribute to the readers’ information. Maxwell & Chmiel (2014) state that “Qualitative content analysis is a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative data” (p. 170). Therefore, the research data was systematically detailed and categorized for the purpose of presentation and disbursement.

### **Trustworthiness**

Rainer (2017) states that “qualitative research often does not include the complicated statistics found in quantitative research. Though qualitative studies generally use words instead of numbers, the trustworthiness of qualitative studies is equally as important as in quantitative studies” (p.104). The researcher interviewed eight randomly selected pastoral interviewees as well as four representatives from each participating pastor's church to include two staff members and two church members at large. Court (2017) mentions a word about trustworthiness by stating “In qualitative research the criteria of truth and accuracy are not so simple. True for whom? The

participants? A wider population? The researcher? The readers? And what does ‘true’ mean anyway? Qualitative researchers have struggled for years to find meaningful concepts that denote the quality of their work” (p.29).

**Credibility.** Court (2017) states that researchers “can’t study everything or everyone in a setting” (p. 34). The researcher’s random selection of participants within a church lent itself to bolster the credibility of the research. Hays & Singh (2011) state that credibility is the “believability of a study” (p. 200). The rigorous institutional stipulations demanded a high threshold for internal legitimacy. For the determination of sensible conclusions to this qualitative research study, “credibility [was] one of the major criteria” (Hays & Singh, 2011, p. 200).

**Dependability.** Hays & Singh (2011) remind researchers that “Dependability refers to the consistency of study results over time and across researchers” (p. 201). This researcher built his study upon the work of many previous researchers and their dissertations. This researcher was “charged with engaging in strategies to show that the similar findings extend to similar studies, and all research team members agree with the study’s findings” (Hays & Singh, 2011, p. 201). The dependability of this research was strengthened by the interaction with the panel of evaluators.

**Confirmability.** The interviewees for this research were committed followers of Christ who had an awareness of discipleship. Hays & Singh (2011) write that “confirmability refers to the degree to which findings of a study are genuine reflections of the participants investigated” (p. 201). As the interviewees were followers of Christ, their genuineness was reflected in the interviews. The researcher played no role in either preventing the interviewee from answering honestly or steering the interviewee in a certain direction.

**Transferability.** The researcher provided and made available detailed information such as “the research process, including the participants, settings, and time frame, so that readers/consumers can make decisions about the degree to which any findings are applicable to individuals or settings in which they work” (Hays & Singh, 2011, p. 200).

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter introduced the reader to the details surrounding the synopsis of the research design, setting, participants, role of the researcher, ethical considerations, data collection methods and instrumentation, and the data analysis. Chapters one, two, and three reminded the readers that God has a plan for the maturation process of every Christian. Ephesians 2:10 states that “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.” Discipleship is an instrumental part of God’s plan for the development of his children. From the perspective of individual personalities and spiritual gifts, every pastor is different. The leadership pattern of discipleship models in pastors’ lives may simply be reproduced patterns which were previously used in their spiritual maturity, but contemporary churches need disciple-making pastors.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

As previously stated, the purpose of this qualitative, interview-based-study is to explore the personal discipleship practices of pastors and compare those practices to the personal discipleship practices of MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400 by collecting qualitative data from pastors, other staff members, and church members. Pastors are essential to the worship services of their churches, but are they also essential to the discipleship processes of their churches? Discipleship is happening in traditional MBC churches and among MBC pastors, and this research design discovered what pastors are doing concerning discipleship. The Research Questions are as follows:

**RQ1.** What are the common factors which are consistently found in MBC churches which offer personal discipleship groups?

**RQ2.** What are the common factors which are consistently found in pastors who have personal discipleship practices in the sample group?

**RQ3.** What, if any, perceived influence is there between the personal discipleship practices of pastors on the discipleship practices of the MBC church representatives in the sample group?

**RQ4.** What, if any, are the commonalities between the discipleship practices being employed among MBC church representatives in the sample group and the discipleship practices of their pastors?

This chapter will feature the details surrounding the compilation protocol and measures, demographic and sample data, data analysis and findings, and the evaluation of the research design.

### **Compilation Protocol and Measures**

This qualitative research design called for research to be conducted to describe the personal discipleship practices of pastors through interviewing pastors and then comparing those practices to the practices of the two interviewed staff members and the two interviewed church

members of those same pastors. Within this study, a standardized measurement of discipleship effectiveness was not utilized, therefore each pastor was responsible to identify their individual perception of effectiveness. As a result, there were no specific numbers or unbiased assessment that could be used to measure spiritual or discipleship effectiveness. Rather, each pastor's perceptions were instrumental in observing this phenomenon. This study collected data in the form of interview transcriptions and investigated the commonality of responses from those involved in the study. As previously mentioned, Court (2017) states that the researcher should "read over and over again all of the data, read everything again, and make notes on similarities, differences, patterns and questions" (p. 63). As the researcher followed Court prescription for data analysis, common themes began to rise. Those themes were noticed by the researcher due to the regularity of shared phases within the interview transcripts. Those common themes allowed the researcher to analyze the personal discipleship practices described by pastors and the discipleship practices of the churches in the sample group, thus better understanding the pastors' roles in discipleship.

The researcher consulted the 2017 MBC statistics, called many of the applicable churches which met the statistical benchmark, shared a brief personal profile and an overview of the dissertation research with the pastor, enlisted eight churches for research (a ninth church was secured in the case of an unexpected withdrawal, but it was not needed), emailed personalized recruitment letters and consent forms to each recruited individual in the enlisted churches, received signed consent forms from each recruited individual in the enlisted churches, interviewed by telephone each recruited individual in the enlisted churches, and emailed an interview transcription to each interviewed individual in the enlisted churches.

## Demographic and Sample Data

**Table 1: Demographic Data**

\* F. Member denotes Female Church Member

\* M. Member denotes Male Church Member

| Church and Personal Pseudonyms | Years as a Christian | Years as a Pastor | Years of Ministry at current church | Years of Attendance Under Current Pastor | Number of Church Services Attended per Month |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Church A                       |                      |                   |                                     |  |  |
| Pastor                         | 53 years             | 42 years          | 21 years                            |  |  |
| Staff 1                        | 28 years             |                   | 3 years                             | 4 years                                  |  |
| Staff 2                        | 32 years             |                   | 3 ½ years                           | 3 ½ years                                |  |
| F. Member                      | 32 years             |                   |                                     | 21 years                                 | 12 services                                  |
| M. Member                      | 27 years             |                   |                                     | 17 years                                 | 12 services                                  |
| Church B                       |                      |                   |                                     |  |  |
| Pastor                         | 50 years             | 45 years          | 35 years                            |  |  |
| Staff 1                        | 49 years             |                   | 21 years                            | 21 years                                 |  |
| Staff 2                        | 39 years             |                   | 13 years                            | 28 years                                 |  |
| F. Member                      | 63 years             |                   |                                     | 35 years                                 | 5 services                                   |
| M. Member                      | 39 years             |                   |                                     | 14 years                                 | 12 services                                  |
| Church C                       |                      |                   |                                     |  |  |
| Pastor                         | 46 years             | 43 years          | 21 years                            |  |  |
| Staff 1                        | 34 years             |                   | 12 years                            | 12 years                                 |  |
| Staff 2                        | 16 years             |                   | 3 years                             | 3 years                                  |  |
| F. Member                      | 40 years             |                   |                                     | 7 years                                  | 12 services                                  |
| M. Member                      | 26 years             |                   |                                     | 13 years                                 | 12 services                                  |
| Church D                       |                      |                   |                                     |  |  |
| Pastor                         | 31 years             | 16 years          | 14 years                            |  |  |
| Staff 1                        | 39 years             |                   | 6 years                             | 14 years                                 |  |
| Staff 2                        | 40 years             |                   | 2 years (est.)                      | 2 years (est.)                           |  |
| F. Member                      | 31 years             |                   |                                     | 14 years                                 | 8 services                                   |
| M. Member                      | 24 years             |                   |                                     | 5 years                                  | 8 services                                   |

| Church and Personal Pseudonyms | Years as a Christian | Years as a Pastor | Years of Ministry at Current Church | Years of Attendance Under Current Pastor | Number of Church Services Attended per Month |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Church E                       |                      |                   |                                     |  |  |
| Pastor                         | 48 years             | 30 years          | 9 years                             |  |  |
| Staff 1                        | 40 years             |                   | 27 years                            | 9 years                                  |  |
| Staff 2                        | 36 years             |                   | 7 ½ years                           | 7 ½ years                                |  |
| F. Member                      | 44 years             |                   |                                     | 9 years                                  | 8 services                                   |
| M. Member                      | 50 years             |                   |                                     | 9 years                                  | 10 services                                  |
| Church F                       |                      |                   |                                     |  |  |
| Pastor                         | 45 years             | 18 years          | 11 years                            |  |  |
| Staff 1                        | 48 years             |                   | 27 years                            | 11 years                                 |  |
| Staff 2                        | 20 years             |                   | 3 ½ years                           | 3 ½ years                                |  |
| F. Member                      | 43 years             |                   |                                     | 11 years                                 | 12 services                                  |
| M. Member                      | 41 years             |                   |                                     | 10 years                                 | 12 services                                  |
| Church G                       |                      |                   |                                     |  |  |
| Pastor                         | 51 years             | 33 years          | 15 years                            |  |  |
| Staff 1                        | 15 years             |                   | 1 ½ years                           | 1 ½ years                                |  |
| Staff 2                        | 31 years             |                   | 15 years                            | 14 years                                 |  |
| F. Member                      | 69 years             |                   |                                     | 15 years                                 | 8 services                                   |
| M. Member                      | 44 years             |                   |                                     | 15 years                                 | 10 services                                  |
| Church H                       |                      |                   |                                     |  |  |
| Pastor                         | 46 years             | 40 years          | 22 years                            |  |  |
| Staff 1                        | 52 years             |                   | 21 years                            | 21 years                                 |  |
| Staff 2                        | 37 years             |                   | 11 years                            | 11 years                                 |  |
| F. Member                      | 46 years             |                   |                                     | 22 years                                 | 8 services                                   |
| M. Member                      | 45 years             |                   |                                     | 19 years                                 | 10 services                                  |

### Data Analysis and Findings

The researcher utilized four research questions which resulted in nine questions being used while interviewing each recruited person. The opening three questions were similar in content and were used to produce the demographic and sample data compiled in Table 1. The Table 1 data allowed the researcher to gain an understanding of each interviewees' time frame with the church and with their specific pastor. The later six questions were exact in wording and

assisted the researcher in answering the research questions (see Appendix A). The data was organized as completed church studies from Church A to Church H. Each completed church study was organized by Church (Pseudonym) Pastor, Church (Pseudonym) Staff 1, Church (Pseudonym) Staff 2, Church (Pseudonym) Female Member, and Church (Pseudonym) Male Member (see Appendixes G through N).

### **Research Question 1**

The first research question was “what are the common factors which are consistently found in traditional MBC churches which offer personal discipleship groups?” Three common factors were discovered and appear in the table below.

**Table 2: Common Factors Found in Research Question 1**

|  |
|--|
| 1. Factor: Doing the work of a disciple-maker.         |
| 2. Factor: Multiplicity of discipleship-based classes. |
| 3. Factor: Use of technology to assist discipleship.   |

**Common Factor 1.** One common factor was that the people of the traditional churches attempted to do the work of disciple-makers even though their individual levels of discipleship as new believers varied greatly. Of the forty individuals interviewed for the research, every person was perceived to be one who attempted to do the work of a disciple-maker. Some felt as if they were successful, and others felt as if they were less successful. A thought-provoking finding was that all of the respondents perceived themselves as people who did the work of disciple-makers, yet their views toward their personal discipleship as new believers contrasted in opinion. Nineteen interviewees held favorable views of their discipleship as a new believer. See Table 3 for excerpts from their interview transcripts which show the favorable views.



**Table 3: Respondents who Held a Favorable View of their Discipleship as a New Believer from the Analysis of Interview Question 4**

| The Interviewee who Gave the Response | The Statement Regarding a Favorable View of their Discipleship as a New Believer   |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Church B Staff Member 1               | “(It) started as a 10-year-old, with the pastor in the new believer’s class. I guess a lot of the other (discipleship) was done through smaller groups such as Sunday school...” |
| Church B Female Church Member         | “Most of the discipleship took place at home or in a Sunday school class.”   |
| Church B Male Church Member           | “There were good godly Sunday school teachers and good Christian people that led me along.”  |
| Church C Pastor                       | “I was (discipled), but it was more because I was in college. Mine came through being in Bible class... I learned as I saw other believers in action.”                           |
| Church C Staff Member 1               | “I would say that I was discipled as a new believer, but not in an organized, intentional fashion. (It was) in everyday life.”   |
| Church C Staff Member 2               | “Shortly after I was saved, I started meeting one-on-one with our youth minister.”   |
| Church D Pastor                       | “The greatest single impact, as far as discipleship, came in my college years with a college small group teacher that fully invested in me.”                                     |
| Church E Pastor                       | “My discipleship process started before I was born. My mother, my father, and their parents were believers. So, they prayed for their children before they were born.”           |

| The Interviewee who Gave the Response | The Statement Regarding a Favorable View of their Discipleship as a New Believer   |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Church E Staff Member 1               | “It was mostly in group situations like Wednesday night Bible studies and Sunday night Bible studies.”   |
| Church E Staff Member 2               | “It was a regular attendance, through Sunday school, discipleship training, and Bible drills. Things where you are learning God’s word. During the early part of (my discipleship) as a student growing in his faith, I had a student minister who was strategic in investing in some individuals.”                                      |
| Church E Male Church Member           | “My entire discipleship was through our church. We were very active in church (as we attended) Sunday mornings, Sunday nights, and Wednesday nights.”  |
| Church F Staff Member 1               | “When I was a new believer that was totally at the hands of my parents.”   |
| Church F Staff Member 2               | “I was part of a couple of Sunday school classes that were huge influences on me. I had teachers who took me under their wings. My pastor was our staff evangelist at the time, and he also took me under his wing. That is in addition to all of the regular rigor of church life (such as) listening to sermons and being in worship.” |
| Church F Female Church Member         | “I had some wonderful ladies that took me under their wings. They were Girls in Action teachers. I really give them a lot of credit for helping me. Of course, my mom and dad were Christians, and they were part of that too.”  |

| The Interviewee who Gave the Response | The Statement Regarding a Favorable View of their Discipleship as a New Believer  |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Church G Staff Member 2               | “I had a healthy discipleship experience when I was a new believer, because my dad was a Southern Baptist pastor. I was connected already in Sunday school and Royal Ambassadors. They provided me with the <i>Survival Kit</i> for new believers, which was a common thing back then for kids who had come to Christ.” |
| Church G Female Church Member         | “My parents were precious Christians. I was enveloped in discipleship from birth.”  |
| Church G Male Church Member           | “There was a dear friend of mine, who happened to be our minister of students at the church where I was saved, who immediately took me under his wing. It was on an informal basis, (but) he just befriended me. For about two years, he walked me down a road of discipleship that was not structured or formal.       |
| Church H Pastor                       | “My experience was basically conversational. I spent time with three other Christian youth.”  |
| Church H Female Church Member         | “I went to the Billy Graham Crusade called Yes '73. I decided that I was going to go. I was 15 years old and I went with people I did not know. I stayed there a week, and that was my first discipleship training.”  |

Continuing on with the understanding that all of the respondents perceived themselves as people who did the work of disciple-makers, it was an interesting finding that there were sixteen interviewees held unfavorable views of their discipleship as a new believer. Even though those respondents held unfavorable views of their discipleship as a new believer, they were perceived as faithful disciple-makers. See Table 4 for excerpts from their interview transcripts which show the unfavorable views.

**Table 4: Respondents who Held an Unfavorable View of their Discipleship as a New Believer from the Analysis of Interview Question 4**

| The Interviewee who Gave the Response | The Statement Regarding an Unfavorable View of their Discipleship as a New Believer  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Church A Pastor                       | “Unfortunately, I was not discipled as a new believer... As I look back on my church where I grew up, I do not know that discipleship was emphasized.”   |
| Church A Staff Member 1               | “I could not tell you that there was any one-on-one type of discipleship.”   |
| Church A Staff Member 2               | “I never was truly discipled from a standpoint of a mentor/mentee role.”   |
| Church A Female Church Member         | “I do not think there was any really. No one came along beside me and tried to disciple me. I was just a new member at a little country church at that time.”  |
| Church A Male Church Member           | “There was not any. I was not raised in church. My parents did not go to church.”  |
| Church B Pastor                       | “I was pretty much on my own in the sense that nobody got one-on-one with me.”   |
| Church B Staff Member 2               | “From a discipleship standpoint, other than going to Sunday school on Sunday morning and going to the youth group on Wednesday night, there was no real active discipleship when I initially got saved.” |
| Church D Staff Member 1               | “As far as actually being discipled, I would say that I was not. I guess, in a way, I was, but not truly discipled.”   |
| Church D Female Church Member         | “There really was no discipleship. I did not start growing as a Christian until (13 years later) when I rededicated my life.”  |
| Church D Male Church Member           | “An initial, structured discipleship thing never happened.”  |

| The Interviewee who Gave the Response | The Statement Regarding an Unfavorable View of their Discipleship as a New Believer  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Church E Female Church Member         | “It was on my own.”  |
| Church F Pastor                       | “I grew up in a church where they preached the gospel. If you are lost, then you need Jesus. You need to be saved. Once you got saved, it was like go to first base, turn right, go to the dugout, and wait on the rapture.” |
| Church G Pastor                       | “I would describe it as weak to virtually nonexistent.”  |
| Church G Staff Member 1               | “As a new believer, there was not much discipleship.”  |
| Church H Staff Member 2               | “That has been something that I am disappointed in. I did not have that (while) growing up. We had the normal Sunday school and an occasional Sunday night or weeknight Bible study.”  |
| Church H Male Church Member           | “I really did not have any support system to appreciate what that meant.”  |

**Common Factor 2.** A second common factor was that the traditional churches researched for this dissertation offered a multiplicity of traditional discipleship-based classes. The classes may go by different names such as Sunday school, small groups, or discipleship groups, but each class offered an experience within the boundaries of discipleship. See Table 5 for excerpts from the interview transcripts which show a multiplicity of discipleship-based classes.

**Table 5: Multiplicity of Discipleship-Based Classes**

| The Interviewee who Gave the Response | The Interview Question which Prompted the Response | The Statement regarding the Multiplicity of Discipleship-Based Classes   |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Church A Pastor                       | Interview Question 5                               | “There is nothing wrong with [traditional Sunday night studies], but we are trying to go in the direction of personal discipleship and reproducible groups.”   |
| Church A Pastor                       | Interview Question 6                               | “As a church, we want to see the discipleship cycle going.”  |
| Church A Pastor                       | Interview Question 8                               | “My group meets on Sunday evenings at five o’clock...Our music minister’s group meets on Friday mornings... Our youth minister has been meeting with a group on Monday nights...Our associate pastor meets with a group on Monday afternoons...There are also a couple of ladies groups which meet.” |
| Church B Pastor                       | Interview Question 8                               | “We have some small groups that we try to get folks plugged into. It is not just Sunday school. We have some small groups of folks that are meeting around town, especially our men.”  |
| Church B Female Church Member         | Interview Question 5                               | “I teach a ladies Sunday school class...I do a Bible class (at a senior adult day care)...I also meet with some ladies for prayer.”  |

| The Interviewee who Gave the Response | The Interview Question which Prompted the Response | The Statement regarding the Multiplicity of Discipleship-Based Classes   |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Church B Male Church Member           | Interview Question 5                               | "I am an adult couples Sunday school class teacher...I teach Evangelism Explosion for our church...Upward Basketball."   |
| Church C Pastor                       | Interview Question 8                               | "We have got several groups that meet."  |
| Church C Pastor                       | Interview Question 9                               | "In the summer we do a book series on Wednesday nights. I just take a book written from a Christian perspective, and...I teach one chapter each week through the summer."                    |
| Church C Male Church Member           | Interview Question 5                               | "...men's study group here at our church."   |
| Church D Pastor                       | Interview Question 8                               | "You have to be in a community of other believers. Some people call this Sunday school, and some people call that small groups. It is a requirement that you be in a small group of people." |
| Church D Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 6                               | "We would meet, read books, and study God's word."   |
| Church D Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 9                               | "I have done several studies with our church on Wednesday nights through some different books that lead us to a smaller group setting."  |

| The Interviewee who Gave the Response | The Interview Question which Prompted the Response | The Statement regarding the Multiplicity of Discipleship-Based Classes  |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Church D Staff Member 2               | Interview Question 8                               | “We try to get them involved in a small group. That is basically our Sunday school. We try to get them plugged in with a group.”  |
| Church D Female Church Member         | Interview Question 5                               | “(It helps to be) involved with youth program mission trips.”   |
| Church D Female Church Member         | Interview Question 6                               | “We make sure that both Sunday school rooms are invited to all activities.”   |
| Church E Pastor                       | Interview Question 8                               | “(My wife and I) have been discipling together within the congregation. We have selected a couple of young new believers.”  |
| Church E Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 8                               | “We do life groups on Sunday nights.”   |
| Church E Staff Member 2               | Interview Question 8                               | “We do a lot of cutting edge stuff in children’s ministry, but if there is a better way to learn God’s word than Bible drills, then I want to see it.”  |
| Church E Female Church Member         | Interview Question 5                               | “I have probably led 15 Bible studies. I do (well) with leading Bible studies, and every time we have a Bible study I attend it. I really love the Bible teachings and Bible studies in a small group.” |
| Church F Pastor                       | Interview Question 6                               | “We emphasize our life groups and our discipleship studies. We offer a variety of different studies.”   |



| The Interviewee who Gave the Response | The Interview Question which Prompted the Response | The Statement regarding the Multiplicity of Discipleship-Based Classes   |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Church F Pastor                       | Interview Question 8                               | <p>“It is very important to get them in a small group. That is where they can find people to challenge them and help them in their walk with God. They are going to make new friends, have fellowship, and study the word of God together... We try to do is get them into a women’s Bible study or a men’s Bible study... If someone wants to do something that lines up with the Book, then we are going to give them every opportunity and resource to do that... To disciple and to help our life group teachers, we will have other life groups.”</p> |
| Church F Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 8                               | <p>“My wife and I go to (a life group) on Tuesday nights... We have three hours of life groups: 8:00, 9:00, and 10:30 on Sunday mornings.”</p>   |
| Church G Pastor                       | Interview Question 8                               | <p>“We are committed to a workshop style on Sunday nights. We have a variety of workshops. We will have anywhere from 4 to 6 different workshops to motivate people to pick or choose a track. Within that one particular track they will grow in their personal walk. We encourage them to build accountability with other members.”</p>  |

| The Interviewee who Gave the Response | The Interview Question which Prompted the Response | The Statement regarding the Multiplicity of Discipleship-Based Classes   |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Church G Staff Member 2               | Interview Question 8                               | “There is daily Bible reading, prayer, and commenting on the reading. I am also involved in three different small group Bible studies... I organized and started a men’s mentoring program at our church. It involves 11 mentors who are elders or former elders from our church.” |
| Church G Female Church Member         | Interview Question 8                               | “We try to have people in the word daily.”   |
| Church G Male Church Member           | Interview Question 8                               | “I invited the men in our life group, starting about seven years ago, to come to our home on Friday mornings at 6:30 for breakfast and Bible study.”   |
| Church H Pastor                       | Interview Question 5                               | “I also mentor a men’s group. I intentionally focus on the guys who are new Christians or unengaged in ministry and leadership in the church. I spend 12 weeks at a time with these guys while focusing on the basics.”  |
| Church H Pastor                       | Interview Question 8                               | “I call it Master’s Men. The Master wants us to be godly men while living the life of a man.   |

| The Interviewee who Gave the Response | The Interview Question which Prompted the Response | The Statement regarding the Multiplicity of Discipleship-Based Classes  |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Church H Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 8                               | “What I try to do as minister of education is find courses or studies that speak to where we are as a church right now. It may be where some people have talked to me about where they are struggling.” |
| Church H Female Church Member         | Interview Question 4                               | “From the beginning, I memorized Scripture. It is a passion of my life, and that is why I teach Bible drill.”   |

**Common Factor 3.** A third common factor was the use of technological aides concerning discipleship. Traditional MBC churches appeared to use every technological advantage possible to assist in making disciples. The interviewees mentioned writing cards, calling others via telephone, text messaging, group text messaging, and apps such as Group Me and Marco Polo. See Table 6 for excerpts from the interview transcripts which show the use of technological aides concerning discipleship.

**Table 6: Technological Aides Concerning Discipleship**

| The Interviewee who Gave the Response | The Interview Question which Prompted the Response | The Statement regarding Technological Aides Concerning Discipleship   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Church A Male Church Member           | Interview Question 5                               | “We are in a group text where we share. We post every morning about our Bible study and what we have read.” |

| The Interviewee who Gave the Response | The Interview Question which Prompted the Response | The Statement regarding Technological Aides Concerning Discipleship  |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Church B Female Church Member         | Interview Question 5                               | "I also meet with some ladies for prayer. We did meet once a week, but this year it has been mostly by phone."   |
| Church D Female Church Member         | Interview Question 6                               | "In my Sunday school small group, we have the Group Me app. We send verses to the girls in our group."   |
| Church F Male Church Member           | Interview Question 9                               | "With the technology that is out there now, you can send just a random text message. You can use email and text messages. You can send them a Scripture, and it will boost them up."     |
| Church G Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 5                               | "Part of my discipleship is being with five other guys via <i>Marco Polo</i> ."  |
| Church G Staff Member 2               | Interview Question 5                               | "I am also using the <i>Marco Polo</i> app to read and pray with my brothers, their wives, and my nieces and nephews. We use <i>Marco Polo</i> to do morning devotions."                 |
| Church G Male Church Member           | Interview Question 8                               | "I used <i>Man in the Mirror</i> by Patrick Morley. We would watch the video on TV of Patrick Morley's weekly Bible presentation, discuss it, and have a prayer time for about an hour." |

## Research Question 2

The second research question was “what are the common factors which are consistently found in pastors who have personal discipleship practices in the sample group?” Only one common factor was discovered regarding pastors who have personal discipleship practices. This common factor that the researcher identified was a sense of resilience with a mixture of humility. The pastors who were interviewed for this research did not have all of the answers concerning discipleship, and many admitted to failing. Even though the failure was part of their discipleship past, they did not give up. They pressed on and tried again by allowing their discipleship efforts to change, evolve, and grow. Ironically, the pastors themselves and their churches did not identify common factors within the practice of pastors that produce disciple-making results that are transferring from pastor to church staff and church members. See Table 7 for excerpts from the interview transcripts which show a sense of resilience and humility.

**Table 7: The Pastor’s Resilience and Humility**

| The Interviewee who Gave the Response | The Interview Question which Prompted the Response | The Statement regarding Resilience and Humility   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Church A Pastor                       | Interview Question 5                               | “Even though I have been a Christian for 53 years and I have been here at this church for 21 years, I am still learning. I am sure (that) I am not where I need to be.” |
| Church A Pastor                       | Interview Question 6                               | “I think that disciples make disciples. If you are going to be a discipler, then you are going to reproduce. I have got a long way to go.”                              |

| The Interviewee who Gave the Response | The Interview Question which Prompted the Response | The Statement regarding Resilience and Humility  |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Church B Pastor                       | Interview Question 5                               | “I am not there yet. It is an ongoing process for me. Every morning, when I am in the word and I am alone with the Lord, he still weeds my garden. He still points out so much of my life that does not look like him. It is a process for me.”          |
| Church B Pastor                       | Interview Question 6                               | “One (is that) I have a long way to go. If I think about it in human terms, it seems impossible that I will ever get to where I need to be.”   |
| Church C Pastor                       | Interview Question 5                               | “Ongoing. Growing. I do a lot of reading and I meet with some guys on a regular basis that help keep me accountable, and I help keep them accountable. At 64 years old, (my discipleship) is ongoing.”   |
| Church C Pastor                       | Interview Question 8                               | “Our discipleship (pastor) meets with a group on a regular basis, and he tries to meet with some guys for a year. He asked those guys to pick out some (other) guys and meet with them. I will tell you that that sounds better on paper than it works.” |

| The Interviewee who Gave the Response | The Interview Question which Prompted the Response | The Statement regarding Resilience and Humility   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Church D Pastor                       | Interview Question 6                               | “If the people that you are preaching to do not know you love them and if you do not know you love them, then over time that will absolutely wreck any discipleship strategy.”  |
| Church F Pastor                       | Interview Question 5                               | “We are challenging one another individually and in our walks with God...We are continually challenging each other.”  |
| Church H Pastor                       | Interview Question 6                               | “I have learned several things. One is action precedes attitude. When my perspective and attitude grow negative and numb, then the only way that I am able to change that is to take action. Action precedes attitude.”   |
| Church H Pastor                       | Interview Question 9                               | “I think that the single greatest challenge in the local church is meaningfully discipling believers. I think the most pressing need in the local church is for those who have been discipled to continue to disciple others. Most people take a discipleship course, they check off (that box), and look for something else. The challenge for me as a pastor and as an individual believer is to make my learning of Christ an everyday renewal.” |

### Research Question 3

The third research question was “what, if any, perceived influence is there between the personal discipleship practices of pastors on the discipleship practices of the MBC church representatives in the sample group?” In some shape, form, or fashion each interview question, from interview question 3 through interview question 9, had at least one concept of pastoral influence. Pastors greatly influence the discipleship practices of the MBC church representatives in the sample group. See Table 8 for excerpts from the interview transcripts which show the perceived influence between the pastors and the MBC church representatives.

**Table 8: Pastoral Influence**

| The Interviewee who gave the Response | The Interview Question which prompted the Response | The Statement regarding Pastoral Influence  |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Church A Pastor                       | Interview Question 4                               | “I had some good mentors and some good pastors.”  |
| Church A Pastor                       | Interview Question 7                               | “I remember my mother saying that if I wanted to know what a pastor was like, then I should watch him.” |
| Church B Pastor                       | Interview Question 4                               | “I grew up in the church, and my dad was a pastor.”   |
| Church B Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 4                               | “That is how it started as a 10-year-old, with the pastor in the new believer’s class.”                 |
| Church B Male Church Member           | Interview Question 4                               | “I had a good pastor that taught the word in Spirit and in truth. That is how I grew.”                  |
| Church B Male Church Member           | Interview Question 7                               | “(Our pastor’s) vision is for everyone to go on at least one mission trip in their lifetime.”           |



| The Interviewee who gave the Response | The Interview Question which prompted the Response | The Statement regarding Pastoral Influence  |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Church C Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 5                               | “My pastor and I have a great relationship of accountability.”  |
| Church C Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 8                               | “My pastor says you have got to meet people where they are to get them where they need to be.”                    |
| Church D Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 3                               | “My pastor identified (God’s call) in me.”  |
| Church D Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 5                               | “My pastor I knew that I was being called to the ministry.”   |
| Church D Female Church Member         | Interview Question 6                               | “Our pastor encourages us to be intentional and invite people.”   |
| Church D Male Church Member           | Interview Question 4                               | “(My pastor) never established a time for me to come by to talk... there was no follow up on his end.”            |
| Church D Male Church Member           | Interview Question 8                               | “Our pastor does a wonderful job of explaining and expounding (the passage).”                                     |
| Church E Staff Member 2               | Interview Question 7                               | “My pastor has been able to instill (an importance on prayer) in us, or at least in me, over the past 7 ½ years.” |
| Church E Male Church Member           | Interview Question 4                               | “I have had very good Sunday school teachers, youth ministers, and pastors throughout my life.”                   |
| Church E Male Church Member           | Interview Question 7                               | “From our pastor I have seen his love for people who are not members of our church.”                              |

| The Interviewee who gave the Response | The Interview Question which prompted the Response | The Statement regarding Pastoral Influence  |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Church F Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 4                               | "My dad was my pastor, so (he and my mom) were my spiritual guides."  |
| Church F Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 6                               | "The pastor that I serve with right now (11 years ago in a town hall meeting) made a statement that burdened my heart."   |
| Church F Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 7                               | "With my current pastor, (it) is seeing his examples of giving and prayer. I have heard my pastor name in prayer the people who have hurt him in the ministry." |
| Church F Staff Member 2               | Interview Question 4                               | "My pastor was our staff evangelist at the time, and he also took me under his wing."   |
| Church F Staff Member 2               | Interview Question 5                               | "Our pastor is our ultimate supervisor."  |
| Church F Staff Member 2               | Interview Question 9                               | "I would have a hard time knowing where my philosophy begins and where my pastor's ends, because I have such a close relationship with him."                    |
| Church F Female Church Member         | Interview Question 7                               | "You are loved by Jesus and you have to show love to others ...I learned that from ...my pastor."   |
| Church G Staff Member 2               | Interview Question 4                               | "I had a healthy discipleship experience when I was a new believer, because my dad was a Southern Baptist pastor."  |

| The Interviewee who gave the Response | The Interview Question which prompted the Response | The Statement regarding Pastoral Influence   |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Church G Staff Member 2               | Interview Question 7                               | “I would say what I have learned from my pastor is not to be controlling or domineering, but to be loyal and available.” |
| Church H Female Church Member         | Interview Question 5                               | “(About two years ago our pastor) challenged us to read one chapter in the book of John each day for 21 days.”           |
| Church H Female Church Member         | Interview Question 7                               | “The longest standing disciple-maker in my life is my pastor.”   |
| Church H Male Church Member           | Interview Question 5                               | “I would say (my experience of discipleship) is robust in character and reinforced by my pastor.”                        |

#### Research Question 4

The fourth research question was “what, if any, are the commonalities between the discipleship practices being employed among MBC church representatives in the sample group and the discipleship practices of their pastors?” Reflected in the interviews was the fact that traditional MBC churches seemed to incorporate the discipleship practices of their pastors. As many pastors shared about discipleship practices, they would interchange their practices with that of their churches. They were essentially the same. Church F Staff Member 2 said, “I would have a hard time knowing where my philosophy begins and where my pastor’s ends.” The researcher felt that statement could apply to every MBC church which was researched. The Panel of Evaluators assisted the researcher with the analyzation of this data. The Panel of Evaluators looked for common themes and surmised their findings in letter form. To answer this research question, the researcher will heavily consider the comments from the Panel of

Evaluators (see Appendix O for the complete Panel of Evaluators Findings). See Table 9 for excerpts from the Panel of Evaluators which show commonalities between the church representatives and their pastors.

**Table 9: Commonalities between the MBC Church Representatives and the Pastors**

| The Church Evaluation | The Statement(s) of the Evaluator Concerning Commonalities   |
|-----------------------|--|
| Church A Evaluation   | <p>“All of the respondents directly or indirectly mentioned the need for relationships in any discipleship methodology.”</p> <p>“While none of the respondents felt disciplined as a new believer through intentional relationships, each one was actively discipling and being disciplined through personal relationships.”</p> <p>“A common topic with each respondent was the word ‘process.’ All five respondents directly or indirectly mentioned a process. Discipleship for these individuals included a process that enabled a new believer to mature in their relationship with Christ.</p> <p>“Another theme was ‘a personal quiet time’ involving Bible reading, prayer, and accountability.”</p> |

| The Church Evaluation | The Statement(s) of the Evaluator Concerning Existing Relationships   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Church B Evaluation   | <p>“Four of the five respondents stated that Sunday school was part of their personal discipleship.”</p> <p>“A common thread found in all five responses was some form of the word “study.” Discipleship for those respondents included studying God’s word.”</p>   |
| Church C Evaluation   | <p>“All of those interviewed stated that they are meeting with others, and this is resulting in accountability and growth in their Christian lives.”</p>  |
| Church D Evaluation   | <p>“Church D Pastor’s statements are echoed through the other interviews.”</p> <p>“Church D Male Member and Church D Female Member provided statements similarly to the pastor whether it was about the Gospel being the starting place or making small group participants participate.”</p>  |
| Church E Evaluation   | <p>“They each spoke of the importance to minister to others. It seems evident that there is excellent communication within this church staff, and that the importance of discipleship is being transferred to the congregation. There is a mutual understanding that discipleship moves from one’s self to the spiritual growth of others.”</p> |

| The Church Evaluation | The Statement(s) of the Evaluator Concerning Existing Relationships  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Church F Evaluation   | <p>“The Pastor uses small group meetings with staff for discipleship. The two staff members use personal time to disciple. The members use personal time and small group time for discipleship development.”</p> <p>“The pastor’s emphasis on discipleship equating to evangelism and growth seems to resonate with staff and members. Four of the five interviewees mention something about others, evangelism, and growth as part of what they are learning about discipleship.”</p>   |
| Church G Evaluation   | <p>“All interviewees had positive views of their present discipleship process. They all mentioned the basics of studying the Bible and praying. Most mentioned that others (peers, children, and spouse) were involved in their ongoing discipleship.”</p> <p>“All of their processes were people intensive. Relationships seem to be the key to their successful disciple making.”</p> <p>“The staff and members agree with the Pastor’s statement that keeping making disciples the main thing will be the greatest disappointment or challenge to the pastor’s work.”</p> |

| The Church Evaluation | The Statement(s) of the Evaluator Concerning Existing Relationships  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Church H Evaluation   | <p>“The evaluator observed that each respondent utilized some method of discipleship that included a relational component.”</p> <p>“All five respondents directly or indirectly mentioned discipleship as a way of life.”</p> <p>“The topic of accountability occurred directly or indirectly with each respondent multiple times through the interview.”</p> <p>“The Pastor shared Bible memorization as a part of his preparation for preaching. The other respondents shared indirectly how meditating on Scripture enables them to grow in their faith.”</p> |

### Researcher’s Additional Findings

In addition to the Panel of Evaluators work, the researcher added cumulative findings throughout the entire study. One interesting fact about the following findings was that the researcher did not ask any specific questions concerning the results. The commonality of the phrases or individual words led the researcher to the discovery. Through analyzing the data and placing the data into “concepts,” the researcher was able to further document the practices of discipleship. See Table 10 for excerpts from the interview transcripts which show the findings concentrated on the concepts of “accountability,” “pouring,” and statements regarding what “discipleship is.”

**Table 10: The Concept of “Accountability”**

| The Interviewee who gave the Response | The Interview Question which prompted the Response | The Statement regarding the Concept of “Accountability”   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Church B Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 8                               | “That is what I have been trying to do with the folks who want to learn, be stretched, and be held accountable.”                    |
| Church C Pastor                       | Interview Question 5                               | “I meet with some guys on a regular basis that help keep me accountable, and I help keep them accountable.”                         |
| Church D Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 6                               | “You can be held accountable by other people who are walking with the Lord, and you can hold them accountable.”                     |
| Church D Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 7                               | “(It is about) being held accountable, and that is the best discipleship practice.”   |
| Church D Female Church Member         | Interview Question 5                               | “It holds me accountable, because I want to be an example to my youth.”   |
| Church D Female Church Member         | Interview Question 9                               | “It is about trying to hold each other accountable.”  |
| Church G Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 6                               | “I really believe that discipleship is simply living life with others, pointing them to Jesus, and holding each other accountable.” |



**Table 11: The Concept of “Pouring”**

| The Interviewee who gave the Response | The Interview Question which prompted the Response | The Statement regarding the Concept of “Pouring”   |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Church B Staff Member 2               | Interview Question 8                               | “You cannot just take in, but you have to pour out.”   |
| Church D Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 6                               | “There were some guys on staff here, some guys in this church, and some older men who invested in me as they saw something in me before I ever saw it myself. (They) pulled me into some groups studying God’s word and poured into me.” |
| Church D Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 7                               | “That is what worked in my life, because people poured into me.”   |
| Church D Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 9                               | “I think that spending time pouring into people through the discipleship process does not happen by itself.”   |
| Church E Pastor                       | Interview Question 6                               | “Maturity comes along with it as you are able to pour into other people’s lives as you multiply disciples.”  |
| Church E Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 7                               | “(Another person who was a BSU director) poured his life into some small discipleship groups. He poured his life intentionally through relationships into students.”   |
| Church F Pastor                       | Interview Question 6                               | “We are looking at every angle which we might have an opportunity to pour into people.”  |
| Church F Pastor                       | Interview Question 7                               | “It is pouring into them.”   |

| The Interviewee who gave the Response | The Interview Question which prompted the Response | The Statement regarding the Concept of “Pouring”   |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| Church F Pastor                       | Interview Question 8                               | “These men will take a young man that does not really have a (male role model) and pour into their lives.”   |
| Church F Pastor                       | Interview Question 9                               | “It is about the kingdom, loving people, and pouring the gospel into them.”                                  |
| Church H Pastor                       | Interview Question 4                               | “We learned a lot, because the older believers were pouring their minds and thoughts into the younger guys.” |
| Church H Pastor                       | Interview Question 5                               | “I pour my heart into them through Scripture and practical life lessons for 12 days.”                        |

**Table 12: The Concept of What “Discipleship Is”**

| The Interviewee who gave the Response | The Interview Question which prompted the Response | The Statement regarding the “Discipleship Is...”                  |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Church A Pastor                       | Interview Question 8                               | “... really kind of haphazard”                                    |
| Church A Pastor                       | Interview Question 9                               | “... a process for me and us”                                     |
| Church A Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 9                               | “... intentional”   |
| Church B Pastor                       | Interview Question 9                               | “... trying to ... give them the tools to get to the mountaintop” |
| Church C Staff Member 2               | Interview Question 7                               | “... the main thing that Jesus has called us to”                  |
| Church C Staff Member 2               | Interview Question 9                               | “... loving people (and) teaching them how to follow Jesus”       |

| The Interviewee who gave the Response | The Interview Question which prompted the Response | The Statement regarding the “Discipleship Is...”  |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Church E Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 5                               | “... a priority”  |
| Church E Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 6                               | “... not always intentional”  |
| Church E Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 8                               | “... mentoring”   |
| Church F Pastor                       | Interview Question 7                               | “... building people in the Lord”   |
| Church F Pastor                       | Interview Question 9                               | “... about building people... about the kingdom, loving people, and pouring the gospel into them...about the reality of who Jesus is” |
| Church F Staff Member 2               | Interview Question 7                               | “... geared in knowing what God’s word says for you and wants for you”  |
| Church G Pastor                       | Interview Question 7                               | “... not new”   |
| Church G Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 6                               | “... simply living life with others, pointing them to Jesus, and holding each other accountable”                                      |
| Church H Pastor                       | Interview Question 5                               | “... in giving”   |
| Church H Staff Member 1               | Interview Question 6                               | “... learning and, at the same time, passing it on”   |
| Church H Female Church Member         | Interview Question 9                               | “... necessary”   |
| Church H Male Church Member           | Interview Question 8                               | “... a sacrifice, (if it) is done well”   |

### **Evaluation of the Research Design**

This qualitative, interview-based research design called for a naturalistic design to the research to be conducted to be descriptive concerning the discipleship practices of pastors, staff members, and church members. This qualitative research described the personal discipleship practices of pastors through interviewing pastors via telephone, and then comparing those practices to the practices of two staff members, and two church members of those same pastors. Within this study, a standardized measurement of discipleship effectiveness was not utilized, therefore each pastor was responsible to identify their individual perception of effectiveness. As a result, there were no specific numbers or unbiased assessment that could be used to measure spiritual or discipleship effectiveness. Rather, each pastor's perceptions were instrumental in observing this phenomenon. Common patterns and themes emerged throughout the interview transcripts, thus better understanding the pastors' roles in discipleship.

The researcher investigated the commonality of responses from those involved in the study and compared the data of those reoccurring themes. The two variables were the personal discipleship practices of pastors and the discipleship practices of MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400. The study used a proportionate random sampling technique. This method of sampling was employed because the number of participants from each subgroup varied. There were 42 traditional MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400 according to the 2017 associational statistics. The researcher conducted telephone interviews with eight randomly selected pastoral interviewees. The researcher included four representatives from each participating pastor's church which included two staff members and two church members at large. There may be a variation in the number of

participants from each subgroup however, for data comparison purposes a minimum of four representatives were interviewed.

The researcher consulted the 2017 MBC statistics, called many of the applicable churches which met the statistical benchmark, shared a brief personal profile and an overview of the dissertation research with the pastor, enlisted eight traditional churches for research (a ninth church was secured in the case of an unexpected withdrawal, but it was not needed), emailed personalized recruitment letters and consent forms to each recruited individual in the enlisted churches, received signed consent forms from each recruited individual in the enlisted churches, interviewed by telephone each recruited individual in the enlisted churches, and emailed an interview transcription to each interviewed individual in the enlisted churches. A panel of evaluators was utilized by the researcher for assistance in developing common themes. Each evaluator completed a period of training led by the researcher. See Appendix F for the Panel of Evaluators' Training Standards. Each evaluator operated under the same analysis system of identifying common themes through comparing questions four through nine of each completed church study. Each evaluator was referred to as Evaluator 1, Evaluator 2, Evaluator 3, and Evaluator 4. Each completed church study evaluation was submitted in the research. Furthermore, the researcher's goals of maintaining complete trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability were sustained.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter will conclude the dissertation by examining the purpose statement, research questions, research conclusions, implications, and applications, research limits, and further research.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative, interview-based-study is to explore the personal discipleship practices of pastors and compare those practices to the personal discipleship practices of traditional MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400 by collecting qualitative data from pastors, other staff members, and church members.

### **Research Questions**

**RQ1.** What are the common factors which are consistently found in MBC churches which offer personal discipleship groups?

**RQ2.** What are the common factors which are consistently found in pastors who have personal discipleship practices in the sample group?

**RQ3.** What, if any, perceived influence is there between the personal discipleship practices of pastors on the discipleship practices of the MBC church representatives in the sample group?

**RQ4.** What, if any, are the commonalities between the discipleship practices being employed among MBC church representatives in the sample group and the discipleship practices of their pastors?

### **Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications**

The research questions were used specifically to answer the issues in the purpose statement. Two issues within the purpose statement were dissected by the research questions. The first issue was to explore the personal discipleship practices of traditional pastors. Interview Question 5 unambiguously discussed the “current experience of discipleship” in each pastor’s life. There were some commonalities throughout the responses such as prayer, Bible reading,

memorization, etc., but the discipleship direction was so diverse that the individual personal practices were hard to bring to a unified point. The second issue was to compare the personal discipleship practices of traditional pastors to the personal discipleship practices of traditional MBC churches. Likewise, determining the personal discipleship practices of MBC churches through the representatives for this study was equally difficult. However, through meticulous evaluation, on behalf of the researcher and the Panel of Evaluators, the personal discipleship practices of the pastors were readily compared to that of the personal discipleship practices of MBC churches. This research exhibited links from the pastors' discipleship practices to the discipleship practices of the MBC churches.

The research questions were also used specifically to answer the issues in the statement of the problem. There were multiple conclusions and implications due to the multifaceted nature of the statement of the problem. The researcher separated the actual statement of the problem into adaptable segments of information.

The first segment of information was the question "Is there a misunderstanding among pastoral leadership with regards to discipleship?" As previously stated in the conclusions concerning the purpose statement, there was a lack of unified responses. Every pastor, and furthermore every person interviewed for this study, was perceived to be active in the methods of discipleship, yet each pastor was perceivably active in a different discipleship direction. The same could be stated about each individual church ministry. Each was effective yet different. Again, there were no specific numbers or unbiased assessment that could be used to measure spiritual or discipleship effectiveness. Rather, each pastor's perceptions were instrumental in observing this phenomenon. As previously stated, Smith (2014) believes that the decline in church growth is due to "the different approaches to discipleship that leaders are taking both

corporately and personally” (p. 1). It is a possibility that discipleship has become so varied between organizations, denominations, and individual churches that it has lost its perceived effectiveness. Respectively, with the different discipleship directions actively influencing each church and each person, then misunderstandings among pastoral leadership regarding discipleship could easily happen. There is no set standard within either the SBC or the MBC concerning discipleship as it relates to the pastor. If there were standardized discipleship measurements, then there is a possibility that pastors who perceived themselves and their churches as effective in discipleship would actually be found as non-effective in that category.

The second segment of information was when the researcher stated: “that spiritual formation is the goal of both discipleship and corporate worship.” Understanding the tenor of the interviews led the researcher to believe that neither discipleship nor corporate worship may be enough individually. The hope is that together both discipleship and corporate worship are the spiritual paradigms that lead to mature Christianity. As previously stated, discipleship and corporate worship lead to the product of spiritual formation through different avenues. This research demonstrated that the lives of maturing believers are enhanced greatly through both corporate worship and personal discipleship.

The third segment of information was that both discipleship and corporate worship meet the “needs in the lives of Christians and work together.” The lives of the interviewees were spiritually shaped by both discipleship and corporate worship. Hardison (2019) specified that “church programs (sermons, large group gatherings, worship events, retreats, and the like) are great platforms for building and growing faith. However, producing authentic dedicated believers of the faith requires intentional relational discipleship in conjunction with existing church programs” (p. 6). This research demonstrated that Hardison’s previous comments are



supported by practical church concepts. The interviewees often mentioned the concrete use of worship events as platforms or springboards to discipleship. The juxtaposition of that idea was mentioned by Church F Pastor in Interview Question 8 as he mentioned that a Tuesday night small group session may be the first spiritual exploration for an individual. This research proved that spiritual needs are met by both discipleship and corporate worship.

The fourth segment of information was the statement/question which was posed as follows: "pastors are essential to the worship services of their churches, but are they also essential to the discipleship processes of their churches?" As referenced in Table 8, pastors are essential to the discipleship processes of their churches. The leadership of the pastoral interviewees had a profound perceived effect on the total environment of the church. The pastor may have only been involved with a small group of disciples, but the pastor's influence on discipleship had a rippling effect across the wake of the church. Therefore, the pastor was able to guide the researcher in understanding the pastor's individual perception of discipleship effectiveness.

The fifth segment of information was that "Christian leaders should never stop learning, so the educational process of discipleship should never stop." Table 7 confirmed that Christian leaders view themselves as continual learners. Many of the interviewees were aged people with decades of Christian service on their hypothetical résumés. Even though each person had grown and matured in Christ, there was still a hunger to grow more and to learn more.

The sixth segment of information was highlighted by a quote from Samra (2006) that "Paul expected the church to play a role in accomplishing the maturational aspect of his apostolic commission" (p. 152). Table 5 referenced the plurality of discipleship-based classes offered by the traditional MBC churches in the research group. From the perspective of the researcher, no

one viewed his or her personal discipleship practices apart from the work of the church. However, each person seemed to view his or her personal discipleship practices in conjunction with the work of the church. The churches in this study undeniably played a role in accomplishing the task of discipleship. Therefore, the work of the church and the work of the pastor are uniquely intertwined in the work of discipleship.

The last segment of information was that the researcher previously stated “most likely, discipleship is happening in traditional MBC churches and among MBC pastors.” This research design discovered that the previous statement was accurate. There were not two churches that were identical in their discipleship practices, but every church hungered and thirsted for discipleship. The pastor of a group of believers “is the key figure to the discipleship process within the local church” (Smith, 2014, p. 1). The pastors who were interviewed for this research were concerned with the spiritual formation of others.

The implications of this research were formidable for the practical aspects of discipleship. The research’s range covered multiple traditional churches and multiple people within each church. Discipleship was perceived to be occurring through the ministries of traditional MBC churches and the perception of discipleship was firmly shaped through the practices of the pastors. The researcher found a gap, in the existing literature, surrounding the role which pastors played in the bigger picture of discipleship. This research cast a considerable amount of light onto that subject.

The applications of this research may be helpful to traditional churches, traditional long-tenured pastors, discipleship leaders, and Sunday school teachers, among others. This research revealed what church leaders do in a step-by-step way with their pupils of discipleship. Traditional churches and church leaders may find a new avenue for discipleship within these

pages. This research was conducted by interviewing people associated with traditional MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400. Therefore, traditional churches with an average Sunday school attendance of less than 400 may have difficulty in application.

A potential modification for the research design would be to modify the number of individuals to be interviewed from each church. It appears to the researcher that more information could be gathered about the pastor's role in discipleship if that number were to be modified. Another potential modification for the research design would be to study traditional churches with an average Sunday school attendance between 300 and 400. Such a shift in Sunday school size may result in a different traditional discipleship model.

### **Research Limits**

A major limitation of this study is the small sample size. There are over 2,000 MBC churches, and the initial delimitation process pared down the potential number of researchable churches to 42. After further delimitation, the researcher studied only eight traditional MBC churches with long-tenured pastors.

### **Further Research**

Further research may include but is not limited to the following ideas. One idea for further research is the individual technologies used in discipleship. As often as technology reinterprets or reinvents itself, its use in discipleship will be modified. Text messaging and cellular apps were common findings in this research. If a study focused on the individual technologies used in discipleship, then many more possibilities may be discovered.

A second idea for further research is seminary studies and the seminary degrees earned by the pastors and staff members. An interesting angle on discipleship and seminary studies

would be to look into difficulties caused by attempting to implement practical measures that were foreign to either the pastors or the staff members due to their seminary alma maters. An example may be if one seminary's emphasis was different from another seminary's emphasis. An interesting angle on discipleship and the seminary degrees earned by the pastors and staff members would be to gauge the overall depth of the church staff's seminary degrees. Do the degrees within the staff complement each other's work?

A third idea for further research is the mentorship of non-ministerial disciples. Do ministerial disciple-makers have a ministry which is perceived to be more effective when discipling other ministers, or do ministerial disciple-makers have a ministry which is perceived to be more effective when discipling non-ministerial people? Also, is the approach of the ministerial disciple-makers the same or different depending upon the subject of the discipleship?

A final idea for further research is the discipleship partnership between pastors and staff members. Does ministry work best when the discipleship aspects of the pastor are independent of those of the staff members? This research seemed to show commonalities between the discipleship ministries of the pastor, the staff members, the church members, and the churches. If a future researcher could find discipleship ministries which were more uniquely independent, then valuable research could be conducted.

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## APPENDIX A

### Interview Data and Research Question Analysis

|                         |  |   |  |   |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Research Question       | RQ1.What are the common factors which are consistently found in MBC churches which offer personal discipleship groups? | RQ2.What are the common factors which are consistently found in pastors who have personal discipleship practices in the sample group? | RQ3.What, if any, perceived influence is there between the personal discipleship practices of pastors on the discipleship practices of the MBC church representatives in the sample group? | RQ4.What, if any, are the commonalities between the discipleship practices being employed among MBC church representatives in the sample group and the discipleship practices of their pastors? |
| Data Source             | RQ1 was answered by comparing the data received from all interviewees concerning questions four through nine.          | RQ2 was answered by comparing only the data received from pastors concerning interview questions four through nine.                   | RQ3 was answered by comparing the data received from individual completed church studies while focusing on what the staff members and church members said concerning their pastors.        | RQ4 was answered by reviewing and compiling the data received from the Panel of Evaluators.   |
| Location of RQ Analysis | RQ1 was answered beginning on p. 80.   | RQ2 was answered beginning on p. 93.  | RQ3 was answered beginning on p. 96.   | RQ4 was answered beginning on p. 99.  |

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Participants' Rights**

The participants' rights are as follows:

1. Each participant will be treated with upmost respect and dignity,
2. Each participants' voluntary service will be greatly appreciated.
3. Each participant will be free to leave the study or withdraw from the study at any time.
4. All participants will be "offered an advance copy of the current study before it [will be] published" (Rainer, 2017, p. 109).
5. If a participating pastor withdraws from the study, then the other participants from that church will be withdrawn as well.
6. If a participating staff member or a participating church member withdraws from the study, then another participant from either the staff of the church or the membership of the church will be sought to join the study.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Church Members' Selection Guide**

The selected pastors which accepted the terms of this study are asked to provide two church members for participation in this study. One church member is to be male, while the other church member is to be female. The selected church members should participate faithfully in the services of the church, be actively involved in discipleship, lead a Sunday school class or any of the synonymous groups listed in the Definition of Terms, and be a member of the church for at least three years.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Interview Questions**

The following set of interview questions will be used when interviewing the selected pastors:

1. How long have you been a Christian?
2. How many years have you served as a pastor?
3. How many years have you served your current church as a pastor?
4. How would you describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer?
5. How would you describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ?
6. How would you describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship?
7. How would you describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers?
8. How do you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith?
9. (The researcher will follow the suggestion put forth by Swaminathan & Mulvihill (2017) that “the interview [should] close with a question that allows participants to add information” (p. 45).) Is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship?

The following set of interview questions will be used when interviewing the selected staff members:

1. How long have you been a Christian?
2. How many years have you served alongside the pastor?

3. How many years have you served your current church?
4. How would you describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer?
5. How would you describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ?
6. How would you describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship?
7. How would you describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers?
8. How do you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith?
9. (The researcher will follow the suggestion put forth by Swaminathan & Mulvihill (2017) that “the interview [should] close with a question that allows participants to add information” (p. 45).) Is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship?

The following set of interview questions will be used when interviewing the selected church members:

1. How long have you been a Christian?
2. How many years have you attended church with the pastor?
3. How many church services do you attend per month?
4. How would you describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer?
5. How would you describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ?
6. How would you describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship?

7. How would you describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers?
8. How do you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith?
9. (The researcher will follow the suggestion put forth by Swaminathan & Mulvihill (2017) that “the interview [should] close with a question that allows participants to add information” (p. 45).) Is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship?



## **APPENDIX E**

### **Panel of Evaluators' Inclusion Criteria**

The panel of evaluators' inclusion criteria is as follows:

- 1.** A potential evaluator must have, at least, a Masters of Theology research degree.
- 2.** A potential evaluator must have at least ten years of pastoral ministry.
- 3.** Prior to the period of evaluation, each evaluator will complete a period of training which will be led by the researcher.
- 4.** Each evaluator will operate under the same analysis system of identifying common themes through comparing questions four through nine of each completed church study.
- 5.** In addition to the comparison of answers within each completed church study, each evaluator will compare the answers given for questions four through nine throughout the entire subset of their focused completed church studies. For example, the answers for questions four through nine given by each participant may be compared to other participants within the same subset. Each evaluator may review up to three completed church studies.
- 6.** The evaluators will be referred to as Evaluator 1, Evaluator 2, Evaluator 3, and Evaluator 4.

## **APPENDIX F**

### **Panel of Evaluators' Training Standards**

The email communication from the researcher to the Panel of Evaluators for their training is as follows (the researcher's Research Prospectus was also electronically attached):

Gentlemen,

Thanks for your assistance. This is basically a quick reference guide for your assistance. It may also be beneficial to acquaint yourself with my Research Design Synopsis which may be found on pages 61 and following in my (attached) Research Prospectus. Feel free to ask any questions. My cell number is \_\_\_\_\_ or my email is \_\_\_\_\_.

In Christ,  
Robert David Haynes

### **Panel of Evaluators Training Material**

God has a plan for the maturation process of every Christian. Ephesians 2:10 states that "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do." Discipleship is an instrumental part of God's plan for the development of his children. Discipleship is best understood to mean the process of creating "healthy spiritual leaders in Christ's likeness to reach the world for Christ" (Kim, 2010, p. 104).

Discipleship plays a very important role in both the lives of pastors and churches. Colebank (2017) states that "discipleship is the church's training ministry of reviving and training people to live a Spirit-directed life" (p. 1). This statement brings into view the fact that discipleship is not just for people who have been recently saved. Discipleship is for every Christian because every Christian seeks a life directed by the Holy Spirit. Colebank goes on to say "this researcher hypothesizes that a major cause of spiritual immaturity is the emphasis on studying the Bible with the goal of knowing information instead of a goal of obeying Christ's commands" (p. 4-5). Resulting from his research Colebank said that "greater fruitfulness is the anticipated result of obedience-oriented discipleship training that helps Christians understand their identity as an ambassador for Christ with a ministry and a message through whom the Spirit of God is working to transform the people around them in their sphere of influence at work, in their community, and at home" (p. 173). With this being the case, the emphasis of discipleship is not so much mental knowledge as it is functional obedience. The goal of discipleship is to retrain a person's actions toward the likeness of Christ.

Smith (2014) believes that the decline in church growth is due to "the different approaches to discipleship that leaders (pastors) are taking both corporately and personally" (parenthetical word belongs to the researcher) (p. 1). One might ask if it is possible that discipleship has become so varied between organizations, denominations, and individual churches that it has lost its effectiveness. Smith (2014) suggests that "the biblical understanding

of discipleship defines it as, ‘the formation, transformation, and application of the word of God within the believer’s life’” (p. 3). Smith goes on to suggest that the church does not simply need another program to be initiated within its walls. Rather, Smith would argue that “discipleship is not just a program; it is something far deeper than a program” (p. 79). A church must do what it takes to be faithful in discipleship, which is “the process of producing disciples” (Smith, p. 84).

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative, interview-based-study is to explore the personal discipleship practices of pastors and compare those practices to the personal discipleship practices of traditional MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400 by collecting qualitative data from pastors, other staff members, and church members.

### **Research Questions**

**RQ1.** What are the common factors which are consistently found in MBC churches which offer personal discipleship groups?

**RQ2.** What are the common factors which are consistently found in pastors who have personal discipleship practices in the sample group?

**RQ3.** What, if any, perceived influence is there between the personal discipleship practices of pastors on the discipleship practices of the MBC church representatives in the sample group?

**RQ4.** What, if any, are the commonalities between the discipleship practices being employed among MBC church representatives in the sample group and the discipleship practices of their pastors (See Appendix A for Interview Data and Research Question Analysis Chart)?

### **Delimitations of the Research Design**

1. This research is delimited to only MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400. According to the 2017 MBC statistics, there are 42 MBC churches with an average Sunday school attendance greater than 400.
2. This research is delimited to MBC churches with at least two staff members in addition to the pastor.
3. This research is delimited to MBC churches whose pastors accepted the terms of this study and provided two staff members, one male church member, and one female church member for participation in this study (see Appendix B for the Participants’ Rights disclosure and see Appendix C for the Church Members’ Selection Guide).

4. This research is delimited to MBC churches whose pastors have at least three years of tenure with that church.
5. This research is delimited to MBC churches whose selected staff members have at least eighteen months of tenure with that church and that pastor.
6. This research will not study the personality traits of the participating pastors.
7. This research will not study the theological traits of the participating pastors.
8. This research will not study the communication styles of the participating pastors.
9. This research will not study the leadership structure of the participating churches.
10. This research will not study the polity of the participating churches.

### **Definition of Terms**

1. *Common factors*: For the purpose of this study, common factors will be defined as themes consistently found in the interview transcripts.
2. *Completed church study*: A completed church study will consist of transcribed data containing five interviews (one interview of the pastor, two interviews of staff members, and two interviews of church members).
3. *Discipleship*: For the purpose of this study, discipleship will be defined as the process of developing “healthy spiritual leaders in Christ’s likeness to reach the world for Christ” (Kim, 2010, p. 104).
4. *Discipleship practices*: Discipleship practices will be defined as “intentionally equipping believers with the word of God through accountable relationships empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to replicate faithful followers of Christ” (Gallaty, 2015, p. 155).
5. *Perceived discipleship effectiveness*: Perceived discipleship effectiveness was defined as the individual pastor's awareness, observations, and interpretation of disciple-making effectiveness as seen in others.
6. *MBC church representatives*: MBC church representatives will be defined as other staff members and selected church members within the church.

7. *Pastors*: Pastors will be defined as those designated individuals whose primary role involves leading the church through preaching and helping “contemporary listeners to understand how God wants them to change to be more like Christ” through times of public proclamation (Pettit, 2008, p. 255).
8. *Spiritual gift of teaching*: For the purpose of this study, the spiritual gift of teaching will be defined as “the ability to clarify God’s truth” (Robinson, 1997, p. 108).
9. *Staff member*: For the purpose of this study, a staff member will be defined as a person who holds a full-time, non-secretarial, ministerial role at a church.
10. *Sunday school*: For the purpose of this study, Sunday school will be defined as “classes separated by age ... to have a developmentally appropriate lesson, with peers, where they learn specific Biblical teachings and practices” (Wade, 2019, p. 5). Synonyms for Sunday school may include, but are not limited to, terms such as Bible fellowships, community groups, life groups, and small groups.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is found by not only looking at what the experts say discipleship is but also by looking at how contemporary pastors approach discipleship. Are the expert’s works on discipleship actually working? As previously quoted, Hardison (2019), detailed that “producing authentic dedicated believers of the faith requires intentional relational discipleship in conjunction with existing church programs,” but the author did not detail the role of the pastor (p. 6). When Christian leaders have their “boots on the ground,” are they following through with discipleship? Through personal Bible study, corporate worship, and the leadership of the Holy Spirit, discipleship is understood, and it results in obedience. The application of discipleship goes beyond the simple head knowledge of knowing what to do and the heart knowledge of knowing why to do it. The application is the primary tool of engagement in a Christian’s life. This is where the head and heart meet the hands. When discipleship is understood (as well as sinful humans can understand it), it defines a person’s actions. Vaughan (1969) looks at the biblical importance of applying knowledge to one’s own self as he says “genuine faith produces an obedient life” (p. 60).

### **Analysis Methods**

Once the telephone interview data has been collected, it will be transcribed by the researcher. Court (2017) states that the researcher should “read over and over again all of the data, read everything again, and make notes on similarities, differences, patterns and questions” (p. 63). All of the data will be organized into categories depicting a completed church study with five interviews (one interview of the pastor, two interviews of staff members, and two interviews of church members). Each of the previously mentioned completed church studies will receive lettered pseudonyms such as Church A, Church B, Church C, etc. rather than naming the churches directly. A content analysis of the data will be performed to see if any potential

commonalities exist between the personal discipleship practices described by pastors and the discipleship practices of the churches in the sample group. As noted in Appendix D, questions four through nine are identical for the pastor, the staff members, and the church members. Common themes will be identified through comparing questions four through nine of each completed church study. In addition to the comparison of answers within each completed church study, the answers given for questions four through nine will be compared throughout the entire subset. For example, the answers for questions four through nine given by each participant may be compared to other participants within the same subset.

A panel of evaluators will be utilized by the researcher for the purpose of assistance in developing common themes. See Appendix E for the Panel of Evaluators' Inclusion Criteria. Court (2017) states that "Internal reliability, sometimes called interrater reliability, refers to whether, how and to what extent another 'rater', observer or researcher would perceive the same things and understand them in the same way as we do in a particular study. It behooves [researchers] to bring another researcher's eyes and mind to this task" (p. 33). Prior to the period of evaluation, each evaluator will complete a period of training which will be led by the researcher. See Appendix F for the Panel of Evaluators' Training Standards. Each evaluator on the panel will operate under the same analysis system of identifying common themes through comparing questions four through nine of each completed church study. In addition to the comparison of answers within each completed church study, each evaluator will compare the answers given for questions four through nine throughout the entire subset of their focused completed church studies. For example, the answers for questions four through nine given by each participant may be compared to other participants within the same subset. As previously stated, the researcher will attempt to telephone interview eight to twelve randomly selected pastoral interviewees. Each evaluator may review up to three completed church studies. Each evaluator will be referred to as Evaluator 1, Evaluator 2, Evaluator 3, and Evaluator 4.

The common themes brought to light through the work of the panel of evaluators will be used to answer the previously stated research questions. Swaminathan & Mulvihill (2017) state that "qualitative researchers often describe their analyses of data in terms of themes emerging from data" (p. 66). After the common themes show consistent factors found in disciple-making pastors and disciple-making churches in the sample group, the researcher will develop visual aids to contribute to the readers' information. Maxwell & Chmiel (2014) state that "Qualitative content analysis is a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative data" (p. 170). Therefore, the research data will be systematically detailed and categorized for the purpose of presentation and disbursement.

### **Panel of Evaluators' Inclusion Criteria**

The panel of evaluators' inclusion criteria is as follows:

1. A potential evaluator must have, at least, a Masters of Theology research degree.
2. A potential evaluator must have at least ten years of pastoral ministry.
3. Prior to the period of evaluation, each evaluator will complete a period of training which will be led by the researcher.

4. Each evaluator will operate under the same analysis system of identifying common themes through comparing questions four through nine of each completed church study.
5. In addition to the comparison of answers within each completed church study, each evaluator will compare the answers given for questions four through nine throughout the entire subset of their focused completed church studies. For example, the answers for questions four through nine given by each participant may be compared to other participants within the same subset. Each evaluator may review up to three completed church studies.
6. The evaluators will be referred to as Evaluator 1, Evaluator 2, Evaluator 3, and Evaluator 4.

### Interview Data and Research Question Analysis

|                   |  |   |  |   |
|-------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Research Question | RQ1.What are the common factors which are consistently found in MBC churches which offer personal discipleship groups?                         | RQ2.What are the common factors which are consistently found in pastors who have personal discipleship practices in the sample group? | RQ3.What, if any, perceived influence is there between the personal discipleship practices of pastors on the discipleship practices of the MBC church representatives in the sample group? | RQ4.What, if any, are the commonalities between the discipleship practices being employed among MBC church representatives in the sample group and the discipleship practices of their pastors?   |
| Data Source       | RQ1will be answered by comparing the data received from the staff members and church members concerning interview questions four through nine. | RQ2 will be answered by comparing the data received from pastors concerning interview questions four through nine.                    | RQ3 will be answered by comparing the data received from individual completed church studies while focusing on interview questions six through eight.                                      | RQ4 will be answered by comparing the data received from each completed church study with the data received from other completed church studies concerning interview questions four through nine. |

## APPENDIX G

### Church A Completed Church Study

**Church A Pastor. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church A Pastor replied, “53 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served as a pastor, Church A Pastor replied, “42 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church as a pastor, Church A Pastor replied, “21 years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church A Pastor replied as follows:

“Unfortunately, I was not discipled as a new believer. As a matter of fact, our staff and I are working on some discipleship for the church. We have been working on a book which focuses on the church. We did some things with small groups which talked about if you were discipled and who discipled you. I had good pastors while growing up. I went to Sunday school, church training, discipleship training, and training union. Our training union was pretty bad. People just read parts. As far as anyone actually discipling me, I did not have that. I had some good mentors and some good pastors. I guess I would say that they modeled visiting and [ministry] things for me, but as (far as) discipleship there was (none). I would say that if I was discipled it was through Sunday school. Even though my dad did not become a Christian until he was 71 years old, he still took us to church. As a child, I cannot remember a time when I did not go to church. As I look back on my church where I grew up, I do not know that discipleship was emphasized.”



**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church A Pastor replied as follows:

“Even though I have been a Christian for 53 years and I have been here at this church for 21 years, I am still learning. I am sure (that) I am not where I need to be. The Lord is still working on me. Sermon preparation is part of discipleship, but I do not think that you can say preparing sermons to preach to other people is a good model for discipleship. I think it helps. In my own personal devotion time and study time with things that I am reading, I am working through discipleship. We are working through a book entitled *The Kingdom Focused Church*. As a church staff, we have talked about discipleship a lot over the last three months. We have looked at the whole idea of discipleship and where we are lacking. We had a *Life Action* group in our church [about two months ago] for an eight day focus. That was challenging to say the least. It was convicting, and I realized how much I do not know. The focus of that group was mainly on discipleship, a walk with Christ, and what you are doing to maintain that walk with Christ. I have got a long way to go. Through personal devotion times, quiet times in the mornings, and some books I am reading, I am learning about discipleship. As a church, we are focusing on starting discipleship groups with three to five people in each group. There are both men groups and women groups. The idea is that those three or four people will be in a group, and the next year those people will lead a group. We are trying to focus more on discipleship groups than the traditional Sunday night studies. There is nothing wrong with [traditional Sunday night studies], but we are trying to go in the direction of personal discipleship and reproducible groups. Disciples make disciples. There are three in my group that are

meeting on Sunday evenings at 5 o'clock. One is a retired man, one is a deacon, and the other is myself. In a few weeks, we will start a study on spiritual gifts."

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church A Pastor replied as follows:

"I think that disciples make disciples. If you are going to be a discipler, then you are going to reproduce. I have got a long way to go. As a church, we want to see the discipleship cycle going. Our young people have actually caught on to discipleship more than our adults. I think older people are more comfortable in larger settings. We have a pretty large group going through *Experiencing God* right now. That group [subdivided] into smaller groups. Older people seem to like the older discipleship training stuff. That style is pretty much 'you sit still, while I instill.' In those classes you do not have to sign a commitment. You can come and go. You can come back if you want to. I think I see in the movement among young people a commitment that we had when we were teenagers. Accountability is the word for it. I think we have got some on-fire young people that sense that, and it catches on."

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church A Pastor replied as follows:

"There was a pastor in my hometown that was never my pastor, but he was in my hometown for over 40 years. After I surrendered to the ministry, I remember my mother saying that if I wanted to know what a pastor was like, then I should watch him. He was at everything and was bigger than life to me. Even though he was an Ole Miss fan, I never held that against him. When he died a couple months ago, they asked me to help with his funeral. I did the personal part of his funeral. I did a couple of revivals for him

while he was pastoring that church. He gave me books and things on sermon preparation. I guess, in a roundabout way, he mentored or disciplined me. I do not think he ever saw himself as my mentor. He was an old school guy, (one that) would visit with people.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church A Pastor replied as follows:

“Our discipleship is really kind of haphazard right now. Really it is a new start. It came through our staff meetings with our associate pastor, youth pastor, music minister, and children’s minister. Family discipleship has been a big part of what we’re talking about. Our youth minister is really pushing parents to be the ones to disciple their children. We are working through that. Our youth minister has been meeting with some young parents and trying to help them with discipleship. Our children’s minister is meeting with a small group. Our associate pastor is meeting with a small group. All of us are meeting with a small group. I think we’re all doing something different. The way the group that I participate with got started was through prayer. I began praying and I wanted to get an older man, one of our newer deacons, and a younger person. I had a college person in the group and he has done well. He has surrendered to the ministry and is really involved with our young people. He is in another discipleship group now. We had another man who has dropped out. I just told them this is what I want to do, and (asked) if these guys wanted to be involved. I need to get another young adult involved with us. I would like to get a young man who is maybe a 12<sup>th</sup> grader or college-age to participate. I think of Paul, Timothy, and Barnabas. I think it is Johnny Hunt who says you need a Paul, a Timothy, and a Barnabas in your life. That is kind of the model that I was going after. We started

doing a discipleship program (which a sister church and their pastor had put together). It was a small three ring binder on discipleship. My group meets on Sunday evenings at five o'clock, which is an awful time to meet for me. Inevitably, I will have a meeting and will have to ask the guys to meet without me. That time seems to work with them, so we will make do. Our music minister's group meets on Friday mornings. Our youth minister has been meeting with a group on Monday nights. Our associate pastor meets with a group on Monday afternoons. There are also a couple of ladies groups which meet. In my discipleship group, it is a time of prayer and encouragement, but we will start a spiritual gifts study soon. I am not sure what the other discipleship groups are doing."

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church A Pastor replied as follows:

"Discipleship is a process for me and us. I still have a long way to go. I guess a disciple is a learner, so discipleship would be a life-long learning process. You will never get to the end of surfing the web, and you will never get to the end of discipleship. Jesus even shared with his disciples that you never stop growing. People that are not growing are dead."

**Church A Staff Member 1. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church A Staff Member 1 replied, "28 years."

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served alongside the pastor, Church A Staff Member 1 replied, "3 years."

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church, Church A Staff Member 1 replied, "3 years. I was a member for about one year before I came on staff."

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church A Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“The main discipleship that I got as an up-and-coming teenager was from going to Wednesday night services, from the youth group, and going to church on Sundays. That was about it. I could not tell you that there was any one-on-one type of discipleship.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church A Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“In the past year, it will really tie into where we are headed discipleship-wise as a church. I have gotten involved in a discipleship group with two other guys. We try to meet weekly to discuss what we been reading throughout the week. We are going through Robby Gallaty’s *Foundations* book. Throughout the week, (we are) reading a chapter a day, studying that, and doing the *Here* journal. We talk about what God is teaching us through that time.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church A Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“I think it is daily reading. As a staff member, it is really easy to read the word because you are studying for something or preparing for a lesson or sermon. I find myself easily getting off (the) track of reading on a personal level. Being a part of an accountability group where I am being held to that has helped me develop a steady pattern of reading the word.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church A Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“The word I would use is intentionality. It goes back to reading the word and the intentionality of multiplying. (It is) returning what I am learning from other disciple-makers who are encouraging me, (and then) turning around and doing that with other people.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church A Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“When we set the group, we spent some time praying about who we felt like God wanted us to be in a group with, instead of a sign-up process or just joining a Bible study. It was intentional. I really felt I could help these guys or they can help me. I went to them personally and asked them if they would be willing to meet on a weekly basis. When we got together, we laid out a plan that we wanted to follow in encouraging each other to read the word. (We are) following Robby Gallaty’s guide to read a chapter a day. It is five days a week that we read. On each chapter, we do the *Here* journal that he recommends. (We look at) what the passage is, why was written, and how it applies to their culture today, and responding with what that means for our individual lives. What action are we going to take based upon what we learned today? When we get together we pray together and talk to each other about our prayer needs. We usually share one good thing that has happened that week and one area where we really feel like we need prayer. We pray for each other, spent time going back through the last week’s readings, and sharing the verse or passage that stuck out this week. We share what we wrote about the

passage. We spent some time fellowshiping about the week and what is going on in our lives. We usually wrap up ending in prayer. Hopefully as we see each other throughout the week, texting each other, or talking to each other about our week, we try to encourage each other.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church A Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“Trying to get where we are headed, discipleship is intentional. It is, I think, more of a one-on-one thing. Nothing against Bible studies, but we have tried for so long to do six or eight week Bible studies. (In those cases) about the time we break down barriers, then it is ending. In the church, I do not know that we have accomplished true discipleship through that method. As we are connecting and making commitments to stick with each other for a whole year or two years with the idea of multiplying, we are going to see (much) benefit out of that.”

**Church A Staff Member 2. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church A Staff Member 2 replied, “32 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served alongside the pastor, Church A Staff Member 2 replied, “3 ½ years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church, Church A Staff Member 2 replied, “3 ½ years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church A Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I never was truly disciplined from a standpoint of a mentor/mentee role. I can ask questions, and I did frequently to my mom and dad. There was no formal (discipleship)

that I can recall. There was no meeting on a regular basis to discuss what it means to be a Christian. (It was) go to Sunday school, Royal Ambassadors, and children's choir. You were to pick up what your teachers (taught) and pick (that) up by watching. There was no formal discipleship by any means. It is interesting to look back on that."

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church A Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

"Personally, I am not a big fan of Bible studies, (such as) going to LifeWay and ordering a study by the latest big-name. I utilize them for classes, but I do not like the devotional style. I have always enjoyed pulling out the Bible and reading large swaths of Scripture. (I enjoy) pulling out commentaries and digging in. Couple that with a lot of prayer. (I ask myself) why do they write this, who were they writing this too, and what is the closest context that I can get to myself? You are just digging in and letting the Holy Spirit move as he will. It is not just reading in *Open Windows* or the latest Matt Chandler study. I am fascinated by most things. The minutia is intriguing. I do not know Greek, but I will still do a word study and look at how (many English words are built on Greek words). My wife is one that humors me. Having her to talk to helps in sharing that experience. As I share those little nuggets it helps in my own personal discipleship. It is forcing me (to discover) how I understand that concept or idea. It may be from the book of Leviticus, but, if I have to articulate it to (someone), then (I must dig in). The way you learn helps to reinforce your own personal discipleship process."

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church A Staff Member 2 replied as follows:



“It all comes back to, do you really believe what you say in your church lingo. (Things such as) God is great, Jesus loves us, and take up your cross and follow me. It is about digging into the Scriptures (and deciding) if I really believe this. Is this just a social club where we come and say the right stuff about a business? Do our lives lineup? It manifests itself as so many different areas. We lost our youngest son five years ago when he was about six (years old). (If I had not) had a personal discipleship time and being grounded in Scripture, then I do not know how my wife and I would have made it through. It changes you to really embrace the discipleship process. You will ask if it is real and you will also ask what I sacrifice. What is off the table and what am I holding back? As Paul talks about being a bondservant of Christ or a bondservant of God, there is nothing that I can hold back. That is not your modern American Christian. (Thinking about the death of our son,) it reflects on our own discipleship. God did not ask us to go from 0 to 60. God walked us step-by-step (through everything). Our son passing away was one small step in the whole process of walking with (God).”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church A Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“People matter. I am an introvert, but I am also the academic type. I can be a research scientist, but I could not be a doctor with rounds. (That is my) mental aspect. I love to teach and preach, but sometimes I look at things in a broad view. I may not necessarily see the people behind the issue. I think we do that a lot in our society as we see issues and not people. I think there are problems with how we approach the homosexual agenda right now. (It is the same with) alcohol issues in (our state). We see ‘yes’ votes and ‘no’ votes, but we sometimes fail to see the people. In discipleship, that really matters,

because you are not just teaching the law. You are looking at a (person's life) and saying that this is what you need. It is very similar to raising the three children that we still have. They are different (from each other). I talked to them differently, encourage them differently, and discipline them differently. I have noticed from disciple-makers that I have watched that it is about individual people. We see that with Jesus as how he talked with James and John and how he talked with Peter. It was different. He saw them as individuals. I have heard our youth pastor use this the most. Things are caught not taught. In discipleship, if I am not doing it or modeling it, then it is only so effective. If I really want to be effective like Christ, then I have to be living it. It is not just something that happens in the classroom. I learned principles from reading books and asking questions of my father, but I never (experienced the practical side of ministry). I never was taught how to make a hospital visit, go door-to-door, or take a survey of people in the park and bring up gospel conversations. I watched other people take their disciples along and learn how to start conversations about Christ and evangelize. (Disciplers) should teach others how to read Scripture and what that looks like. (It is) walking with them and being transparent in that walk. That is very difficult. I have a group right now that (consist of) three guys around (20 years old). I am almost 40 (years old), and I had to tell them that I messed up this week. (I might have to say) that I have struggled with lust, language, or whatever it is. It is difficult to look at guys half your age and be open and transparent. Of course there is a barrier within the ministry. We walk a line, but there has to be some sort of transparency in discipleship. The disciples saw Jesus when he was tired, napping, and they saw him frustrated. It was not sin, but they saw these things and learned how to handle them appropriately. If I do not show them how to handle temptation appropriately

as I am discipling, if I do not show them how to pray, if I do not show them how to walk and do all these things, then that is one less thing that they are learning. I do not want them to have to figure it out on their own as I did.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church A Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I have only started two specific groups at the church. One has (floundered) and one is going strong. One of my children is 17-years-old and recently surrendered to the ministry. So that is interesting in itself. As a father (I am trying to disciple him). I know him (since I am his) father and I know where he is going. It is interesting trying to disciple him without him knowing he is being disciplined. I am throwing our (13-year-old twins) into the mix, because there is a discipleship process. We are who we are. It is hard to not teach what you know. I like to fall back on Scripture. (6 to 12 weeks studies are great for a class) but (discipleship) is about teaching them to read the Bible on their own. It is to set them on the right path and give them the right tools. We can tell them what books to read, so that they can finish this on their own. They teach you how to think and process things on your own in your devotional studies. My wife is using *Foundations* by Robby Gallaty where you read through the Bible in a year. I like that idea because it is not a Bible study. It leaves the Bible study discussion up to the Holy Spirit. Most of everything that I am going to do will come back to reading the Bible for yourself. A first-year believer should not jump into the last half of Daniel or the book of Revelation. Teenage boys should not wrestle with the Song of Solomon. The Song of Solomon can be instructive for a teenage boy, but the Bible in itself is not too hard to understand. We do

not have to rely on Bible studies all the time. Our youth pastor wants to bring along those kids. Being a disciple is almost a level that we have to accept. In our culture when a person becomes a Christian, they often need more than this. The idea of going deeper really comes down to Scripture. It is important to memorize Scripture. I ask our people what are you memorizing and why are you memorizing this. What is the verse that really jumps out at you from the Holy Spirit? What is working on your life? Prayer is something that we struggle to explain. My dad was my pastor most of my life. The prayers that we hear most the time at church are public prayers for effect. They are phrases and lingo that we stack together. The ushers pray the 10 different phrases that they know. (We are) to listen to the Holy Spirit as we pray. That is a step that I try to teach my own kids. I challenge them to pray for a whole minute. My son thought that he could do that, but after 10 seconds he was quiet. The next week he got to 20 seconds. He is understanding what prayer is. Prayer is not just requests. As you grow deeper as a disciple, the things you are concerned about and want to pray about grow too. The main things are to understand Scripture, to memorize it, and to pray. It is very difficult.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church A Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“One thing that I have had to embrace is that not all discipling will turn out as you expect. I started a (discipleship) group with older guys and I thought, with these two men, that it would be an easy group. Life kept getting in the way. We signed a covenant that showed the parameters of our group, and life kept getting in the way. Every week there was (an excuse). It just kind of fizzled. We see each other and we talk, but there is no desire to pick it back up. As a discipler, I felt pulled to them, but other things were more

important (to them). A few months ago, one of the guys (in my discipleship group) asked me to disciple him. I already had a group that was struggling, so I did not know if I was the right person, but we hit it off. He invited another to join us so there would be three of us. There is another one who joined us, and they are going strong. I am convinced they are going to change this county at some point.”

**Church A Female Church Member. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church A Female Church Member replied, “32 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have attended church with the pastor, Church A Female Church Member replied, “21 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many church services you attend per month, Church A Female Church Member replied, “12 services.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church A Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I do not think there was any really. No one came along beside me and tried to disciple me. I was just a new member at a little country church at that time. I was saved there and became a Baptist there. I had been a Methodist. No one came along beside me.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church A Female Church Member replied as follows:

“Daily Bible reading, prayer, and I have just finished an *Experiencing God* Bible study. I teach Sunday school and in that helps a lot. I really enjoyed the *Experiencing God* Bible study. It was eye-opening. It caused me to think about my walk with Christ. I would look around me and see the Lord at work. I have taught Sunday school off and on for years. I

even taught Sunday school in the Methodist Church before I was a Christian. I did not understand what salvation meant as a 12-year-old when I joined the church. It was not preached that way often. I remember a few hellfire and brimstone sermons when we had revival. The Methodist preachers were not as emphatic about needing to experience salvation. The Baptist Churches are more geared that way. That is what it is all about.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church A Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I am never as close to God as I would like to be. It is a learning experience that goes on your whole life.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church A Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I have learned the consistency of coming along beside someone (and) trying to guide them. (We want to) experience God in everything we do, (such as) our work life and our play life. Trying to stay close to the Lord through Bible reading and the difference that makes in the lives of the people around us (such as) our children and grandchildren. Everybody is affected by that. I have learned so much from (many people), but I have never had a person to disciple me. Our lives are so busy, and that is sad. Sometimes we get so busy with doing all of the church work that we miss doing the things that will make a difference in somebody else’s life. As a 75-year-old, I look back and see what I could have done differently. I also see what others could have done differently as a disciple to me. I would have loved for someone to come along beside me at that time in my life. There were many problems as a young mother and a mother trying to grow teenagers. I worked all of my life, and I was not a home-mom. I worked all my married

life until I retired. Sometimes a mother gets lost in the work, the raising of the kids, and the housework. There is so much more to life than that. (We should) find time to do that. Other things are not as important as that. I do not think people know how to (disciple). It would be great if every young Christian had someone appointed to them to disciple them. Getting personal with someone you trust and you can tell your innermost thoughts and desires to takes time to build that type of relationship. And I do not think we do that enough. It is hard to find (the time). It will be great for young people to have someone assigned to them that would meet with them on a regular basis or several times a month. Even a phone call would be nice to discuss what that person is dealing with and working through on a daily basis.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church A Female Church Member replied as follows:

“Everybody gets some discipleship in church, but the key to that is being there for someone when they need it through the week. I would set up a time to go by and check with that person or meet that person somewhere for a cup of coffee. We would talk about how they were doing, what is going on, and what they felt God was doing in their life. Are you feeling as close to God as you would like to feel? All of us want a stronger relationship, no matter how close we feel we are. I would like to feel closer at times. At times I do feel closer to God and sometimes I do not. I would visit with a person, and I know that is difficult for young women. I think women should disciple women and men should disciple men. I love couples classes. So much goes on in those classes especially with young married couples. People need to share their innermost thoughts with the class,

but they need to go somewhere where they can share and feel comfortable with a personal disciple who they can meet with and talk with on a regular basis.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church A Female Church Member replied as follows:

“No. I think we pretty well covered it.”

**Church A Male Church Member. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church A Male Church Member replied, “27 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have attended church with the pastor, Church A Male Church Member replied, “17 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many church services you attend per month, Church A Male Church Member replied, “12 services.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church A Male Church Member replied as follows:

“There was not any. I was not raised in church. My parents did not go to church. I was going to church because the girl I was dating was going to church. I am not a smart man, but I figured out that (there) was three hours per week that I got to sit beside her without her parents. (The interim pastor at that church) preached one Sunday about heaven and hell and how they are two very distinct places. We all are going to one of those two places. He also preached about how Jesus came and got on the cross and paid that price so that none of us had to perish. On that Sunday morning (while) sitting in the balcony, I knew that I was going to die go to hell. From my perspective, he led the entire congregation in the sinner’s prayer. (He said) that if you were there that morning and you knew that you would die go to hell but you wanted to do something about it, then say a



prayer in your heart. He led the entire congregation through that prayer. (Afterwards) he said that if you said that prayer, then he wanted you to come down front. He had me right until that part. There was no way that I was going to leave that balcony and walked down in front of all those people that I had my own opinions of. I tried to go back and live my old life as before, and it did not fit. It did not make sense, and I talk to my girlfriend about it. (Our conversation) quickly was above her head. We went to talk with (the newly called pastor of that church). (He shared) that when I said that prayer, then I was saved at that point. Light and darkness do not mix. You are trying to go back to the darkness like you have always lived, but you are a new creation. That is why you are miserable. The next Sunday I went down front and made it public. I was baptized and it was like, all right, you are a Christian, you own a Bible, so good luck. In churches today, you can be disciplined if you want to be disciplined. If I wanted to join a bikers' club, they would probably do a little research and (share with me) what they believe and what they do. If you accept Christ as your Savior, join the church, and join a Sunday school class where there are some good men and women, then (there may be some discipleship). It is hard to find men who will help you along, because most of us want the world to think that we have all the answers. But deep down we are scared at how few answers we have. We are afraid that someone will ask us a question that we cannot answer. (We are afraid that some will say) you have been a Christian for 27 years and you cannot answer this question, so what have you been doing. We feel inferior.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church A Male Church Member replied as follows:

“Right now I have a group of guys that I meet with monthly. We meet on Saturday mornings and have donuts and coffee. We share life. We are in a group text where we share. We post every morning about our Bible study and what we have read. (We also share) prayer requests. We meet once a month and share life. (We discuss) what our kids are going through, school, and life. I think that is why Jesus drug (the disciples) around on dirt paths. He wanted them to see his life. When he stubbed his toe in his sandals, he wanted him to see how he handled it. I have three kids, and I try to do the same thing with them. I am very open with them about my struggles. I have a coaching side in me. There are times when I may go overboard with them. I will sit them down and share that there is no instruction manual to raising them and that I will make mistakes. My job is to raise you up to be godly men. Godly first and men second. I try to be real with them. (I try) to let them see me interacting with other people. We do a rodeo ministry. (Recently) in Las Vegas, I was there to share my three-minute testimony. Over the period of a week, the group that I was with shared the gospel presentation over 1,200 times and 124 people came to know Jesus through it. It is not being ashamed of your story and not keeping it hid.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church A Male Church Member replied as follows:

“Humility would be it. We want people to think that we have all the answers, know it all, and do not have any struggles, but the brokenness of pride is the main thing. In a man’s life more than anything, we use pride. If you have been a member of a church for any amount of time, have a leadership role in a church, or be a deacon at the church, (people

think that) you should not have that question or that you should be above that. We build walls with pride. Pride is what holds the wall together.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church A Male Church Member replied as follows:

“Deliberateness. You have to be deliberate about it. It is not going to happen by accident. There are five guys (in my discipleship group) and it is hard to find a time when we all can meet, but you must be deliberate. I have quit this group 50 times, because of (people not placing importance on our meetings). In my mind I have planned that out, but God always convicts me. If it was easy, then everybody would do it. You have to be deliberate whether you are being discipled or you are discipling someone. You have to be deliberate with it.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church A Male Church Member replied as follows:

“I have a book that was given to me by a (former) staff member. It is a discipleship handbook that basically starts off as if you just accepted Christ. It talks about the relationship and goes step-by-step. I have used that book with a discipleship group before. Right now my family and I are going through it. We do it once a week. I have had people to ask me (about being discipled). It requires a commitment (from) both halves. It does not need to be taken lightly. If you are not going to serious about it, then there is no need to dive off in it. You are going to waste both parties’ time.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church A Male Church Member replied as follows:

“I think women are better at (discipleship) than men. I think that women are more open to heartfelt conversation. (As) men we try to act like we are big and tough. I think that you have to be real to be discipled. I think the main problem with men is brokenness and being willing to admit that (we) do not have the answers. I do not have the answers and I know you do not have the answers, but let us find out the answers together and help each other.”

## APPENDIX H

### Church B Completed Church Study

**Church B Pastor. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church B Pastor replied, “50 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served as a pastor, Church B Pastor replied, “45 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church as a pastor, Church B Pastor replied, “35 years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church B Pastor replied as follows:

“I was pretty much on my own in the sense that nobody got one-on-one with me. I grew up in the church, and my dad was a pastor. I was very involved in the church, but my personal discipleship was more of just gleaning what I could on my own. It is a long process, and I am still in it.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church B Pastor replied as follows:

“I am not there yet. It is an ongoing process for me. Every morning, when I am in the word and I am alone with the Lord, he still weeds my garden. He still points out so much of my life that does not look like him. It is a process for me.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church B Pastor replied as follows:

“One (is that) I have a long way to go. If I think about it in human terms, it seems impossible that I will ever get to where I need to be. The second thought is the thing that

gets me through. God has promised to get me there. In my walk, I say that I have a long way to the top of the mountain, but I have somebody beside me that is telling me to go on and that he is going to help me get there.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church B Pastor replied as follows:

“The first thing that I have gleaned is that it is part of my call. (It is) not just that I would be a disciple, but that he is discipling me to disciple others. It is all about turning around and bringing others through the valley that you have just been through. Up the mountain that you have just been through. He has taught me to teach others and to bring others. It is all about that. That is what I saw in the disciples. That is why there was such an explosion in that early church. It was a profound thought they could be saved, but it was simple that you are saved so you could bring others, not just so you could get to heaven.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church B Pastor replied as follows:

“First of all, we have some small groups that we try to get folks plugged into. It is not just Sunday school. We have some small groups of folks that are meeting around town, especially our men. I try to get them plugged in to that. The second thing is for our ladies. I have a core of lady disciplers, if you will. I hook our new believers up with one of those, and just let them spend a couple of months (with them). Maybe once a week (discussing things such as) how do you pray, how do you read your Bible, and how do you get started in your walk. It is a mentorship thing with our ladies one-on-one. We have some of our men that also do that. If there is someone that will be better served with that

type of attention, then I have some men able and willing to walk them through (that).

What I have learned from doing it the hard way is that it would have been much better for me personally, if I would have had someone to confide in. Especially in those first few weeks when I had questions about wrestling with temptation and sin. With nobody there, I asked questions like if I was saved (then) why do I feel like this. It would have been a great help if someone were standing there beside me saying yes, that is normal. You feel like that because you are normal. I did not feel normal, but I felt like maybe I needed to be saved again. The importance of those first few weeks is in getting started and knowing where to get started. I had a Bible and felt like since I was saved that I should understand (the book of) Revelation. I have been saved a long time, and I still struggle with it. That is why it is important in that critical time.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church B Pastor replied as follows:

“Everybody is in the same boat. Every new believer needs that start. Whether they have been in church for 50 years and (recently) gave their heart to the Lord or have no background, they still need those basic tools too. Seminary taught me how to study, and it taught me how to fish, in other words. Everybody needs to learn how to fish. It does not come automatically with salvation. That is why Jesus took so much time with the disciples. He was bringing them along. They were not perfect, but they were not what they used to be. That is what discipleship does, and he is our pattern. It took time for that to happen. My encouragement about discipleship would be to not overlook anybody, because everybody is in the same boat. Everybody needs to learn those tools so they can

study, pray, and grow. With discipleship, all we are trying to do is give them the tools to get to the mountaintop, where they are going to be. For me, that is what discipleship is.”

**Church B Staff Member 1. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church B Staff Member 1 replied, “49 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served alongside the pastor, Church B Staff Member 1 replied, “21 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church, Church B Staff Member 1 replied, “21 years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church B Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“It began when I made a profession of faith. At my home church, you had to go through a four-week class for new believers before you were even baptized. (The leader of the class) went through the basics about what your profession of faith means, that baptism is important, that church attendance is important, and that Bible study is important. (He talked about) your own personal relationship and how to grow yourself. That is how it started as a 10-year-old, with the pastor in the new believer’s class. I guess a lot of the other (discipleship) was done through smaller groups such as Sunday school, what we used to call discipleship training, and we had a youth pastor to spend some time with me. That would be the main ways back in those days. You are talking (about) the 70s and 80s.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church B Staff Member 1 replied as follows:



“Over the last couple of years, I have gotten into journaling. (I have been) using Robby Gallaty’s material. (I use) daily readings, Scripture readings, memorization, and then journaling. I have two different groups that I meet with each week. One is an individual and then the other is a small group. There are four of us. We do two things. We discuss about our readings and studies over the week and we also have accountability questions. There is a double edge on that.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church B Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“I guess learning that you are not on your own. You do have personal time, but it is also about relationships too. Iron sharpens iron. That is what I get from my groups. There is accountability there that you need. I have learned that I need both: a personal side and the accountability side. An involvement with others is a biggie. When you do your quiet times from the word is the only thing that makes a difference. I can be praying, but if I am not spending time studying the word and meditating on it... That is the only thing that makes a difference. Studying and meditating on the word. It is not two different things, but it has to be a combination there.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church B Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“Everything from methods to the passion to want to do that. I want to be challenged. Some of the readings have been an encouragement to me. (With) some of the guys, I have used their materials. With some of the guys, I have used their methods. I try to do my own reading and studying. Vance Pittman used to say that it is fine to read devotionals and hear from others about what God is sharing with them, but you need to have time to

let God tell you stuff. There has to be a mixture of those. You cannot really do just one or the other.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church B Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“I hate to say that it is a system, but it is. It is just getting to know the guys. It is about being around folks who are willing to be discipled and have a desire to be discipled. (It is about) joining with them and not just telling them what to do. That is what I have been trying to do with the folks who want to learn, be stretched, and be held accountable. I am not saying do this, but I am saying do this with us. It is like, come along with us. We lead by example versus by saying this is what you need to do. I guess I have learned more than anything that it is by example rather than do this or do that.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church B Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“I think it is essential. I think that the church overall, not just (our church), has really wasted a lot of opportunities. I do not think it is all at the church house. I think the majority of discipleship really needs to be informal. It is meeting a guy for lunch or breakfast and spending some time hanging out with him. It is not always going through material. It is about life, asking questions, and trying to answer questions. Jesus did not have material or curriculum. Back in my old youth days, I used to think that we had to have material for discipleship. That is fine, but you teach people how to pray by them listening to you pray. (It is about) opening the Bible and digging through the Bible verses

and going through a (biblical) book. There are some great materials out there today, but a lot of it is about coming alongside (others). Jesus had the 12 that hung out with him.”

**Church B Staff Member 2. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church B Staff Member 2 replied, “39 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served alongside the pastor, Church B Staff Member 2 replied, “13 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church, Church B Staff Member 2 replied, “We joined in December 1991 and in 1993 I began serving as treasurer. In 2002, I surrendered the ministry and began going to seminary. In 2006 (13 years ago) I started as a full-time employee (here).”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church B Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I was actually saved at a youth camp over Christmas break, and I was attending a Methodist Church. I had a Baptist youth guy, and they were very evangelistic. From a discipleship standpoint, other than going to Sunday school on Sunday morning and going to the youth group on Wednesday night, there was no real active discipleship when I initially got saved.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church B Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I really break personal discipleship down into a couple of categories. The first would be my quiet time and personal Bible study on a daily basis. I have learned that from people here at the church. (The second would be that) discipleship leads to service. I have been

serving on top of my vocation. I serve as a Sunday school teacher, I work with the youth, I go on mission trips, and I am involved in small group Bible studies with men.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church B Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I learned how to be a Christian man according to what the Bible teaches. I learned that from Scripture, and I learned that from the personal experience (from) testimonies of Christian men who have walked the walk a long time. That leads into being a better husband, a better father, and serving better in the kingdom with what God would have me to do.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church B Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“One guy shared with me one time about the passage where Jesus said why do you call me Lord, Lord and do not do what I say. He used that to point out that really the only Scriptures that we believe are the ones that we live. Something else I learned from a guy is about training a mule or an ox to plow. You can hook them up and try to teach him yourself or you can hook them up to an old experienced mule or cow and let that mule or cow train that new one. That is kind of what I have done. I have hooked up to older men who have walked and have learned the lessons that I need to learn. That is the way I have learned, instead of learning the hard way. Granted, I have learned plenty the hard way. I tried to hook myself up and learn from them.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church B Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I try to encourage them and show them about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It all starts there. Another nugget that I got is that you cannot teach what you do not do. As far as personal discipleship and another person, I try to share with them what I do. It starts with a personal relationship and from that will flow service. You cannot just take in, but you have to pour out. We are here for a reason. That is why God has left us here. You do not just take in knowledge to sit around and talk, but you have to do.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church B Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“It takes work. It takes an investment of time on everybody’s part, those that are doing the teaching and those that are being taught. When you get to the service part of things, there are some people that have the tendency that they want to be seen. They want everybody to know that they are serving. I heard a story about a preacher who had a guy come to him who wanted to do something in the church. He was ready to serve. (The preacher) said that he wanted him to show up at six o’clock in the morning and do some cleaning around the church. The man did not show. He did not want to serve, he just wanted to be seen serving. There is a difference. (The preacher) wanted to find out who is pretending and who is contending. We have got a lot of pretenders and that is not what it is about. It is not about us. It takes time. It is not about you.”

**Church B Female Church Member. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church B Female Church Member replied, “63 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have attended church with the pastor, Church B Female Church Member replied, “35 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many church services you attend per month, Church B Female Church Member replied, “About 5 services, due to health problems and surgeries.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church B Female Church Member replied as follows:

“Most of the discipleship took place at home or in a Sunday school class.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church B Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I teach a ladies Sunday school class, so I am in fellowship with a lot of believers. We encourage each other, and it is a strong ladies class. I do a Bible class (at a senior adult day care). That is a ministry of encouragement. (I have) a personal Bible study and a personal quiet time. I also meet with some ladies for prayer. We did meet once a week, but this year it has been mostly by phone.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church B Female Church Member replied as follows:

“A believer should not be isolated. We need each other for growth and encouragement. We are exhorted (in Hebrews) to not neglect that.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church B Female Church Member replied as follows:

“There was a lady who discipled a lot of us young mothers of the time, and I learned some things from her. (Some of those things are) staying in the word, how to study the

word, how to apply the word, and how to reach out to others. (Another thing I learned) is how to take care of home, husband, and children.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church B Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I would want them to know that I cared. We get a lot of visitors in (my) Sunday school class, so I make sure that I reach out personally and contact them and to encourage them to come. We do everything we can to make them feel comfortable. (We) invite others and reach out to our neighbors.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church B Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I am not sure that we make as much of a formal effort to (disciple) as we need to. In other words, not setting up a specific time to meet with someone (to grow) through a relationship. I wonder if there should be more of a specific time set. I know a lot of that is done through classes, but I wonder if we should have a specific time for follow-up. I think that is one place where I fail.”

**Church B Male Church Member. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church B Male Church Member replied, “39 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have attended church with the pastor, Church B Male Church Member replied, “14 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many church services you attend per month, Church B Male Church Member replied, “12 services.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church B Male Church Member replied as follows:

“I am going to say that you are talking about how I was trained. I happened to be at a very good church (in another town). There was a group of guys who were generally my age, and they were the ones that I started associating with. There was a guy who worked with me and was (in the same career field). He was a believer and would laugh at the way I would talk, cuss, and carry on. At the same time, he was sharing with me and setting a good example for me. Then I started associating with him and some of his friends. I finally realized that I was a sinner and could not save myself. I was not worthy to go to heaven. They told me those things along (the way), but they did not cram it down my throat. They realized that I would reject it. That is how I came to know the Lord. (It was) through their testimonies and their teachings. As I joined (that church in another town), there were good godly Sunday school teachers and good Christian people that led me along. I had a good pastor that taught the word in Spirit and in truth. That is how I grew.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church B Male Church Member replied as follows:

“There are several things there. I am an adult couples Sunday school class teacher. The one that learns the most in that class is me. That is a great benefit. The fellowship there is good, and it inspires me to prepare myself. I try to get into the word every day to decide what I am studying and preparing for. I teach Evangelism Explosion for our church. (We have) two semesters. One will start at the first of the year, and we had just concluded one. There is a lot of outreach there at different times and in different ways. Programs that we



have going on like Upward Basketball, we get names from that. The Easter cantata, we get names from that. We try to train people to share their faith, to share the gospel, and to knock on doors. It gives you a lot of opportunities. That helps me, teaches me, and convicts me.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church B Male Church Member replied as follows:

“I guess what comes to mind is Matthew 28:19-20. (It says) to be a good disciple of the word and share the hope lies within us. It also makes me recognize how blessed I am to know the Lord, even as sorry of a sinner as I am. One thing it inspires me to do is to go on mission trips. We go around the world. We were helping (a ministry organization in our hometown) which helps folks who are really in need. Those unfortunate folks come through there, and I had three people pray to receive Christ. I just wish I could get them involved so we could disciple them. We are trying to make a better effort on the discipling of new believers. We have been to India, Thailand, and Brazil. We have been all kinds of places sharing the gospel.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church B Male Church Member replied as follows:

“We have excellent staff at (our church). (Our pastor’s) vision is for everyone to go on at least one mission trip in their lifetime. He is a giant of being an example of a disciple-maker. As a matter of fact, he has a sermon about giants and how that giants create other giants. (Our associate pastor) is the same way. Those two guys love the Lord, they love people, and they want people to love. They are trying to disciple people and create opportunities for everybody to be involved and grow as a believer.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church B Male Church Member replied as follows:

“In Evangelism Explosion, if someone does pray to receive Christ, we give them a little booklet called *Partners in Growing*. That book has five methods of growth. Number one is read the Bible. I tell them that you need to get your head in the Bible and the Bible in your head. Number two is prayer. That is our opportunity to talk with God. There are certain things we will ask him and wait for answers. Number three is worship. Find a Bible believing and Bible teaching church where you can hear the truth of God’s word. Number four is fellowship. (That is) getting involved in a small group like a Sunday school class where you are associating with fellow believers who are going through life just like you are. Number five is witnessing. I always tell them that I bet there is someone that you want tell about what just happened to you. That will be the first time that you witness for the Lord. We just led a lady to the Lord, and she has terrible alcohol problems. Recently, they found her 21-year-old daughter dead probably from an overdose. She stood up during the funeral and said that she wanted to know how to be saved so that she could see her daughter again. When I heard that, I ran her down with an EE team (that is me and two ladies). We talked with her for over an hour. She did finally pray to receive Christ. We told her that was the beginning. That was not the end. She did not even know why there were red letters in the Bible. Two days later I called her to give her some Scriptures in Ephesians 6:10-20. I had to spell Ephesians for her. We are trying to get her involved, and I am hoping that she will be at church Sunday. If they do not come and get some training and some discipleship, then they are not going to know. I told

(our pastor) that we need a new believers' class. (Our associate pastor) is working on that. It may even have to happen during Sunday school time. I remember when I got saved that the first thing I did is work through a new believers' class. It was kind of an elementary book for folks who had been saved for a long time, but it covered the basics of the gospel and the Scriptures to show you what the gospel is about. It started advancing from there. It was a 6 to 8 week course, I guess. I have still got that little book at home. It was a fill in the blank book. It was just some way to get people's orientation toward spiritual matters and not the world."

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church B Male Church Member replied as follows:

"Those mission trips are eye-opening. When you leave the boundaries of the United States, you see how blessed you are and what a need there is worldwide. People are lost. They do not know the Lord. They say in India that there are 2 to 3 million gods. I have been to India six times. I have seen people saved over there, but they worship idols. One time they were having a celebration. They were hauling them around in trucks and they have got them on their mantels. If you walk in a mall over there, there is a shop there with idols everywhere. That is just one example. It will give you an opportunity to tell people about the Lord. Those things help you grow."

## APPENDIX I

### Church C Completed Church Study

**Church C Pastor. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church C Pastor replied, “46 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served as a pastor, Church C Pastor replied, “43 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church as a pastor, Church C Pastor replied, “21 years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church C Pastor replied as follows:

“I was (discipled), but it was more because I was in college. Mine came through being in Bible class. I did not have anyone who individually took me aside and discipled me. I learned as I saw other believers in action. I did not have any one person who mentored me.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church C Pastor replied as follows:

“Ongoing. Growing. I do a lot of reading and I meet with some guys on a regular basis that help keep me accountable, and I help keep them accountable. At 64 years old, (my discipleship) is ongoing. We meet once a week, and the group fluctuates (in size). We meet together sometimes and, if the group is larger, we separate. Sometimes there may be 12, and, if there is, we separate. We talk together a little, pray together a little, and then separate.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church C Pastor replied as follows:

“Accountability. You need accountability with other people.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church C Pastor replied as follows:

“The need to take care of my own soul. I need some soul refreshing of my own if I am going to lead others. I guess that is one of the biggest things that I have learned through the experiences I have had with others. You have got to take that time. You cannot lead people were you have never been or at least where you are not trying to go.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church C Pastor replied as follows:

“We try to hem up some people that we think would receive (discipleship) well. We have got several groups that meet. Our discipleship (pastor) meets with a group on a regular basis, and he tries to meet with some guys for a year. He asked those guys to pick out some (other) guys and meet with them. I will tell you that that sounds better on paper than it works. Those guys have a hard time recruiting other guys for a lot of reasons. When you have a staff member, it has a little more clout. Guys are more willing to do that. We try to engage some accountability in them. Some growing in their faith. Helping guys with their weaknesses and acknowledging their strengths. God can use both of those. (In my own discipleship group), we just wing it. We do not use any type of (curriculum). Every once in a while, we will pick out a book written from a Christian perspective that might be helpful. We will read it together and go through that.

Sometimes you are hitting topics that might be hard for you to bring up. You can get those, read those together, and come back. Sometimes that is helpful.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church C Pastor replied as follows:

“You (the researcher) and I are coming from two different generations. When I was growing up, discipleship was a time. That is how we looked at it. People looked at it as Sunday school on Sunday nights. There was not a lot of thought given to it. We as Southern Baptists have certainly woken up to that. Is not a time, but it is something that you are trying to become. For us, if you just talk about the time, it is Wednesday nights. We have a huge discipleship time. We have gone to a curriculum base. Those not involved in the other (Wednesday night) stuff, we work through a prayer sheet and sing a few songs and then we break into classes. (The classes last) for an hour. When we go through a new members or visitor’s class, I say that discipleship is not about when you do it. If you were to talk about when we do it, our strong arm is on Wednesday nights. It is more about an ongoing continual type thing. I think that is the beauty of a new era and a thought concerning discipleship. I think for so long we were ingrained. There were name changes. When I grew up there was Training Union, then there was Church Discipleship, and then it was just Discipleship. Southern Baptists have discovered that it is more about what you are doing than when you are doing it. I think it is a very positive thing. My preaching is very discipleship oriented along with evangelism. When you preach through a book (of the Bible), you are going to be more apt to help that (discipleship wise). In the summer we do a book series on Wednesday nights. Not doing their curriculum and our (regular) deal. It is not full-blown like it is to the school year. I just take a book written

from a Christian perspective, and I encourage our people to buy one. We make them available here. I teach one chapter each week through the summer. It has been good for our people to open their thoughts to some great insight. It can really be helpful to inspire them to begin to look and find some books that they can read. (This is) not just in a devotional way, but in a discipleship way. Last year we did *Culture Shock* by Chip Ingram which is probably one of the most popular summer series I have ever done. I take a chapter and try to make it my own. I do not use (the) Pro Present (presentation aide at) any other time. I use it on that book series and on Sunday nights. It is an ongoing way of how we disciple people. It is a huge system as well as thinking about them individually. We try to look at both of those.”

**Church C Staff Member 1. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church C Staff Member 1 replied, “34 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served alongside the pastor, Church C Staff Member 1 replied, “12 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church, Church C Staff Member 1 replied, “12 years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church C Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“I would say that I was discipled as a new believer, but not in an organized, intentional fashion. (It was) in everyday life. My grandmother had a walk with God like none other. In leading me to Christ, she had a huge role in that. She kept me when I was a kid, like in daycare. I did not hear Mother Goose or stories like that. I heard Daniel and the lion’s den, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and David and Goliath. I heard stories of faith

even before I was a Christian. I got saved early on and it was a continued relationship with her and my parents. It was the same thing. They had a phenomenal walk with Christ. (They never) sat down and said let me teach you. It was seeing them in their everyday experience in their walk with Christ. Honestly, looking back at it, it was the same thing through the people in my home church. Again, it was not intentional. I do not think that they knew they were doing it. Seeing the people around me in real-life settings handle all situations.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church C Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“(It is) pretty good. It is not as organized as it should be. My pastor and I have a great relationship of accountability. Just the two of us, just us talking through life. I have one guy here at the church who is about my age. We do discipleship, and I consider him more of an accountability partner. We talk my Scripture, talk about life, and talk about how our relationship with Christ affects our lives. We meet frequently, but it is not on a scheduled basis. We talked two or three times per week about life. I have a few guys in our church, and we meet at least once a month. Right now we are working through the book of Daniel. In my personal devotional life, I want to study Daniel and I invited (them) to come and study that with me. It is not going to be an organized Bible study where I am going to come in and teach like I teach a class on Wednesday nights. I am going to study it and I challenge you to study it. Let us get together once a month and talk about what God is teaching us through it. I have both organized and unorganized aspects of it. My wife is a huge (positive) challenge to me too. She listens to a lot of podcasts and reads a lot of books. We sit and talk about stuff that we are learning together.”



**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church C Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“One of the first and biggest goes back to my grandmother. I remember being a youth at youth camp. Youth camp is a huge emotional experience, and I came back really emotional and high. I had rededicated my life and all this kind of stuff. Even though I was in eighth grade and did not have much to rededicate, I just needed to make my relationship more real. I remember coming home and talking to her, she said what (is) rededicating. Is that biblical? She just challenged me to put the emotion aside for little bit and get grounded in what Scripture says about this. At first it kind of hurt my feelings, (because) I thought that my grandmother was denying my experience. It was discipleship. Whether she knew it or not or I knew it or not, it really is what that was. My other big time was when I surrendered to ministry. I remember having a lot of conversations with my mom and dad about that. It was not an organized fashion. I spent a lot of time laying on the foot of their bed and keeping them awake at night. (We were) talking about what that meant and what it meant to be a part of ministry. More recently is the challenge from my wife. In ways that I am teaching, growing, and trying to be more compassionate (about) ministry. It is not doing ministry just to be doing ministry, but being more compassionate in my dealings with people.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church C Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“There is a need to be intentional in discipleship, (but) a ton of discipleship happens at unintentional times. For instance, that conversation with my grandmother. It was not to sit down and intentionally teach (me) something. I went to her house and mentioned that I

had rededicated my life at youth camp, and she was like okay, what does that mean. I look back with my kids now and I have not done a great job with it. My oldest is a teenager now and to get him to sit down and try to study a book together (is difficult). We have not done a great job with that. It is about finding those moments in life when we can say this is what we can learn here or this is what we can learn about God.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church C Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“As far as discipleship practices, there are a couple of different things. One is probably on a larger group scale. I teach a discipleship group on Wednesday nights and I am teaching through the gospel of Matthew. We are just going to go step-by-step through Matthew. (Soon) I am going to teach through Judges, and we are going to go step-by-step through Judges and unpack the word of God to see what that looks like for us. My pastor says you have got to meet people where they are to get them where they need to be. It is not a one-on-one time, because it is a bigger group. We are not going to get into deep, personal, intimate details of people’s lives and see how that is going. I try to structure that and look at all aspects: Old Testament and New Testament. (We try) to see what all of God’s word says to us. We want people to get into God’s word for themselves. Do not be dependent upon me or another teacher. The second is a group of guys that we started several years ago. George Guthrie did a thing on reading through the Bible in a year. We went through the Bible in a year. The challenge initially was to do this and the goal was for (them) to get two or three guys and challenge them to read the Bible with you. That has been a goal for 12 years. That has not taken off like I wanted it to. Those guys have

not really broken off a whole lot with their own groups. Some of that is a failure on my part, and some of that is a failure overall. The idea of them leading somebody else is terrifying to them and they do not think they can. They tried to start groups and nobody would commit to (them). People are not too busy to do the things they want to do, but way too busy to do the things they do not want to do. You have got to change that culture. I have not gotten there yet. It is being more intentional about being more intimate in the class. (We talk) about how this affects my personal walk with Christ.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church C Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“I do not feel like I do a great job of it even though it is my job. I do not feel like I do a great job of it honestly. I feel like a marker of discipleship is when you are creating people who are creating disciples. If that is going to be a marker for me, then I do not know how well I am doing that. I do not know that there are a whole lot of people who are creating disciples. I need to do a better job that. (It is) not just on the people to grow in a relationship, but understanding that true growth is on helping others to grow. Not just to grow in our faith, but to know faith.”

**Church C Staff Member 2. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church C Staff Member 2 replied, “16 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served alongside the pastor, Church C Staff Member 2 replied, “3 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church, Church C Staff Member 2 replied, “3 years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church C Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“Shortly after I was saved, I started meeting one-on-one with our youth minister. Apart from our large group of student ministry, he pulled me and a couple of other guys aside, and we met three-on-one. It was just learning how to follow Jesus one-on-one.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church C Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I have some guys who are a little bit older than me in the faith and I default to them. They are guys who have leadership positions in churches or guys who are lay leaders. I have seen how they trust the Lord and they are my go-to people. They pray for me, and they lift me up. I can go to them with any question I have. They will meet with me, and they are faithful men who took the time to invest in me whenever I need it.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church C Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“(I have learned) to take time with folks. We are never a finished product this side of heaven. We are still in the process and are in need of people. People are people. Some people need to be babied or (brought) along. We are to love them through the good times and through the bad times. Time is one way that you can express that desire to love people.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church C Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I have learned the vision of discipleship is the main thing that Jesus has called us to. When he left, he said go therefore and make disciples. No matter where I am at in life (a

youth minister, a pastor, a plumber, a teacher, a janitor), am I making disciples? Am I investing in someone else to follow Jesus? Wherever I am or whatever I am doing I should be active in seeking to disciple and invest in a younger brother.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church C Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“My mode of discipleship now is going back to Scripture. (It is) to help them understand Scripture, show them how to read their Bibles, teach them how to pray, teach them how to share their faith, teach them how to share their testimony. This is what I do as far as investing in someone and helping them turn around and turn into a disciple-maker eventually. We have a disciplee and the goal for that person is to become a discipler.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church C Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“If Jesus is not the main goal, if it is to glorify yourself, if it is to make others see you as a better person, then you are missing the mark of discipleship. Discipleship is loving people, teaching them how to follow Jesus, because that is what we do. That is what he has called us to. Since he is our master and we are his bond slaves or servants, then that should be our goal. It should not be to glorify ourselves or flex our spiritual muscles (by saying) look how many spiritual disciples I have. It is to glorify Jesus and show the world how many disciples Jesus has.”

**Church C Female Church Member. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church C Female Church Member replied, “40 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have attended church with the pastor, Church C Female Church Member replied, “7 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many church services you attend per month, Church C Female Church Member replied, “12 services.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church C Female Church Member replied as follows:

“That is hard, because it is not like I had this life-changing transformation at 5 years old. I had not done a whole lot. It just has been there my whole life. It is not like I have this long story to tell of my journey before Christ. It is like he has always been there from day one, it felt like.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church C Female Church Member replied as follows:

“The past six months have been amazing. (It is because of) where I am at the moment. The church asked me if I would help with women’s Bible study, which I did years ago when I was in my mid-twenties. I felt young at that time, but now I am kind of the old mom helping with (others). We have five children ranging from twenty-two to three (years old). I have either been there, done that, or I am doing it now. He has taught me so much, through these women that I am working with right now, about real life and the things that we are going through. Here is a constant conversation that we have in our class on Wednesday nights. We put on our church faces to walk in, and we make sure that our kids have on their church faces. But, we are still real people going through real stuff. We have become so honest with each other, and through that we are able to get into

the Scripture and dig deeper. (We can) find stuff that applies to our ‘church person’ that we have become. We try to mask things that we are going through, because we are afraid that we are the only ones who are going through it. We can talk about it, because we are in church. We are the Wednesday night crowd, (so) we are the core group. We cannot open up like we should. These women have taught me so much about how Satan continues to try every way to get to us. We have to have our antennas up constantly, thinking about (Satan’s next plan or attack). (We try) to battle it now and take care of it, so it does not turn into something that we have to deal with down the road.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church C Female Church Member replied as follows:

“There are physical things that I can tell you, because I would not have my husband, my children, or the things that I have right now if it was not for what I have learned through Christ and being discipled. There is no telling where my life could have been, physically speaking. Grace. Just understanding the concept of God’s grace. Finally figuring out how real that is.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church C Female Church Member replied as follows:

“There is one person that comes to mind. It goes back to grace. Every conversation that we have, as we dig into it and dive in, she has taught me about grace. God’s grace.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church C Female Church Member replied as follows:

“If you are constantly masking what you are going through, whether they are temptations or feelings that you are going through, when you come closer to Christ then you cannot mask that and hide it. You cannot have an issue in your life and run from it, but you have to run toward it. For example, we had one week when we talked about marriage. If you have issues in your marriage, that is not something that you air. We are not going to walk in open air and our bare soul. I had everyone anonymously write down, a piece of paper, something that you have overcome in your marriage or something you are going through in your marriage. I collected those. It is kind of funny now with text messaging that we do not know each other’s handwriting anymore. I mixed them up, and I did not know who wrote any of them. I read them out loud, and through tears we realized that we are not the only ones going through this. We are not the only ones who have been through it. When you acknowledge that, then you can run to it with God and figure it out with him, how to handle life. This past semester we did *Lies Women Believe and the Truth that Sets Them Free*. We do more practical studies, I would say. (They are) life application studies. It started as a mom/parenting type class, and we started to dig deeper into our personal lives. If we are not in tune with God, then you can throw the mama thing out the window. Get yourself in tune with God first, then we can let everything else fall into place.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church C Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I think that it is something that the church does not need to get away from. I think there are so many churches now that are the feel-good types of churches. They do not dig deep and they do not teach the discipleship that we (need) to have. Life does not always feel



good, and it is not always great. If we are not disciplined and disciplined in how to handle those hard times, then that is when we fall apart.”

**Church C Male Church Member. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church C Male Church Member replied, “26 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have attended church with the pastor, Church C Male Church Member replied, “13 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many church services you attend per month, Church C Male Church Member replied, “12 services.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church C Male Church Member replied as follows:

“I grew up in the church and thought I got saved at a younger age, but I did not have that relationship. In between (my) junior and senior years of high school, I got saved. I tried to get more involved in a daily devotion.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church C Male Church Member replied as follows:

“(I would say) daily devotions and the men’s study group here at our church. There may be two to three or five to ten guys (that meet), and we are going through a book. We are finishing Daniel this year. We have been meeting once a month going through Daniel. Next year we are going to start on Revelation.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church C Male Church Member replied as follows:

“God is always in control no matter what is going on in the world and who thinks they are in power or control. God has a bigger picture in plan that we may not always know or see.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church C Male Church Member replied as follows:

“(Our associate pastor) is pretty good. I am more of an introvert, I do not know if you picked up on that or not. I am short on words and straight to the point. He has the right temperament, attitude, and (is) a people person whom others can learn from. He does a good job developing a relationship with people.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church C Male Church Member replied as follows:

“Depending on if it is a new Christian or old Christian, I would look for a type of devotional study to help them along and to get them involved in Scripture more. (To develop) the habit of spending time in the word.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church C Male Church Member replied as follows:

“No.”

## APPENDIX J

### Church D Completed Church Study

**Church D Pastor. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church D Pastor replied, “31 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served as a pastor, Church D Pastor replied, “16 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church as a pastor, Church D Pastor replied, “14 years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church D Pastor replied as follows:

“I was born and raised in church. I was in a Southern Baptist home, and my mom had me in church every time the doors were open. I was saved at age 9. Like many others growing up in a similar tradition, I was involved in Sunday school, Royal Ambassadors, and the youth. I was heavily involved in the youth group and the student ministry. The greatest single impact, as far as discipleship, came in my college years with a college small group teacher that fully invested in me. That guy taught my college Sunday school class. He was the (local) NBC station manager. Do you remember when the show NYPD Blue came out? It was the first time that a naked man’s rear end was ever to be shown on national television. Prior to being my Sunday school teacher, he had refused to show the NYPD Blue episode on the (local) NBC affiliate. NBC demanded his firing, and he resigned as the station manager. He started his own advertising agency. When I got to college, he was teaching a college Sunday school class. It was one of the first times that I remember being so impressed with how prepared he was. Even though I was not exactly

living for the Lord, I would still come because I was convinced that this man believed and could back up everything he was saying. That blew my mind. The more I got to know him, then the more he challenged me. He challenged me in my Christian life and my study life. He challenged me on an academic level to really study my faith and to study the Bible. He gave me the first Christian discipleship book that I ever read. He gave me a copy of *The Pursuit of God* by A.W. Tozer. He challenged me to read it, and I could not put it down. I truly believe that this is one of the ways that God used to call me into the ministry. That started a searching and a longing. I began to really study my Bible and read. To this day, through all the people that taught me growing up, he is the one that I still hear from. He might say that he listened to my sermon last week and thought I did a great job explaining the text, and he still sends cards from time to time. It is a passion of his, and I really respected the stance that he took on the Bible. It really created a hunger in me to keep studying. In the past 10 years or so, I have (gained) perspective of how much impact that had.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church D Pastor replied as follows:

“That is an ongoing commitment and a challenge. That is one of the things I think that pastors struggle with. First is coming to the realization that you cannot lead on empty. So often there is a temptation, because Sunday is always coming, to be prepared to preach. I guess, if we are not careful, then what I am preparing (may not have) impacted me. In my own personal time with the Lord, I try do what I encourage other people to do. There is no real differences. That starts with the Bible. This is incredibly simple, but reading the Bible. No more. No less. Do you read your Bible? Daily Bible reading, prayer, and

having a devotional book (not necessarily a 365 day devotional book) that I am reading that has nothing to do with what I am currently teaching or preaching. That is to make sure that not everything I am reading is to give out, but it is to breathe in.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church D Pastor replied as follows:

“(Regarding) my own personal discipleship, how it has impacted me, and how I hope the ministry is being carried out. Discipleship cannot be done unless someone truly loves and cares about the people they are discipling. I think from my own personal standpoint about how many personal hours I spend studying to teach and studying to preach. It does not matter if the sermons are outstanding, average, or poor. If the people that you are preaching to do not know you love them and if you do not know you love them, then over time that will absolutely wreck any discipleship strategy. My beef sometimes with strategies is that, if we put the foundation before the strategy, then the strategy is not going to work. In my own life, I have to be able to know and trust someone for them to be able to disciple me. It even happens with people I will listen to preach. It takes a long time (for me) to get things from their preaching, because I want to trust their theology and trust their heart. It is also true in how we apply that to discipleship as well. There has to be a genuine concern for the people. We are not reproducing for the sake of reproduction. That is the ideology of cancer. We are reproducing because we know that is what is best for people that we love. We want God’s best for them. (There should be) a genuine concern for people being disciplined.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church D Pastor replied as follows:

“I think the greatest conviction that I have learned is that sometimes, as a pastor, we want to disciple in broad strokes. Meaning that we want to preach to hundreds or thousands of people. In a similar way to a podcast being heard, an article being read, or a book being read. The people who are the most incredible at discipling others are the ones that understand that there must be a relationship built. Obviously, there is a place for the pulpit ministry or those broader spectrum discipleships. If there is not some individual relationships being built (in small group settings), then there will be a lot that falls through the cracks. Accountability in those relationships need to be built. Specific people investing time in other individuals is vital.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church D Pastor replied as follows:

“There are complete volumes that try to cover the breadth of that question. I will try the best that I can. First, what is a disciple? A disciple is a follower. You cannot be a follower unless you are a believer. Discipleship has to start with evangelism. For this purpose, we are not spending all of our time talking about certain strategies. Every discipleship strategy must have the question of are you a genuine believer. Even in church life (this should exist). It is not about whether someone is a church member or if they have been baptized. Is this person a genuine believer? You cannot disciple a person who is not a believer. (That person) needs to be changed by the power of the gospel. So, initially ensuring that a person is a true follower of Jesus Christ is important. It is almost like what we are doing right now. Asking questions in different ways to see if you get different answers. You are trying to find if a person understands what original sin is, what

repentance is, the difference in wanting forgiveness and truly repenting, and getting a grasp on what it truly means for Christ to be Lord of your life. If you see from the fruit of their testimony that they are a genuine believer, then there are a few things that have to happen. We can look at the Parable of the Soils. For the seed to land on good soil, a few things have to happen. These are requirements that we make of either new Christians or new church members. Number one is that you need to commit to corporate worship. At some point in society, it may have been assumed that Christians went to church or (participated) in a worship service. Now, being in the digital age that we are in, that is not something that is taken for granted. There are a lot of people because of an individualistic culture that do not believe that. It is taught nowhere in the New Testament that you can be a growing disciple of Christ and not worship with the Saints. As simple as this is, we help people understand that since you are saved, then you should want to be here regularly in attendance in corporate worship. Immediately upon stressing corporate worship, you need to be in private worship. That seems like a daunting task for a lot of people. They need to be in private worship. We are asking you for seven days a week to have a time when you read your Bible and spend time in prayer. It is impossible to be a disciple if you are not in corporate worship, and it is impossible for you to be a disciple if you are not in private worship. These requirements of discipleship would be fundamental. Corporate and individual (worship). The second thing we stress is that you have to be in a community of other believers. Some people call this Sunday school, and some people call that small groups. It is a requirement that you be in a small group of people. As our church or any church grows (whether that church runs 50 or 1,500), there is no way to bring life into that group of people unless they are in a small group to provide fellowship,

life, and accountability. They need to be able to serve together. What we have found in discipleship is that we are good at getting the crop to pop up out of the ground. There is an initial excitement and emotion. We often found that the back door was as wide open as the front door. We tried to figure out what the missing element was. Why are we attracting them but not keeping them. We have found out through our own studies that we retain a very high percentage of the people that get in a small group or life group Bible study. If we are able to move them from just a worshiper to a small group attendee, then our chance at keeping them and discipling them goes up exponentially. There should be corporate worship, private worship, and small group (involvement). We base everything on these three expectations. We expect everyone to serve. We do not believe it is possible to be a growing Christian if you are selfish. Modern culture often panders to people having their needs met. We want people to move along quickly in the process to think about how they can meet other people's needs. That is involving service to the church and missions. Service is about more than being willing to clean up on Wednesday nights in the nursery or singing in the choir. Those ministries are vital and we want people in those ministries, but we have not produced a disciple if they cannot give their testimony. Part of service is being able to share what God has done in your life, to be able to share the gospel. That is a strong statement, but you cannot share the gospel when you do not know the gospel. If you are not able to explain it, then it has not taken root in your life. Worship, community, and service would be the driving forces behind our expectations of discipleship."

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church D Pastor replied as follows:



“There are a thousand rabbit trails that we could run down, but I think that we have covered it.”

**Church D Staff Member 1. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church D Staff Member 1 replied, “39 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served alongside the pastor, Church D Staff Member 1 replied, “6 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church, Church D Staff Member 1 replied, “I have been on staff for six years, but I have been a member of this church for 17 years. I was a basketball coach locally before being on staff here. I was active in the church and involved in the church, but I was being called to something different. My pastor identified (God’s call) in me. As I told him about the call I was feeling, even before I shared with my wife, he told me that he had noticed it too. That kind of scared me.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church D Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“There was none. I actually grew up in the United Methodist Church. I have since converted to Baptist. I accepted Christ and after that I was involved in the church and in Sunday school. There was not much of a student ministry. (Discipleship) kind of fell by the wayside.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church D Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“As I previously stated, in the first few years after my salvation, there was not much discipleship. God’s grace kept me close. It kept me in a walk with him. I was involved in a previous church when I was living in another city. That is where God really started moving in my life. As we came to (our current church), there was a great discipleship model here. I got on a fast-track in my walk with the Lord. (It came) through getting involved in small groups. I started serving in the four and five-year-olds Sunday school (class). The natural adjustment after serving there for a few years was to go to the students. I started serving in (the student) area on Wednesday nights and teaching Sunday school. That was when I was still teaching and coaching (as a vocation). That is when I started to sense God’s call on my life to ministry. There was a lot of struggle trying to figure it out. I was an older person at that time (being) about 40 years old. (My thoughts were) what am I doing, and what am I feeling. I struggled through that trying to figure out what God’s will was for my life. I was a member here at the church and through discussions with my pastor I knew that I was being called to the ministry. At that point in time, I did not know which direction. I did not know if I was going to be a pastor or what (ministry) would look like. We had an opening (in our church staff) because our children’s pastor left. I was really good friends with (the children’s pastor). I was selected to be on the search committee and (served) as the chairman. We went through a process of looking at resumes, and I told the Lord that I was not going to seek anything or actively place resumes across the state for ministry positions. I never said anything to anybody, and one day our pastor came in and asked if I would be interested. I said that I did not know and asked to pray about it. I prayed about that for a week or two, and I felt like I was called to that area. I felt that I would be interested in that. At that point, (the

pastor) said that we were not going to make a decision right now. I (asked) the committee to continue to look, and they (continue to search for a period of about 6 to 8 months) without me being on that committee. They came back and asked if I would be interested (in the position). I met with the team in view of the call and started as the children's minister here."

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church D Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

"Early on as I was a member of this church what helped me tremendously were the people on this staff at that time. They pulled me into a very small group of two, three, or four guys. We would meet, read books, and study God's word. I really think that was a tremendous help in my discipleship and my walk with the Lord. That is where I felt like I grew in a big way. There was accountability and spending time in God's word. I got to look at other men who were good godly Christian men. They had a strong walk, and through that it helped me to grow. I started off as children's minister, then became the discipleship pastor, and now I am the church administrator and missions pastor. (Concerning) discipleship I teach a small group. I tell them that you have got to spend time with the Lord in his word. You have got to find that quiet time. You have got to find a relationship which is bonding with him. They need to be in a small group of some sort where you have accountability. You can be held accountable by other people who are walking with the Lord, and you can hold them accountable. The smaller the group; the better. Jesus disciplined in small groups. Everything you study about Jesus' discipleship group was in a small setting. I think it is very important to be involved with some guys. There were some guys on staff here, some guys in this church, and some older men who

invested in me as they saw something in me before I ever saw it myself. (They) pulled me into some groups studying God's word and poured into me. God can do anything, but he uses people to facilitate that. I am so thankful for those men who did that for me because they saw something. God was leading them to do the things they were doing in my life."

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church D Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

"Spending time in God's word. Spending a quiet time with him. I think that is the most important and foundational thing that we can do with new believers. It is harder to do that without a small group setting for new believers. It is hard for new believers to do that on their own. What does it look like to spend time with the Lord? What does it look like to have a quiet time? So many things can be learned through a group of two, three, or four people. You are going to open up more. It is sometimes hard in my small group. We have been together for a long time, over a year now, and we have grown to thirty people. That is not a perfect model. At some point we are going to have to grow into numbers of different classes. It is fantastic that a number of people in that group have come from just being worshipers to getting plugged into a small group. It has grown, and now it is time for us to divide and multiply. The most foundational thing for me is finding that habit or routine of spending time with God every day. It is about hearing from his word and spending time with him. (It is about) being held accountable, and that is the best discipleship practice. That is what worked in my life, because people poured into me."

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church D Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“This is what God has placed on my heart over the last year or so. It is identifying those people who are new believers (or) young in their walk with the Lord and finding a way to build a relationship with them in a small setting. (I may) take them out to lunch and begin investing in them. We began to have conversations about what God is doing. I will share my testimony with them about what God has done in my life and hopefully encourage them to see the things that God will be doing in their lives. It goes back to spending time together and being able to have deeper conversations about who the Lord is and what he is doing. It reverts back to looking into his word, seeking his guidance, and doing those things.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church D Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“I think that spending time pouring into people through the discipleship process does not happen by itself. I think it happens much better in a smaller group. I have done several studies with our church on Wednesday nights through some different books that lead us to a smaller group setting. I think that the discipleship process happens much better (in a smaller group). The smaller the group; the more there is that can be accomplished. It is hard to disciple people. You may can disciple people in a group of 500, but that becomes difficult, because I do not think you can get very deep into what God is doing in their lives. Most people would close up and not share. I think sharing is very important. I try to encourage my small group (to share) in this safe area. I taught our small group from the outset that I want them to be discipled. I want to help them in their walk with the Lord. I do not ever want to waste a day that we come in here. I want us to be constantly growing in our walk with the Lord. That is why we made a smaller setting. We do not do that in

the sanctuary where you are in a group of hundreds and hundreds of people. You just cannot discuss the things that need to be discussed. (Things like) what is going on in your life, your own heart, and where God is taking you. You can share with others. I think that helps them to open up. Every night we end our time with a share time of what you saw God do in other people's lives and maybe even around the world. I have never been anywhere where God did not speak to me. I could be on the other side of the world and he shows me something incredible. It blows my mind. He is wanting to show us those things so that we can grow closer to him. I think the sharing part helps other people understand that God is moving. It helps them to see what God is doing in their lives. It helps them to grow closer to him and ultimately that is what we want. Every day should be a step toward him. That is the reason it is called a walk. We should constantly be striving to walk even closer to him. I hope I never reach the place where I say, hey, I am there. I will be getting closer and closer. I never want to say that I accomplished everything. I will constantly be striving to improve my relationship with him like I do with my spouse each and every day."

**Church D Staff Member 2. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church D Staff Member 2 replied, "40 years."

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served alongside the pastor, Church D Staff Member 2 replied, "next month will be 2 years."

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church, Church D Staff Member 2 replied, "next month will be 2 years."

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church D Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“At that time our church was old-fashioned. We had Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, and Discipleship Training on Sunday nights at five o’clock. You had that formal process. As far as actually being discipled, I would say that I was not. I guess, in a way, I was, but not truly discipled.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church D Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“Still growing. I guess that should be the case for all of us. We were talking earlier today about going through *F-260* (which is a Bible reading plan from Replicate Ministries) and doing the journal every day. Going through that process has meant (a lot) to me. That is one thing that I am looking to share with our small group leaders. I hope to start that in the coming months with maybe three guys. (I hope to) walk them through that process and, in turn, them find three or four guys and doing that. (We are) just trying to get that multiplication going.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church D Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“We are continually growing. You never really arrive. It is a process and every day you are looking to grow that relationship.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church D Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I was in college and the local church had just called a pastor. He had only been at that church for maybe a month. He came by, met the BSU director, and said that he was wanting to do *Masterlife* with his church. It had been a while since he had done it, and he

wanted some guinea pigs. The BSU director gave him several names, and he called us up. There ended up being four of us that went through *Masterlife* with him. That was the first time I had ever done anything like that. That was really my first true discipleship experience. At that point in time, I did not think about going into the ministry. I guess something I picked up from him was his sense of persistence. If you miss a day at Bible reading, that is okay. Do not quit, just jump back in. Keep working until you make it a habit. One thing that stands out about him was his humbleness. The attitude he had towards trying to learn more about God. He would always say: the more you learn; the more you love him.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church D Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“Let us say somebody joins the church on Sunday morning. The first step is that we try to get them involved in a small group. That is basically our Sunday school. We try to get them plugged in with a group. We encourage them. Someone always asks what is next. We tell them to come to worship every chance you get and to invite a friend. Find a small group, come every chance you get, and invite a friend. Get plugged in trying to read your Bible. In January we are starting a church wide *F-260* trying to get people involved in reading their Bibles every day. (We are) also encouraging people to serve. (They may choose to serve) in our church as a greeter, security, or whatever. We have a rule that (a person) must be a member for a year before they can teach. We have community service (projects) and different ministries that we are involved in. So we always say worship,



small groups, and service. That is the pathway that we follow in trying to get people plugged in. If you are doing those things, then you are growing.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church D Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“No. (The discipleship process) needs to be something simple that people can replicate. If there are only three steps in the here repeated often, then hopefully it will sink in and become second nature.”

**Church D Female Church Member. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church D Female Church Member replied, “31 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have attended church with the pastor, Church D Female Church Member replied, “14 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many church services you attend per month, Church D Female Church Member replied, “8 services.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church D Female Church Member replied as follows:

“There really was no discipleship. I did not start growing as a Christian until (13 years later) when I rededicated my life. That is when I really started to get involved with (our church). That was when I started to have discipleship. I had a Sunday school teacher who started the discipleship process with me.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church D Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I have a quiet time and I have several devotionals that I have set in my phone to remind me. I have a prayer time and I am a Sunday school leader which helps me. It holds me accountable, because I want to be an example to my youth. (It helps to be) involved with youth program mission trips. I realize that it is not all about me. It is about trying to love people and make a difference.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church D Female Church Member replied as follows:

“Having people feel connected. (Our pastor) has annual meetings with the Sunday school or small group leaders to go over plans, what is working, and what is not working. He values our opinions of what we are doing. He does not believe in doing things just to be doing them. He wants everything we do to make a difference. He asks if things are working or if they are not working. He wants us to intentionally reach out to people in our small groups. In my Sunday school small group, we have the Group Me app. We send verses to the girls in our group. We have two services for our 7 to 9<sup>th</sup> grade girls. We make sure that both Sunday school rooms are invited to all activities. Our pastor encourages us to be intentional and invite people.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church D Female Church Member replied as follows:

“Letting people know that you care. They would personally call me on the phone and say that they missed me at Sunday school. They would say that Sunday school is not the same without me. That would send a card. (Before I rededicated to the Lord) I was kind of hit or miss (with my attendance). I was going through a lot personally, but when I tell you that they loved me and prayed for me and my family, that is what I want to do. I want

to know what is going on in my small group. (I do that) so I can be intentional about reaching out.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church D Female Church Member replied as follows:

“When we are having our small group, I make sure that they are all participating. I expect them to take notes during big church. When we talk about the sermon, (I ask) what applies to them or what they need to change in their life? We break down the sermon in our small group. They (also) participate in the Group Me app. If there have been prayer requests, I remind everyone to pray for whatever is going on. When we have special gatherings at the church, I walk around and let them know that I am glad they are there. I try to love on them.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church D Female Church Member replied as follows:

“When I talk with my youth about discipleship, I remind them that it is about doing life together. It is about trying to hold each other accountable. I want them to be better tomorrow than they were yesterday. If they mess up, then it is okay. We go back, get on bended knee, and repent to God. We move on from that and do not continue to look in the past. It is teaching them about God’s grace, love, and mercy. Sometimes we are judgmental, but God is not. We need to offer that same grace, love, and mercy to others. (The young ladies that I teach) can be very critical of one another. God has his arms wide open to accept us, so why do not we do more of that with each other. Are you going to be a builder or a basher?”

**Church D Male Church Member. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church D Male Church Member replied, “24 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have attended church with the pastor, Church D Male Church Member replied, “5 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many church services you attend per month, Church D Male Church Member replied, “8 services.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church D Male Church Member replied as follows:

“I have this memory of when I was baptized at the age of nine. I was given a *Survival Kit*. It was like a little workbook thing. It was something like doing one thing a day, and my parents would help me with it. I would see my pastor on Sunday mornings and he would say something about us getting together to talk about (the *Survival Kit*). He never established a time for me to come by to talk. I have a distinct memory that there was no follow up on his end. It was like a weekly occurrence that he would tell me that we were going to do this. I was just a kid at church and wondered if we needed an appointment. An initial, structured discipleship thing never happened.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church D Male Church Member replied as follows:

“There is a really close friend of mine that I try to get together with about once a month. This semester has been a really difficult semester for us. (When we get together,) we have coffee and just talk. It is not a real formal discipleship. He is a strong believer, and it is (discipleship). That is the type of conversations that we have. We have both been super

busy lately. My personal study is also what I would consider discipleship. That may not be flesh and blood, sitting down with somebody, but it is certainly an aspect of my discipleship. I am currently taking some additional graduate classes at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. I have been doing that for the last three semesters. I am taking some apologetic courses. So that has been a part of my personal studies.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church D Male Church Member replied as follows:

“The importance of study. I am a bookish kind of guy anyway. This is about the importance of studying the Bible and other books that help deepen your knowledge.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church D Male Church Member replied as follows:

“One thing that comes to mind is from my friend that I meet with semi-regularly for coffee. He gave a book to me by Robby Gallaty entitled *Rediscovering Discipleship*. One of the big takeaways (from that book) was having a plan for how you are going to do (discipleship). You are not just muddling along with it.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church D Male Church Member replied as follows:

“There is a small group that I teach. My wife and I teach it together. It was originally a newlywed class. There were several newlywed couples in church and we got them together to start this class. That class has been going on for three years now, so it has transitioned to a young married class. This is a group of believers which are in a similar life stage. This class is structured to follow the Sunday morning service. We dig in deeper

to the passage that was just preached on. Our pastor does a wonderful job of explaining and expounding (the passage). We dig in as we compare notes and start questions. We also try to do some topical discipleship. We did (a study on) finances. We also did a study on the attributes of God which was almost like a type of theological education. For me personally, studying and reading is very important. While thinking about discipleship, we have attempted, as a class, to read a book and discuss it. Well, no one else really read the book. That kind of flopped on us. (Previously) my wife and I, while living in a different area and attending a different church, were part of a small group of newlyweds. We wanted to do that for a group of newlyweds one day. We tried to model our (new) class after the one we had been a part of. (In the previous class,) we regularly read books and discussed them. In our minds, this was going to be great, but it was not. It kind of hurt my feelings a little bit. I wanted it to be great for them like it was for me. It just was not. Looking back, the clientele (of the classes) was different. (The previous class and its members) were more bookish than the current class. Everybody is different. There was comfort in being honest with everybody. (I would have to say) you did not do your homework. It just did not work, so we tried something different. I learned the hard way and have not done that again. That just was not going to work with this group. (As people in my group mature,) I see that they are going to be there (for the class). There are some other people who average coming about once a month. As we discuss something in our (discipleship) group, I love to hear someone ask what the Bible has to say about this. They are going to Scripture to answer their questions instead of just asking me. They are looking up the answers on their own.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church D Male Church Member replied as follows:

“The only thing that I thought of that really did not fit into one of the questions is what is the gospel. (My wife and I while teaching the class) try to keep the gospel at the forefront of our discussions. We tried to think about how this (subject) applies to the gospel or what does the gospel have to say about this. We want our view to be through the lens of the gospel.”

## **APPENDIX K**

### **Church E Completed Church Study**

**Church E Pastor. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church E Pastor replied, “48 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served as a pastor, Church E Pastor replied, “30 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church as a pastor, Church E Pastor replied, “9 years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church E Pastor replied as follows:

“My conversion experience and subsequent baptism by immersion took place when I was six years old. That happened at my home church. My grandparents, on my mother’s side, helped start that church. My grandfather was a music director and a deacon. My mother was involved in that congregation from her childhood, and (is involved there) even today. My discipleship process started before I was born. My mother, my father, and their parents were believers. So, they prayed for their children before they were born. It is not a big surprise to me that I made a decision to follow Jesus as early as I did. I was immersed in the gospel. They lived (the gospel) out, and I saw it. That congregation is a strong congregation still today. At six years old, my discipleship process was really in our Sunday school classes. I attended Sunday school. We also had Royal Ambassadors, Girls in Action, and Mission Friends. I was in Mission Friends early on getting discipleship and missions (education). I attended church every time the doors were open. I would say



regular, constant exposure to the gospel and to other believers who gave their time to teach and equip is how (my discipleship) happened.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church E Pastor replied as follows:

“First of all, my own personal devotional life is critical. I am currently systematically reading through the Bible. I have done that for multiple years, but this year I am going through a *Kingdom Bible Reading Plan*. It has four sections of Scripture each day. I also have a prayer journal. I spend time prayer journaling. I spend time doing that every morning and sometimes throughout the day. Currently, I am five days ahead on my Bible reading, as it is approaching the end of the year. My wife is a strong believer. In the morning time, we have a discussion about different Bible passages or things that she is working on. She teaches Bible at a local school. My son is also a Bible teacher, so we stay in the word. I try to keep things fresh in my prayer life as well. I came across Psalm 119:164, which says seven times in the day I will praise you, because of your righteous judgment. I thought about where it says seven times in a day. A few days ago I set the alarm on my phone for seven different times during the day. At 6 AM, 8 AM, 10 AM, 12 PM, 2 PM, 4 PM, and 6 PM I had phenomenally divine appointments. Discipleship includes the regular spiritual disciplines. I always value coming up with fresh ways to incorporate new spiritual disciplines. It was a magnificent experience. I would highly recommend it.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church E Pastor replied as follows:

“The first thing on the list is intimacy with King Jesus. Sunday I preached on the incarnation. The Bible says that the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory. Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father and sent the Holy Spirit. He takes up residency inside of you. As my wife testified Sunday morning, Jesus is in us. The intimate walk with Christ (is the) discipleship process of developing and maturing in your faith. It is learning to nurture that relationship and learning to experience it every moment of your day. So many people compartmentalize their faith. They have public, private, Sunday, and weekday (sections of life). Some have one hour a day versus 24 hours a day. It is not that. Your life in Christ is 24/7. I go to sleep praying, and I wake up praying. Intimacy with King Jesus is a benefit. Maturity comes along with it as you are able to pour into other people’s lives as you multiply disciples. The multiplication process will probably come in on another question.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church E Pastor replied as follows:

“Some of the things I have learned have been very practical discipleship methods that I read about or learned about from individuals. I tried to implement (things that I have learned) and apply those to my life. I guess incorporate would be a better word. I try to incorporate them in my own discipleship. For instance, I have a cousin who is a pastor and he reads the Bible every year. Each year he reads through a different Bible, and he keeps those Bibles. He puts them on a bookshelf, and, when you walk in his library, you will see 40 or 50 Bibles lined up. He keeps the dates in them when he read through the Bible. He reads through chronological Bibles and different versions. He is a mentor in my life through his prayer life, prayer journals, and sermon preparation. I have gleaned from

all of that. I also try to learn from dead people as I read old books from years gone by. I let dead men mentor me, and I let alive men mentor me. I also learn from new believers. I like the freshness of a new believer. I want some of their excitement to spill over me, because I have been a believer for 48 years. I do not want to get dull. I want to stay fresh.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church E Pastor replied as follows:

“The best example is the current example. My wife and I are very compatible spiritually. She may be more (spiritual) than me. Recently, we have been discipling together within the congregation. We have selected a couple of young new believers. One is a female (new believer) whose husband was already a believer. The other is a husband (new believer) whose wife was already a believer. I developed a discipleship strategy called *Five Levels of Lordship*. The first level is Jesus is Lord. If you are dead in your sin, then you are on that first level. Jesus is Lord whether you are a believer or not. It is a fact. The second level is where you confessed Jesus as Lord and enter into a relationship with him. We talk about those dynamics. For the third level I use is a ministry résumé. I have a personality test that I give. I also give them a spiritual gifts assessment. We talk about ministry passion and some of the things they are passionate about. We take those three things, put them together, and they write out a paragraph summarizing what their ministry résumé would look like. I try to help them discover their gifts and learn how to implement them. The fourth level is reproduction. I teach them how to disciple other people. The people (that I am currently involved in discipling) are 28 to 35 years old.

Even though they are infants in Christ, they have had exposure to the gospel. I have put them on the fast track and have helped them. I am trying to train them on how to disciple somebody else. The last level is results. There are people such as Billy Graham whose lives have greatly impacted Christianity. Those people still impact the kingdom of God. Those are the five levels of Lordship. I have done that with our staff and have taken Sunday school classes through that. Right now, when a new believer comes to faith, I approach them and ask if they would consider going through this with me for about six weeks. After that, I get them plugged in to a Sunday school class or a small group where they can build relationships with other believers. That is what I am doing right now and that is a part of our church. I am trying to train these two new couples. They have shown a lot of potential, and I want to stay with them to see how they progress. I can see them taking another set of folks through the same process.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church E Pastor replied as follows:

“One thing is that you never arrive. Even when you die and go into the presence of Jesus, it will be for all of eternity. The challenge is in our human nature. We get slack and apathetic. Our priorities are in the wrong places. The things of the world lure as a way from spending the time necessary to develop the relationship with the Lord. That is always been a challenge through 30 years of pastoring. Some people will catch on and you cannot give them enough. Others you are not able to track down. I try to find the ones that want to grow. The couples that I have been working with have been so encouraging, because they are soaking everything up as a sponge. They are so far along in their personal lives. We have been talking with them about their children (and future

children). As I mentioned earlier, my discipleship process took place before I was ever born. You are to start early before they are born. It is constant work.”

**Church E Staff Member 1. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church E Staff Member 1 replied, “40 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served alongside the pastor, Church E Staff Member 1 replied, “9 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church, Church E Staff Member 1 replied, “27 years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church E Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“It was mostly in group situations like Wednesday night Bible studies and Sunday night Bible studies. I do not recall having any kind of mentoring, one-on-two, or one-on-three type of environments. From my junior year in high school on, for about two or three years, we had ongoing discipleship group. We met at 6 o’clock on Wednesday mornings and we would begin the process with prayer, a brief devotional, and memorizing Scripture. We would start to memorize the Sermon on the Mount. I do not know if that would qualify discipleship per se, but it pretty well grounded me in Scripture.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church E Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“For me, it is a priority. You go through valleys and you go through growth spurts just as you would as a physical human being. Spiritually speaking you go through that as well. My time with the Lord, my personal quiet time, and my discipleship is necessary not just as a minister, but as a Christian. Years ago, there was a time when I spent more time in

preparation for student ministry at the expense of my own personal walk and discipleship. The Lord convicted me of that many years ago. When (discipleship) became a priority in my own life, it became more fine-tuned and personal.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church E Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“I think that discipleship and my own personal walk have prepared me for how to intentionally (communicate) with other adults. Discipleship takes on many forms. It does not have to be the latest printed book at Lifeway or an Experiencing God study. Those are good studies and they are part of it, but discipleship is more of a life experience. It has enhanced my walk and faith, so I can be even more intentional in relationships with other people. Our faith grows as we grow through life together. Discipleship is not always an intentional, step-by-step approach (like) a Bible study or mentoring. It is walking through life with other people that are younger in their faith or less mature. You have an opportunity to speak truth into them. Discipleship has helped me to grow stronger relationships with people without it even being a ‘discipleship’ experience. (That is done) through friendships and sharing life together. There are moments that happen when I can speak truth into their lives and them into mine.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church E Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“A lot of that goes back to the youth minister when I was growing up. He was pretty intentional about a lot of things. I felt particularly close to him because I liked him. I felt like he entrusted a lot of things to me. I can remember going back to him 10 or 11 years after he left our youth group. I was going through a very particularly hard season. After I

shared with him, I expected him to tell me what to do, but he did not. He told me that what was happening right now would forever mold my philosophy of ministry. He did not give me the answer that I needed at that time, but he challenged me to get into the word more. That is when the Lord gave me a passage at the time that I needed it. It became my life verse that I could hold on to even during the worst of times. Discipleship, from that standpoint, was someone who invested in my life. (Another person who was a BSU director) poured his life into some small discipleship groups. He poured his life intentionally through relationships into students. He brought them along and gave them responsibility, and he gave me responsibility. Richard Ross, who orchestrated the True Love Waits movement, has always been big about investing in young people. From a mentoring aspect he tries to keep young people connected to the church through meaningful relationships. That is what sacrifice is all about. It is not just a program or a study. You can look at it that way, but it is about doing life. Peter, Paul, Mark, and all of that bunch just did life together. They experienced many of the same things. They disciplined others and, in turn, they were also being disciplined.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church E Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“What we found from our church’s standpoint is that we do small group stuff. We do life groups on Sunday nights. We feel like we have a small window of time in January through April and August through November. (This is) so people can be a part of something. It is not an easy thing for people to buy into something like that. (We want them) to get engaged in a small group environment. Maybe it is through a study on

Daniel or the Psalms, but they are journeying through life with other people. One reason I like Sunday school so much is it is very much a part of the discipling process. You have a lead teacher that is investing in people, leading them in truth, and checking on them.

Discipleship is so important. When young people graduate from high school or college, they pretty much graduate from church. (They are) in their late 20s or early 30s before they make their way back. Richard Ross encouraged them through personal study and reading. I would want to find young adults and other adults who just loved kids. They may not have to have a blazingly magnetic personality. By doing that, the kids connected. For the few weeks that (the leaders) have them during the year, they were teaching, leading, and loving. I tried to keep (mentors) who would have the same 3 to 5 kids all year long. They would come back and still have that relationship with that particular adult. The mentoring side is what discipleship is. I think that is why it is very important to engage young people on that kind of level.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church E Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“(Someone) said something that really resonated with me as I try to do youth ministry. The phrase was not original with him, because I have seen it in the book of Philippians. The phrase is to know Christ and to make him known. That is discipleship for me in a nutshell. It is knowing Christ in an intimate personal way, growing in my faith, and turning around and investing in other people. Paul told Timothy to entrust himself to reliable men. Discipleship in a nutshell is to know Christ and make him known. It will be hard to make him known if you are not growing and not intentional in your own walk with Christ. I ask student ministers if they spend more time in preparation for Wednesday



night then they do in their personal time with the Lord. Inevitably most say that they spend a lot of hours getting ready for something. How can you be ready for something if you have never taken the time to listen to what God wants to speak to you? If you spend the time in the word and grow as a disciple, then others will see it and know. It was real in Paul, and that is why he could tell Timothy to entrust yourself to reliable men. My basic philosophy is to know Christ and make him known.”

**Church E Staff Member 2. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church E Staff Member 2 replied, “36 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served alongside the pastor, Church E Staff Member 2 replied, “7 ½ years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church, Church E Staff Member 2 replied, “7 ½ years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church E Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I was saved as a child at about six years of age. That happened in the context of a children’s ministry. Because I was so young, I do not know if the discipleship process for me was strategic or not. It was a regular attendance, through Sunday school, discipleship training, and Bible drills. Things where you are learning God’s word. During the early part of (my discipleship) as a student growing in his faith, I had a student minister who was strategic in investing in some individuals. (He invested in us) not just as a group but on an individual basis. Once I was a minister, I think that changed. It is ongoing once you become a staff member. Unless you have a mentor that you are meeting with, then a lot of that happens on your own.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church E Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I would say that early in my ministry (while in my 20s and early 30s) it was more individual. While serving on a staff, I think a lot of that happens in staff, if the pastor is strategic in discipling the staff along the way. (It is) not going from a lone ranger perspective, but having the opportunity to grow as a staff and as a believer. Over my time (here), my discipleship process has been better because I walk along with some other guys that I know here and the accountability factor. That is probably because of my age now. I am 42 years old and I realize that accountability, mentorship, and walking through your life as a believer is better done in community.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church E Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“A love for the word of God. That comes out of discipleship. If that is not happening, then I think we are missing the boat on discipleship. If we are not falling in love with the word of God, what they considered discipleship may actually lean toward devotion. We have got to be focused on God’s word. It must be central to us growing as believers. Number one was falling in love with the word of God, and number two is healthy relationships. (That may be) a marriage, the relationship you have with your kids, or the people that you are serving. Healthy relationships are going to be birthed out of discipleship. We are doing the great commandment of loving the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength. The second part of those relationships is loving your neighbor as yourself.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church E Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“It is almost repeating what I just said. Number one is the importance of the word of God. That is part of my pastor’s life. My pastor has been able to instill (an importance on prayer) in us, or at least in me, over the past 7 ½ years. The importance of a consistent prayer life and how we development that is an area of discipleship where I have grown.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church E Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“As a children’s pastor, I am primarily dealing with children in discipleship, but that is not completely true. I deal a lot with parents, families, and volunteers. I echo what has been taught and modeled to me and that is the importance of the word of God. (It is) first and foremost. I want kids to fall in love with the word of God. If the kids are going to fall in love with the word of God, then parents are going to need to be there. How do I do that with kids? We still do Bible drills. We do a lot of cutting edge stuff in children’s ministry, but if there is a better way to learn God’s word than Bible drills, then I want to see it. Bible drills have basically removed all of the fluff. You are just learning straight Scripture. That is exactly what we need to be doing. While children’s ministry and discipleship may evolve, we have to wade through. We are trying to get kids interested in the faith and following Jesus, but you do not want to lose your focus on God’s word. We need adults that are modeling the faith for their kids. We need parents doing that and we need our volunteers doing that. (That is) showing the importance of a healthy relationship with their Creator. If that is not being done at home, then it is not going to happen in two

or three hours per week at the church. As parents, we have to make sure that is a priority. People think that church is just another thing on the buffet of life choices. Unless (discipleship) is a foundational element in our life, then it will just be another choice that they are making for one or two hours per week. That is not going to cut it.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church E Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“For me, it is a learning process. If we had discipleship figured out in the church, then we would be doing an overall better job. There is so much room for us to grow. My wife and I run a camp for kids during the summer, and we try to emphasize different aspects of discipleship that they can take from the camp experience. (Those aspects are) learning how to pray and learning how to read the Bible. I think maybe we have overcomplicated it. We need to explain to kids what it means to read the word, how to understand that, and how to pray. Jesus’ disciples asked him to teach them how to pray. I think we should be doing the same thing with kids and adults. Parents want to ask what the next step is, but (what about) what do you need to do now. We must be asking that in discipleship: what does our next step look like for an individual?”

**Church E Female Church Member. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church E Female Church Member replied, “44 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have attended church with the pastor, Church E Female Church Member replied, “9 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many church services you attend per month, Church E Female Church Member replied, “8 services.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church E Female Church Member replied as follows:

“It was on my own. I have been rallying for new Christian classes for years, because I felt that was lacking as a new believer. I listened to the sermons and I did my Bible study, but I still did not grow as I should have. (I needed) to learn what it was to have a relationship with Jesus.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church E Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I have probably led 15 Bible studies. I do (well) with leading Bible studies, and every time we have a Bible study I attend it. I really love the Bible teachings and Bible studies in a small group. (The Bible studies) are on Sunday nights. The last one (was on) the supremacy of God. I have facilitated a lot a Beth Moore and Kay Arthur studies. We will be doing Daniel. I love (our associate pastor’s) classes, because he is in depth but understandable. We have done some self-help, grand-parenting (studies). We are learning what it is to have a personal relationship with the Lord. I loved him for years, but I was not in love with him. That has just been in the last 15 years. There is a difference.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church E Female Church Member replied as follows:

“The love that God has for me. That overwhelms me.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church E Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I have a new grandson-in-law that married my granddaughter. He is Spanish, and I know that (our associate pastor) realized that (my grandson-in-law) was not saved. He probably made 10 trips to visit and to get to know him as a person. He was raised in church but he was not saved. I just so admire that he enjoys teaching in the simplest form.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church E Female Church Member replied as follows:

“It is such a joy having that relationship with the Lord. I would start with (the book of) John. I would go through the chapters with them a step-by-step.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church E Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I am really strong about having a new Christian’s class. We are all about having people saved, but then we kind of leave them hanging. They really do not know which way to go. We had (a new Christian’s class) for some time. I have seen people who were saved and disciplined after their salvation experience, and they have grown. I did not know anything (after my salvation), and I was raised in a Christian home. We had Bible readings every night. (Before being saved) I thought I was saved by association, I guess. (Discipleship) is a follow-up work after somebody is saved. It is most important. It is not numbers, but is following through with them.”

**Church E Male Church Member. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church E Male Church Member replied, “50 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have attended church with the pastor, Church E Male Church Member replied, “9 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many church services you attend per month, Church E Male Church Member replied, “10 services.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church E Male Church Member replied as follows:

“My entire discipleship was through our church. We were very active in church (as we attended) Sunday mornings, Sunday nights, and Wednesday nights. I was there roughly 99.9% of the time. Our Sunday school and discipleship training were very good and instrumental in me being saved. My knowledge of the teachings of the Bible was exceptional. From the time that I was old enough to remember until now, I was fortunate to set under a number of good teachers. I was a senior in high school when I was saved, so I also got involved with another church’s youth group. It was a larger church (that was) nearby. They would always have a summer youth minister. There was a lot of really good Bible studies going on then. (There was) a lot of personal commitment. I would say that I have had a very good opportunity, through my church and through other churches nearby, (to have very good discipleship leaders. They exhibited a very close walk with Christ. I have had very good Sunday school teachers, youth ministers, and pastors throughout my life.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church E Male Church Member replied as follows:

“I am still learning every day. I still do personal devotions every day. Occasionally I have an opportunity to teach some classes on Sunday nights and substitute teach on Sunday mornings. It still requires a lot of teachings. For the first time in my life, I am trying to

read through the Bible. I am not going to make it in one year, but I will make it in two years. I am still being exposed to teachings. For example, I helped lead a study in who the Holy Spirit is back during the spring. Gaining more knowledge and experiencing the Holy Spirit in my life is probably my focus now. (I am) trying to develop more and more my relationship with Jesus through the Holy Spirit. I also try to be more recognizance of people who need to be saved. (I also spend) more time praying for the lost than I have ever in my life.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church E Male Church Member replied as follows:

“The biggest part of (why) discipleship is important to me is it gives me a better knowledge and a better confidence in talking to other people about being saved, about Jesus, and about what a true Christian really is. From that standpoint, it is the most important to me. It is the confidence to speak boldly when the opportunity arises. First of all, knowing what the Bible says about a situation and being able to share from the standpoint of not condemning. Showing Jesus’ love rather than his condemnation.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church E Male Church Member replied as follows:

“First of all, I see that other disciple-makers have a lot of joy in their lives. It would be what I would call true happiness. The second thing I find in disciple-makers is love for, not only the people in his class which he teaches, (but also) the people in the outside world who have no knowledge. A desire to reach those people. From our pastor I have seen his love for people who are not members of our church. That has instilled in me a



greater desire to try to reach them along with him and other people. I think the best example from a good disciple-maker is showing love in his heart for other people.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church E Male Church Member replied as follows:

“There are not any particular steps that I take, because you have to treat every person differently. They are going to receive you differently. First of all, I believe that to lead somebody else in discipleship you have got to exhibit not a perfectly sinless life. There are certain things that are acceptable in society but are not acceptable in the way the world views Christians. I feel like, first of all, if you are going to disciple someone new that has just become a Christian or someone that you are dealing with, then you have to exhibit a life that is more like what they expect a Christian to be. Not a holier-than-thou, but a clean living person. The second thing I think is showing them what a true Christian is by focusing on Jesus’ life and not on my life or other Christians in the church. I want to focus on how Jesus lived his life. We all know that all Christians, in some respects, are hypocrites. That is the drawback that the world sees about Christianity. (It) is that Christians in no way, shape, or fashion live up to the standards, then we are considered hypocrites. We need to exhibit the best life that we can according to Christian standards. Always pointing people that we are trying to disciple to not model their life after my life, the preacher’s life, or anybody else’s life, and to not judge Christianity by me, the preacher, or anybody else. Model and judge Christianity by Christ.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church E Male Church Member replied as follows:

“I think Southern Baptist churches need to spend more time in discipling young converts as far as being intentional about it. (It is more than) just saying we have these opportunities. We need to be more intentional.”

## APPENDIX L

### Church F Completed Church Study

**Church F Pastor. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church F Pastor replied, “45 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served as a pastor, Church F Pastor replied, “18 years as a pastor and 25 years as a vocational evangelist.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church as a pastor, Church F Pastor replied, “11 years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church F Pastor replied as follows:

“There was none. I grew up in a church where they preached the gospel. If you are lost, then you need Jesus. You need to be saved. Once you got saved, it was like go to first base, turn right, go to the dugout, and wait on the rapture. This is very sad. This was not an intentional thing. It is just the fact of not knowing. There was a lack of information and understanding of what discipleship was really all about.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church F Pastor replied as follows:

“My personal devotions, my Scripture readings, prayer, a personal walk with God, and interaction with the ministry team here. We pray together every morning. We have prayer time even if one of the staff members is not here. We have been doing that for my years here. We have words from the word. (That consists of) someone sharing, talking about that, and discussing their feelings concerning that. We are challenging one another individually and in our walks with God. (This is beneficial) to myself personally and to

our staff. We are continually challenging each other as we listen each morning.

Sometimes I or the executive pastor will bring a word from Scripture, and we will discuss that. We then go into prayer time and share our hearts. It has changed the entire outlook of the ministry of our church.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church F Pastor replied as follows:

“Growth. Jesus said in the Great Commission to go and make disciples. Disciples make disciples. We lead people to Jesus, but we must disciple them. As Scripture says, iron sharpens iron so as a brother sharpens the countenance of another. That is exactly what we have been doing in our prayer time. The same is true individually. There is not going to be a cohesiveness in people’s lives without discipleship. Discipleship has changed the whole mentality of this church. It has shut the back door. We went from running 300 to running over 1,000. We emphasize our life groups and our discipleship studies. We offer a variety of different studies. We are about to launch a financial class on Sunday afternoons that will help people. We want them to understand the tenets of the faith. We disciple them in the things of God such as evangelism and basic biblical principles which should be applied to their lives. Finances are one of those too. We are looking at every angle which we might have an opportunity to pour into people. We really want to do that.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church F Pastor replied as follows:

“Strong churches consist of strong believers. You will not be any stronger than your discipleship. As I traveled around the country (as an evangelist), I was in all different

sizes and genres of churches with different pastors and different situations. The churches that were growing and being effective in reaching their community were the churches that emphasized discipleship. You do not build churches. You build people. Discipleship is building people in the Lord. It is pouring into them.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church F Pastor replied as follows:

“I am going to try to steer (a new person) to a life group. That is where ministry takes place. It is very important to get them in a small group. That is where they can find people to challenge them and help them in their walk with God. They are going to make new friends, have fellowship, and study the word of God together. The second thing we try to do is get them into a women’s Bible study or a men’s Bible study. Here is an example: we started the men’s Bible study when God placed it on somebody’s heart. If someone wants to do something that lines up with the Book, then we are going to give them every opportunity and resource to do that. One of our men wanted to start a men’s Bible study for men having difficulties in marriage. They were just learning how to walk with God and be godly men. Every guy who comes in here and has needs or problems, I asked permission to give their number (to the leader of the men’s Bible study). He will give them an invitation to join that class. On Wednesday nights, that class has gone from 0 to 30. We have 30 men in there studying the word of God. That one guy has now disciplined 30 guys. (As others grow in their faith,) they are going to tell other people about Jesus. They will be excited about their faith. They will be inviting people to come to the Bible study with them. Tonight, our Worship Pastor is teaching a Bible study. It is a

Tuesday night life group. We do what we have to do to be able to minister to people. To disciple and to help our life group teachers, we will have other life groups. For someone who has never been to a life group, they will come to someone's home on a Tuesday night. You have got to be intentional about it. I hammer it every week. Every week I say that there is a place for you in our small group Bible study. We have about 60 or more classes and there is someplace that (a guest) can find. Get in there and get with it. They are going to be faithful. They are going to be committed. You know, come to church. They are going to tithe and pray. They began to practice all of the Christian disciplines. We do not say to them you need to do this, this, and this. Dr. Adrian Rogers used to say you are supernaturally natural, but you are naturally supernatural. It is the work of God that goes within us and flows out of us. I talked to someone today who said that he is not a good Christian. I said that we are not either, because God is still working on us too. God is continually working stuff out of us and he is working stuff in us. The Scripture speaks of glory unto glory. God is continually working in our lives. These life group teachers will take people (and work with them) one-on-one. We have a senior adult deacon who has four guys that he personally discipled. We have a mentorship program. These men will take a young man that does not really have a (male role model) and pour into their lives. We have some ladies who do the same things. We have a young lady who is in her first year of college. She did not come from a Christian home, but people discipled her and she is solid. God will use her to reach other people. It is multiplication. One kernel of corn will produce an ear of corn."

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church F Pastor replied as follows:

“Discipleship is about building people. It is about the kingdom, loving people, and pouring the gospel into them. It is about the reality of who Jesus is. We are a totally different fellowship. Our pastor emeritus is back. When he came, there were 32 people here. When my wife and I (first became affiliated with the church) there were about 90 people here. When our worship pastor got here, there were about 200 people here. It has been (because of) biblically-based teaching and preaching.”

**Church F Staff Member 1. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church F Staff Member 1 replied, “48 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served alongside the pastor, Church F Staff Member 1 replied, “11 years (with him as senior pastor). We have served on staff together for a total of 27 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church, Church F Staff Member 1 replied, “27 years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church F Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“When I was a new believer that was totally at the hands of my parents. My dad was my pastor, so they were my spiritual guides. My mother led me to the Lord after a sermon that my dad preached. I will always remember that sermon. It was a sermon that he called *The Slippery Slope*. My dad always pastored small, little, country churches here in Mississippi. They were my Sunday school teachers and my home discipleship people. As a new Christian, (discipleship) was really formed by my parents who were my pastor and pastor’s wife.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church F Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“There is a difficult thing in a minister’s life (where) we have to separate our study of preparation time for things we are doing (from) our personal discipleship and growth. I have struggled through the years with (dates to teach or preach). I know those are coming, so I am in the word preparing for that. I do not think that is how God calls us to personal discipleship and growth. I always work on things that are not goal specific for ministry. Currently, I am joining with most of our church as we are reading through the whole New Testament in a year. We read a chapter together every weekday. There are probably 200 of us doing that. I participate in that, but that is not goal specific. That is personal study. I always make sure that I am in some type of a book (of which) some are devotionals. Occasionally I will throw in a leadership book. I try to be in one at least every two months or every quarter. It is totally outside of anything else I am studying or doing. (Last) year two books came to me just because of where I was in my personal walk and things that were going on in our church. I had a book recommended to me. He is a pastor who writes about preparing yourself for inevitable experiences. (I also read) a book entitled *Bait of Satan* by John Bevere. That book says that things are going to come your way that will test you as a Christian. How we respond and how we react will have a greater influence than a lot of sermons we preach. Both of those books helped me, because we went through a couple of tough things here at our church. I found myself reflecting on if I acted right and reacted right. Those things make a bigger impact than your sermon preparation. Even though I am a minister of music, it still falls the same. Outside of my studies on discipleship, I am usually (involved) in something on worship.



Last year I read Mike Harland's new book on worship essentials. I will have an opportunity to speak to a group (at a local university) about that later. I love to read things that I am not prepared for but that God can use in my life."

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church F Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

"I am 54 years old and have been a Christian for 40 plus years, and I have learned that I have never arrived. I am still growing and learning about God. I am not going to stop until I see him face-to-face. (There was a Bible professor) who use the word 'dynamic' often (while describing the word of God). I always thought he meant dynamic as saying something was great or explosive in power. I have learned that an element of dynamic means ever-changing. The same passage of Scripture could say something totally different to (you) that it speaks to (me). I have also found that it hits me differently in my Christian walk where I am right now. It blows my mind that God would bring me back to something that I read nine months ago. I needed it nine months ago and, when I come back to it, it has not changed, but there is a new development in reaching me. In the idea of discipleship, one of the things that I have learned was a paradigm shift here at our church. When I came to the church I am currently serving we were well known for (being evangelistic). All of our efforts were on outreach. We were not discipling the way we could be or should be. I still do not think that we have arrived at that. I think that we are a whole lot better than we were. The pastor that I serve with right now (11 years ago in a town hall meeting) made a statement that burdened my heart. I had been here on staff for a considerable amount of time, and he said that our church was a mile wide and an inch deep as far as discipleship goes. At first I was almost offended by that, because I had

been a leader here for many years. That was evident on me, because I was a leader in this church. And then I realized that it does go back on me. We had to look at a paradigm shift in our worship, in the way we study, and how we teach people in discipleship. In all of those areas, you find out that developing deeper disciples helps to take care of the evangelism.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church F Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“One of the big things is watching them in the element that God has been using them. With my current pastor, (it) is seeing his examples of giving and prayer. I have never seen a person who has given away more both financially and spiritually to other people. I have never seen so much evidence of (what has been given to him). It is a huge circle. Every time people have given to him, then he gives it away. (I did not learn that through) a 19 week study on giving. I saw it demonstrated before me. That is something that you pick up. In return, you find yourself doing that for others. The second element is prayer. I cannot think of the times that we have come to a pivotal moment or place in the spiritual life of our church and then we spend a moment in prayer. When he came here 11 years ago a senior pastor, (he established) daily times of prayer. (A staff member’s absence) better not become a staple. We are going to spend time in prayer together. The question is occasionally asked about how our staff is getting along (due to personality conflicts or something else). In 28 years at the same place, that is going to happen. I made the statement that it is really hard to have hard feelings toward someone when you hold hands with them and pray five days a week. Those are things that you do not read in a book or get straight from Scripture. Those are things that you pick up because of the

example that was given. I have heard my pastor name in prayer the people who have hurt him in the ministry. That is something that I have picked up and it has become a part of my life. That has been one of the hardest things for me to do when I feel that someone has wronged me.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church F Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“I do it in a large group scale with the different life groups that I am connected to. We term them life groups here (but others may call them Sunday school groups or small groups). We do not ask our people to do anything that we do not do. My wife and I go to (a life group) on Tuesday nights. We are in worship both hours (on Sunday mornings). We have three hours of life groups: 8:00, 9:00, and 10:30 on Sunday mornings. At 8 o’clock I am in sound checks, and at 9:00 and 10:30 I am leading worship. I want to be there when our pastor is preaching, so that (it is not a bad example to set). There are times when I teach our life group. I also have a large life group which is my choir ministry. I have to find time to pick service music for them, teach them rudiments of worship and music, and incorporate that as I sow into their lives. The first 15 minutes of our choir practice on Wednesday nights are prayer and Bible study. My pastor helps lead that eight out of ten times. It is a part of us working together. Another scale is being more involved in missions. 20 plus years ago when I came here, we were more worried about door-to-door evangelism in our city and county. The work that goes on at (our church) does not stop during a 24-hour day, because we have missionaries on the field in the Far East and in Uganda. We also have mission work that we are supporting in the Dominican Republic

and Costa Rica. By the time that I am going to bed, I know that others are getting up and starting to do work. We are looking at new work that will start promptly in India. There is a possibility that I will be going for a week to teach pastors and discipleship with three other ministers.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church F Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

I feel like we have covered everything.

**Church F Staff Member 2. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church F Staff Member 2 replied, “20 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served alongside the pastor, Church F Staff Member 2 replied, “3 ½ years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church, Church F Staff Member 2 replied, “3 ½ years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church F Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I was part of a couple of Sunday school classes that were huge influences on me. I had teachers who took me under their wings. My pastor was our staff evangelist at the time, and he also took me under his wing. That is in addition to all of the regular rigor of church life (such as) listening to sermons and being in worship. The most formative way that I was seriously disciplined was through a series of men and women who took me under their wings and pointed me in the right direction. They told me (authors) to read.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church F Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I have my regular spiritual (daily) disciplines of prayer, Bible study, and things that I do as a staff member. Prayer has the highest priority. We believe in the word at our church, so we study it as a staff together. I also study it personally. You have to be careful about saying that service is part of your discipleship process, because you could turn the work that you do for the church into your own personal discipleship time. I try not to do that. I find that serving is a huge part of the discipleship process. I was a deacon and a teacher before I was a pastor. Those things have been huge in my life and formation. They put you up against other people (through) mentoring. Our pastor is our ultimate supervisor, but I am the direct supervisor of a staff of about 15 people. Working through the rhythms of everyday life at church together is a huge discipleship process for me. You love people, learn how to deal with people, and learn how to love people the way that you are supposed to. They rub against you. It is iron sharpening iron.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church F Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“Developing a prayer life is a huge part of it. Focus on understanding and living out the word. At our church, we focus on both of those. Those are the things that I think helped develop me more than anything else.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church F Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“The focus on the word. All of discipleship is geared in knowing what God’s word says for you and wants for you. The best disciple-makers that I have seen are people who really seek to personally disciple people. (It is) not in just group settings or large settings, but it is in personal settings with people in one-on-one settings.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church F Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I began as a Sunday school teacher. Teaching the word, on an individual basis and sometimes on a group basis, is a huge part of that. It starts with reminding people of their need to share Christ with others. The discipleship process begins with evangelism (which is) making sure that loss people know about the salvation process. (Discipleship) starts there and helps them understand the process of what is written.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church F Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I would have a hard time knowing where my philosophy begins and where my pastor’s ends, because I have such a close relationship with him. He has been such an integral part of my development as a disciple. He has called many people out of our church (to serve). Two of the members of our staff were on the pastor search committee. There are only two members of our staff who were not former church members (here). Our pastor is very good at listening to others. I hope that I have influenced him some. In a perfect church setting, I hope that iron is sharpening iron so that you do not know where one’s philosophy ends and the other begins.”

**Church F Female Church Member. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church F Female Church Member replied, “43 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have attended church with the pastor, Church F Female Church Member replied, “11 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many church services you attend per month, Church F Female Church Member replied, “12 services.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church F Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I was young, and at first I did not understand everything. I had some wonderful ladies that took me under their wings. They were Girls in Action teachers. I really give them a lot of credit for helping me. Of course, my mom and dad were Christians, and they were part of that too.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church F Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I am currently the senior adult director at (our church). I help others with their walk. I study my Bible and teach a life group. I also do a devotion prayer group for ladies. That has really been very good. I have watched the growth in them. It is almost unbelievable for some of the ladies, because we are talking about senior adults. It has been really great to see them grow. I love Jesus and I want to do everything that he wants me to do for him. I like to tell people about Jesus.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church F Female Church Member replied as follows:

“(I have learned) that Jesus loves me unconditionally. Even though I make mistakes, he still loves me. I need to pass that on to other believers and grow them in those areas. Everything is not always perfect, but we keep on keeping on for Jesus regardless. The

ladies that taught me in Girls in Action loved me. I try to do that for people. I try to love them. It is not just that Jesus loved them, but I love them and their church loves them.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church F Female Church Member replied as follows:

“It is kind of what I said earlier. You are loved by Jesus and you have to show love to others as Jesus showed love to me when he died on the cross. I learned that from a few people (such as) that Girls in Action teacher, a transitional pastor that I was under, and my pastor now.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church F Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I give them a little of the background of how this ladies group got started. That entices them to learn a little bit and be part of us. It got un-started because I resisted. I resisted quite a bit. I knew what God was wanting me to do, but I really did not want to do it. Some of the ladies wanted me to do some games, but I knew that is not what God wanted me to do. Finally, one day, I told my pastor that it was time. So, I started this group by talking to people (and asking them) to try this. I tell them about how we can come together as ladies. Most of them are older than I am, but that is okay. They needed someone to be there for them. Older ladies, sometimes, do not feel like they have anyone to talk to. It has been amazing. I also stressed to them that we do not take this outside of the doors. That encourages them a little bit. They may be a little timid every once in a while about saying what is on their heart. I have seen a lot of growth in this group of ladies. It started out with a smaller group, and (now) we are over 20 most of the time. We



(just) started our second year. I needed them to grow. I did not need to be the person that was going to bring the devotion every week or bring the prayer every week. Upfront, I tell them that I would like for one of them to volunteer to do it. It has been amazing. They will do it, but they need that little bit of encouragement. They can do it, and no one is going to judge them for what they say. I have seen some ladies that I have never heard pray. They are godly ladies, but I had never heard them pray in public. There has been growth in this class. They do the devotions themselves. I encouraged a couple of them to be the secretaries. (It) has been amazing to watch these ladies grow in their faith and their love for Jesus. They will tell other ladies and bring them in. The biggest thing has been to watch these ladies and try to disciple them. (I try) to encourage them that they can do the same things that I do.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church F Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I would like to think that not only our church but all churches are putting more emphasis on discipleship. I think that is where we grow as Christians. If you are not in the life group, then you get left out a lot. Discipleship and life groups are where you are going to get that closeness of what God really has for us. I am not discounting our pastor or the service. That is where it starts. If we do not get them into a life group, they do not grow as Christians very much. They do not know how. Get them into a group to learn about Jesus, learn how to study, learn how to study their Bibles, and be in the word every day. They need to be praying. You do not have to be on your knees praying but you need to be praying. I drive down the road a lot and pray. You can pray for anything and you see

miracles through all of this. When you are hurting, you can ask someone to pray for you and you can feel it.”

**Church F Male Church Member. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church F Male Church Member replied, “41 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have attended church with the pastor, Church F Male Church Member replied, “10 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many church services you attend per month, Church F Male Church Member replied, “12 services. Anytime there is a service, I am going to be there.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church F Male Church Member replied as follows:

“As a new believer, I was eight years old. I was really motivated and passionate about sharing my experience with other people my age at that time. I really did not have a lot of access to other people other than at the elementary school. As I got older, I tried to share some. From there, it kind of tapered off. I got away from home, and I got away from God. Getting away and coming back has been one of the biggest things for me to be able to talk with people and disciple others. They have been through the same thing. It is almost a reflection for them. (They might not have) gone down that exact road.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church F Male Church Member replied as follows:

“It is evolving, expanding, and growing. My knowledge of the word is as vast as (ever). I am growing in the word. When I was a young Christian, I was probably an inch deep and

100 yards wide. Now I am getting fuller. Plus I am getting deeper. I am more sensitive to the Holy Spirit, because I have opened myself more. The other thing has to be because it is on God's time. It is always been on God's time. At the same time, I had to do certain things like being more sensitive to the word and the Holy Spirit. I would use the analogy of a sponge. Earlier in my life my sponge was dry and drawn up. Now it is full and my cup runneth over, if you will. Just like what is going on in my men's ministry. I get goose bumps just talking about it."

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church F Male Church Member replied as follows:

"The one big thing I have learned is that all you have to do is surrender. All you have to do is surrender yourself, give yourself up, die to yourself, and believe. Make the Lord the Lord of your life. You do not have to just talk about it, but you have to be about it. That is something you have to do. They told me that they want me to do this class. There are men in our church that need this word, and you are going to be the one to do it. I did not hesitate, (because) I have been told it would be like that. I had been sensitive to the Holy Spirit. When you are sensitive to other people and care about other people being saved, you have to surrender. You have to do something too and be about it. The blessings are going to come. It is all through the Bible where people were obedient. You have to be obedient. I have seen that when I finally decided to be obedient, then things finally started happening. God started revealing himself and his blessings abound. I cannot wait to see what else is going to happen."

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church F Male Church Member replied as follows:

“The biggest thing in any leadership is leading by example. That is the most profound way that you can make an impact on someone’s life. Is not talking about it, typing up papers on it, or sending out emails. It is doing it. That has had a big impact on my life. There are also ladies in our church to do that. There are plenty of people in our church that are serving. When you see that, you say wow, look at what they are doing. There is no wonder they are smiling and happy all the time. They are receiving a blessing.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church F Male Church Member replied as follows:

“When we started this class, there were about four of us that got together. Last Wednesday night we had 30 men in our class. Three or four regulars were not there. God has blessed us. One of the big things we do is make sure that their salvation is in line. I want to make sure they are sure about their salvation. We are doing books like *The Revolution*, things from Tony Evans like *Kingdom Man*, and stuff from Dr. Johnny Hunt. We are just getting in the word. It is all scripturally based. I make sure that everything we talk about it scripturally based. When I give a little of the testimony of a particular thing, I want men to talk back. I want them to open up. When men open up, they get comfortable and they start to realize that the situation or the valley that I am going through is not unique to me. Other men have done this. You are not weird and you are not strange. You are just like the rest of us, and we are working together to move forward. Another thing that we do is we have a group text. We send out a Scripture every morning. We are keeping contact. It is not that we just see each other a couple times in class and we never see each other again. We will have a fellowship away from the church campus,

so guys can loosen up. We will cook, we will eat, and we will have a fellowship time. We might watch a ballgame or something. They will open up and then a little bit more. When everybody leaves out of the class, we huddle up and put hands on each other. We huddle up and we pray. We mention prayer requests like that and then I will meet them at the door. I make sure that I make eye contact and I shake every man's hand as he leaves. I tell them thanks for being here and you do not know how much your being here has helped me. I look forward to seeing you again next week, and God bless you. Go lead your family."

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church F Male Church Member replied as follows:

"There are all types of different ways to get close. Adults want to feel like they are doing something. They want to feel like they are making a difference. They are not going to feel that difference unless they are actually doing something. A long time ago we used to go out and knock on doors in visitation. We do not do that anymore. Eye contact and seeing people is a big tool (and) I do not know many churches that do that anymore. (Our church) is under construction right now, and we cannot have potlucks like we use to, but that is another way to reach people and disciple people. (We try) to get people plugged in and make them feel like they are doing something. That may be as simple as leading in prayer. You can look at them, call them by name, and ask if there is something you can pray for them about. With the technology that is out there now, you can send just a random text message. You can use email and text messages. You can send them a Scripture, and it will boost them up."

## APPENDIX M

### Church G Completed Church Study

**Church G Pastor. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church G Pastor replied, “51 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served as a pastor, Church G Pastor replied, “33 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church as a pastor, Church G Pastor replied, “15 years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church G Pastor replied as follows:

“I would describe it as weak to virtually nonexistent.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church G Pastor replied as follows:

“I would describe it as good. I would say that I feel like that I am as confronted with the truth claims of Scripture today as I have been in my life. (I am) as nurtured in those truth claims as I ever have been in my life. I would describe the status as good. I think that my interaction with Scripture is stronger or at least as strong if not stronger. My interaction with other brothers who are like-minded, guys in my staff as well as guys in my peer group. There is a give and take that is part of my daily and weekly life. I have not always had access to the same set of circumstances that I do today. That has been extremely helpful to me.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church G Pastor replied as follows:

“I have learned that a personal walk with Christ is priority. Absolutely nothing compares to that personal walk of discipleship. That walk must be maintained. Every effort must be made to protect and enhance the walk. It needs to be the first job of my spiritual life.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church G Pastor replied as follows:

“First of all, I have had my own views reinforced. It is helpful to recognize that it is not reinventing discipleship. Discipleship is not new. It is old. I do not believe, at its core, that discipleship should be tinkered with. It is a sinner interacting with the word of God by means of the Spirit of God to bring him under the control and mastery of the things of God. I am committed to that and have been encouraged by guys that I see were doing that. They are committed to their own personal disciplines. They are committed to their own practice of holiness and sanctification. They do not compromise. That is a strong encouragement to me.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church G Pastor replied as follows:

“Well I am a pastor, so the first thing that I do is try to model my own personal witness of discipleship and being a disciple. The first job of a disciple is to be a disciple. Secondly, I am a pastor, so I want to handle the word of God with the regard I think it deserves whether I am teaching, preaching, or having conversation with people. I want to handle the word of God with the respect and confidence that the word of God deserves. Thirdly, I want to challenge people with good resources. I have a long list of good books that I try to recommend. They are not critical commentaries, but they are popular books that will

help people be exhorted. Fourthly, we are committed to biblical counseling at our church. Meaning that we have a number of resources in print and verbal resources that are made available to all kinds of people weekly through my own ministry and the counseling ministry of our church. We also do giveaways trying to keep people focused on their own personal discipleship. Lastly, we are committed to Sunday nights. We are a Sunday night church, where others have moved away from Sunday nights. We are committed to a workshop style on Sunday nights. We have a variety of workshops. We will have anywhere from 4 to 6 different workshops to motivate people to pick or choose a track. Within that one particular track they will grow in their personal walk. We encourage them to build accountability with other members. Those other ways are the most obvious.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church G Pastor replied as follows:

“No, but I am a preacher, so I always have something to say. We all understand that the command of Matthew 28 is to make disciples. I would say that the great disappointment or challenge, if you will, for a pastor’s work is how to keep the main thing the main thing. There are many, many voices that want to suggest that there are other things that are equally important. While there are things that are important, there is nothing as equally important as your own personal devotion to Christ or leading a group of people to pursue Christ. Everything else dovetails off of that. If we can keep Jesus and the pursuit of Jesus at the forefront, then we could cure a lot of ills in the local church.”

**Church G Staff Member 1. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church G Staff Member 1 replied, “15 years.”



**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served alongside the pastor, Church G Staff Member 1 replied, “Just over a year and a half as a student pastor. I was on staff here in other aspects (before that).”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church, Church G Staff Member 1 replied, “A year and a half, full-time.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church G Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“As a new believer, there was not much discipleship.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church G Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“This may have come up some when you talked with (our associate pastor). We are doing this men’s mentoring program and I am a part of a Bible reading group with them. I am part of that. Part of my discipleship is being with five other guys via *Marco Polo*. Praying with them, reading Scripture with them, and discussing it with them. For our student ministry, we do discipleship groups. I am part of those as well. (Within) various aspects of that is where I do my discipleship. As far as being discipled personally, it comes from the men’s mentoring and the conversations and relationships that I have with other men. It is about living life with other leaders. As far as the Bible study perspective, it comes from our discipleship groups. (They) work through the various Bible studies with our people for accountability’s sake. That is where I am at this point.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church G Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“Everybody is going to view or define discipleship differently, and a lot of people want to make it a program. I really believe that discipleship is simply living life with others, pointing them to Jesus, and holding each other accountable. There are relationships in my life from discipleship that will last a lifetime. There is also a desire in my life to read, study, and understand Scripture. I know that other people are doing the same things and we can walk alongside each other in doing that. (We) have these open conversations where we do not go with the biggest words that we can use. It is about doing life with each other. What is the Lord teaching you? How are you growing in your walk with Jesus?”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church G Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“I am a visual learner. I will take this from a student ministry aspect, since that is what I do. We do things that we see other people emulate. I can look in my life and (wonder) why I do things the way I do. It is because this person led me that way. It is really from watching or seeing people study Scripture. Hey, this is an idea of how to study Scripture. Hey, these are some questions that you can ask people. It really seems, as I watch things from a distance, that that was really good. We have one leader in our life group who (asks weekly) what the Lord is teaching this week. What did the Lord do in your life this week? I think that is a really great discipleship question. What did the Lord teach me? What did the Lord do in my life? Am I reading Scripture for the sake of saying that I did it, or am I saying Lord teach me in this moment? I start with a question in my own life and in the lives of others. What is the Lord teaching you and how are you growing from that?”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church G Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“I currently speak once a week with one of our students. We have been doing this for about a year. When we started this in January, I would go through and mention our discipleship group readings. I would ask him to share about one of his readings from the day. I would say let us get to know each other and hang out to build this relationship. For the last three months, we have been working through the discipleship curriculum of *How to be a Man*. Every week we go through those devotions about what stuck out, how you can learn, how you can grow from this, and what you can take away from this. We read the Scriptures from that devotion. We work through that each week.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church G Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“Looking back on my life as a 14-year-old who surrendered his life to Christ, having no discipleship, coming from a broken home, I do not blame my mom, but nobody disciplined her. We went to church all the time, but there was not any real discipleship there. After working with students, I saw a disconnect there. How are we training parents to disciple in their homes? We are now left with the question of what is discipleship. What does it mean to make disciples? We are over complicating it, in my opinion. There are a lot of parents out there who are not discipling their kids. Kids are surrendering their lives to Christ, being baptized, and then what is next. If their parents are not involved in church, then they are going to fall into that pit. They will fall into the was-not-discipled category.”

**Church G Staff Member 2. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church G Staff Member 2 replied, “31 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served alongside the pastor, Church G Staff Member 2 replied, “14 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church, Church G Staff Member 2 replied, “15 years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church G Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I had a healthy discipleship experience when I was a new believer, because my dad was a Southern Baptist pastor. I was connected already in Sunday school and Royal Ambassadors. They provided me with the *Survival Kit* for new believers, which was a common thing back then for kids who had come to Christ. I worked through that on my own I believe. I was also in a Scripture memory group at church during that time. For a six-year-old or a seven-year-old, it was pretty robust for a new believer discipleship process.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church G Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I would say healthy (and) well-rounded. Something that might be unique is the level of interaction that I have in my personal discipleship. Each morning I read to my kids a couple of verses from Proverbs. I am also using the *Marco Polo* app to read and pray with my brothers, their wives, and my nieces and nephews. We use *Marco Polo* to do morning devotions. I will read with two of my kids as they are about to go out the door

and pray with them. Then later, when I wake up my third, we will watch that video and my brothers and their kids will watch that video. That is how I keep my kids in the word a little bit each day and pray with them. I also do a similar thing with a group of four other guys. Mondays through Fridays we do morning Bible readings that are usually one or two chapters. We are going through selections from the Old Testament this year. When it is my day, I will read and mention something I noticed, something I wondered about, something I need to do, and something I am praying for, and then I will pray. Each of us is assigned a day of the week. On the days that is not my day, I will listen to their videos. They do the same thing.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church G Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“One of the big things I learned as a college student through discipleship was that God was not impressed with my spiritual disciplines. He was not viewing my spiritual disciplines as a basis of extra credit or special favors. It was something that I did as much for me as for God and maybe more for me. Getting over legalism with my spiritual disciplines was a big hurdle to clear. I feel like I have been able to help a lot of other young people to come through different aspects of legalism.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church G Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I would say what I have learned from my pastor is not to be controlling or domineering, but to be loyal and available.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church G Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“Certainly with my family we will have a short daily Bible reading and prayer. I also make sure that my family is in church regularly and connected to discipleship in that way. Regarding other men, there is daily Bible reading, prayer, and commenting on the reading. I am also involved in three different small group Bible studies. Two of which I lead and one that I co-lead. I should also mention that I organized and started a men’s mentoring program at our church. It involves 11 mentors who are elders or former elders from our church. It also involves 44 men who have signed on for the year-long program. They do a daily Bible reading using *Marco Polo*. It is similar to what I described that I do in my group. There is a weekly class where they survey the Old Testament and there are four books to read throughout the year. There are also four potlucks to get together with them, their wives, and their families throughout the year. That is a big part of our church life. We just started that program last year.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church G Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I would just say that I think it is very important that people have the opportunity to discuss spiritual matters on a regular basis. The church expects that to happen in small group Bible studies, but I do not think it usually happens in small group Bible studies. When I lead small groups, I make sure there is a lot of discussion. (I) do not focus on me saying insightful things or hitting home runs, but (I) am setting people up in the group to have discussions. That is kind of the method to our mentoring program. At least once a

week, these guys are going to read the Bible out loud to a group of guys. They are going to use some kind of comments and discussion on that Bible reading. I think that goes a long way in helping people grow in their faith. Speaking about the Christian faith and concepts of discipleship. Speaking about the Bible. I think it is crucial to have a person grow in their faith.”

**Church G Female Church Member. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church G Female Church Member replied, “69 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have attended church with the pastor, Church G Female Church Member replied, “15 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many church services you attend per month, Church G Female Church Member replied, “8 services.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church G Female Church Member replied as follows:

“My parents were precious Christians. I was enveloped in discipleship from birth. I remember when I was about three years old asking my mother about where all Jesus would be able to see me. That is not really about growing, but (I was around) that from the beginning. My dad always disciplined me. He was a minister and my mother was a precious Christian. (My dad) was a BSU director. There were so many others (also).”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church G Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I teach a ladies Sunday school class, and they are just older than I am or my age. (We covered) all of the issues, and that will keep you on your feet. I have a Bible reading plan

that I make up every year for the class. The Bible readings are for every day. I get up and do that in the mornings. I sometimes miss, so I am making up today. I have had some hectic days of ministry and have not done all of my readings the way I normally do. On Sunday mornings we all discuss what we have read and discuss any questions we had before the Sunday school lesson. There are friends that I call and we encourage each other. I try to encourage along the way. (There is) a long list of people I encourage. We try to be absorbed in the word. We have had some stress in my family. My husband has been diagnosed with Parkinson's. You know how the Holy Spirit speaks to you while you are doing whatever you are doing. The old hymns of the faith just keep popping into my mind. In my mind, I am singing the songs. Oh how that blesses me."

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church G Female Church Member replied as follows:

"Peace in the storm. We have a storm, (because) my husband has Parkinson's. We have no family around (except) for our church. Peace in the storm. We are about to have a real chance to use it."

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church G Female Church Member replied as follows:

"Being in the word, so that the word (is what) you breathe in and out. I do not know how to describe it. It is (being) absorbed in the word. It is having the joy from the Lord. The essence of what is true is in the word, and we stand on that."

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church G Female Church Member replied as follows:



“That is what I do with my class. There is teaching, and the lesson does not really have to be on that. There are many things from the Lord and we deal with those things. We try to have people in the word daily. We want them to do that so that we can trust (in the Lord) even when it does not make sense. We want to have those voices from the word that are so real to us. We have bathed in them for so long that when a problem comes up, then the word comes. We stand on that even when it does not make sense. I try to bring that out. With this class, we have a Group Me on the Internet. We try to stay in touch often. That way we can pray for each other, and we do. We always pray for each other and share in our problems. It is not just whining. We do not whine. We have to be real strict about that. If you come in our class, you will not be allowed to whine.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church G Female Church Member replied as follows:

“Being in the word and being connected in the body. It is not dropping in every now and then. It is a connection. Even though I only make eight services a month (each Sunday morning and Wednesday night), I am always connected to the body. Most of our class is. We might not make every meeting, but we are connected to the body.”

**Church G Male Church Member. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church G Male Church Member replied, “44 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have attended church with the pastor, Church G Male Church Member replied, “15 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many church services you attend per month, Church G Male Church Member replied, “10 services.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church G Male Church Member replied as follows:

“I was extremely blessed, and it probably has a lot to do with my values on discipleship today. There was a dear friend of mine, who happened to be our minister of students at the church where I was saved, who immediately took me under his wing. It was on an informal basis, (but) he just befriended me. For about two years, he walked me down a road of discipleship that was not structured or formal. He just engaged me in every way to get me plugged in as quickly as possible to the church. I grew up in church. It was not that church was new to me. I had a new profound appreciation for Christian community after I invited Christ to rule my life. To this day, we are still friends and I give him credit for my development.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church G Male Church Member replied as follows:

“As it has been for years, my daily habit is to get into my personal study for an hour or so before I go to work. I pray, read God’s word, and ask God to show me himself through his word. (I ask) that he will help me to see myself in his word. He is very gracious to do that. I have a prayer list that I go over every day. My wife and I have been married for 47 plus years and for half of that time we pray together every day as well. We read a short devotional and pray together before I go to work. We pray about the things that we share in common. In my private prayer time, I try to pray first and foremost about the things that God is working on me about and the other prayer needs that he has put on my heart as well.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church G Male Church Member replied as follows:

“I was saved in 1975. In 1980 my wife and I were approached about starting a new Sunday school class. (We were) to go and recruit a couple of workers to help us and start a new Sunday school class from scratch. That was my first exposure to be asked to lead a discipleship group. After much prayer and encouragement by the minister of education of (that church), he let me know he would walk through the process with me, nurture me, and train me, then we agreed to do that. At that time I was 30 years old. We have been in three different churches since that time and have taught Sunday school classes or small groups at every church we have been in. We have probably taught 9 or 10 life groups or couples classes for all of those years. I had to be a quick study and I have fumbled, failed, and tripped a lot trying to understand how to lead discipleship. I was keen from the get-go that every person is important. We do not ever need to lose track of anybody. That was driven into my core early on. I have always been real sensitive about not letting one sheep go astray. If you will think about the shepherd and flock analogy, then that is kind of the approach that I have always taken. Quite honestly, over the first few years I was focused on developing my teaching habits and my study habits and style as much as anything else. Our discipleship skill sets developed over time. Today, we lead a life group (that we have led) for about 15 years. I stepped out from teaching my peers about 15 years ago. I would have been about 55 (years old) then, when we were asked to lead a struggling thirtysomethings life group. They were mostly 25 to 40 years of age, and they were struggling to survive. We decided to take that on. It has probably been my greatest growth period as a discipler in my whole Christian journey. About that same time, (my

wife) and I decided that we needed to be able to rightly divide the word of God properly. We went to Chattanooga for three or four different weekends. We got deeply involved in *Precept Bible Studies*. I wanted to be able to learn God's word without the additional aid of a lot of commentaries and outside influences. I am sitting here in my study now and I have four study Bibles open. So, it is not that I do not believe in commentaries. I wanted to learn to study God's word inductively and to teach it inductively. That revolutionized my teaching. That was 15 or 16 years ago. The Lord led me to start thinking about discipleship spiritually. I landed on several verses that have been core to what I believe. One is Colossians 1:28-29. That says and we proclaim him, Christ of course, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom. And then it says why we do this. It says in order that we may present everyone perfectly in Christ. When I first began to pour over that verse, I realized that I did not have all of the wisdom that I needed. I remembered that James said that if you need it, then ask for it and God will give it to you. I began to pray a lot about the wisdom needed to teach effectively. We do the admonishing and warning in teaching with all wisdom, because God gives us (the discipler) a season in a person's life to impress them for Christ. I tell our life group very often that God has given me a season with you. It is my goal, at the end of the season, that you be more like Christ than when we began our walk together. As I think about discipleship, that is the overarching theme."

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church G Male Church Member replied as follows:

"Paul talks about the race that we are to run for Christ likeness. That is our life's journey of sanctification. I believe that in a church we run in packs, like wolves run in packs. We

do not leave anybody behind. We should never take on a discipleship responsibility unless we are prepared to bring everybody along. We should not be so self-righteous that we put ourselves in some position and expect everybody to come to where we are. I think that I have been taught that we are to go back to where they are at the lowest level and walk with them and bring them forward without leaving any person.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church G Male Church Member replied as follows:

“I have tried a couple of different things over time. Until last summer, I invited the men in our life group, starting about seven years ago, to come to our home on Friday mornings at 6:30 for breakfast and Bible study. (It was) to be more intentional about reaching men. I believe that if you can reach the man, then you can reach the family. If you can strengthen the family, then you can strengthen the wife and you can strengthen the children. I asked God to do a work there and we had about 14 men, over those seven years that participated in that Bible study on Friday mornings. Basically, I used *Man in the Mirror* by Patrick Morley. We would watch the video on TV of Patrick Morley’s weekly Bible presentation, discuss it, and have a prayer time for about an hour. That is one way we did that very intentionally. About five or six years ago, our church started a biblical counseling ministry, and I got involved in that. I have taken one week each February (at Faith Baptist Church in Lafayette, Indiana) (which amounts to) about 160 hours of training. I did not do that necessarily to be a good counselor, but to enhance my discipleship to increase my knowledge and wisdom.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church G Male Church Member replied as follows:

“Hebrews 10:24-25 says something like let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another. I teach a study on spiritual gifts and I will leave this with you in closing.

(This quote) is based on Hebrews 10:24-25. I am going to plagiarize it. I was looking for a good meaning of what Christian fellowship is. I believe that *koinonia* is more than just sharing a meal together and having a good time together. I know it has an entire amount of spiritual depth to it. I was led to Hebrews 10:24-25. The commentary that translated (that passage) gives a definition for fellowship. It says that fellowship is a spiritual duty of every believer to stimulate each other to holiness and faithfulness. I probably repeat that in our life group quarterly. (It) is for the express purpose to help them understand that they exist in this body to stimulate somebody to love and good works. Or, to stir up the fellowship to be holy and faithful. We all have that notion. It is not just me, the teacher. I believe it from the bottom of my heart.”

## APPENDIX N

### Church H Completed Church Study

**Church H Pastor. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church H Pastor replied, “46 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served as a pastor, Church H Pastor replied, “40 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church as a pastor, Church H Pastor replied, “22 years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church H Pastor replied as follows:

“My experience was basically conversational. I spent time with three other Christian youth. As far as early disciplines, they were Bible reading and prayer. It led into sharing Christ with my friends. That grew out of personal discussion and conversation time with three other friends. One was about five years older than me, and the other two were my peers. The four of us would go camping once a month and spend most of the night talking about what we had been reading in the Bible. We would spend time every Sunday in Sunday school together discussing the lessons. We spent most every Sunday afternoon participating in a church outreach ministry through visitation. We would intentionally target unchurched youth to talk with them about their relationship with Christ. We were recruiting them for our youth Sunday school group. Worship attendance was a vital part of my early discipleship. We (also) had a discipleship training group. The leader would assign parts, and we were to prepare (by) bringing one or two additional verses of Scripture related to that topic the next Sunday evening. I participated in a home Bible

study which rotated from house to house. It was a multi-generational group. We would take one book of the Bible, read a chapter, and discuss it. It was a Bible reading discussion time with that group. It was simple and consistently systematic. We learned a lot, because the older believers were pouring their minds and thoughts into the younger guys. Every week we knew what the next chapter of the book would be, so we would come prepared. That was the agenda for the evening.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church H Pastor replied as follows:

“(It is) a continuation of what I have done in the past. My early years as a Christian really set a pattern for me. I develop a chronological Bible reading plan for our church. Consistent Bible reading and prayer time are (part of that experience). In my early morning Bible reading and prayer time, I focus on me. God, who am I? What am I to do today? What is going on in my life? I also have a ministry focus. My ministry is not only here at the church, but it is also with my students at Liberty. I spend time praying for these guys and gals and communicating with them by text and email. I will sometimes call those who are going through really tough times. I am continuing to nurture my own sensitivities through my engagement with other people and their lives’ needs. Bible reading, prayer, and my sermon preparation (are in that experience). I preach out of where God is speaking to me. I do not sit down and plan a year’s sermons. I focus on a short series, what I am reading, and my own personal development. I want to grow with my people. Another thing that is part of my discipleship now is mentoring. In addition to my preaching and teaching ministry, I also mentor a men’s group. I intentionally focus on the guys who are new Christians or unengaged in ministry and leadership in the church. I



spend 12 weeks at a time with these guys while focusing on the basics. I will focus on prayer, Scripture reading, self-management, our stewardship of time, our engagement with family, and our investment of resources. Over those 12 weeks, I basically ask (about) what God is doing in their lives today. We talk about where God has been at work in their lives over the past week. We talk about how God works in our lives and how he communicates through circumstance, Scripture, and our own personal meditation and prayer time. Another part of my discipleship is in giving. My wife and I really enjoy giving and helping those who are struggling. In addition to our tithe and commitment to the debt retirement of our church, my wife and I give a lot. I am a beekeeper and sell my honey here at the church at a much discounted price. We put any money that comes in through that back into our mission work with single moms and those who have fallen on hard times or lost their jobs. We do not share a whole lot about that. My staff knows that any time someone comes and there is money in the envelope, they take that money and help people. Another part of my discipleship is international mission work, disaster relief, and missions. My wife and I invest our time through a couple of trips every year. We are investing ourselves, especially in Haiti. We have been (going) there for six years now. Our church ministry teams have almost 30 trips there. I teach beekeeping to the rural farmers. They are the poorest of the poor. Their annual income is about \$360 per year. I have been nurturing a relationship with an international nonprofit that actually provides the wood and the bees. I mentor and teach beekeeping to these farmers so they can literally triple their annual income with the sale of honey and beeswax. I do this through Scripture by teaching biblical lessons every week. We look at God's principles on life which is taught to us through nature and the honeybee. Investing in those precious people

is part of my discipleship. We have a medical clinic, women's ministry, and men's ministry going now. The church that we have been mentoring is now planting churches. I include that in my discipleship because that is where God is growing me to be selfless. In my men's group on Sunday afternoon, I am encouraging them to invest in their (Haitian) family and to invest their dollars wisely. (A great) investment of dollars is in teaching others about a renewable resource that God has provided all of us. Part of my discipleship is the study of Bible lands. Every three years or so I lead a tour to Israel. I will add a side tour to either Greece, Rome, Jordan, or Egypt. I take men and women who are wanting to know more about the land and the Lord of the land, and I pour my heart into them through Scripture and practical life lessons for 12 days. At the core of my personal discipleship are five things: daily Bible reading, daily prayer time, sharing my faith, giving, and sharing my faith in Christ. If your discipleship outgrows its basic disciplines, then it has outgrown its meaningful effectiveness in your life."

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church H Pastor replied as follows:

"I have learned several things. One is action precedes attitude. When my perspective and attitude grow negative and numb, then the only way that I am able to change that is to take action. Action precedes attitude. You cannot steer a sailboat if you do not hoist the sail and catch the wind. To the degree that I am investing myself in the core disciplines that I have shared, I find joy in my walk with God. The more I share my faith, the more I want to share my faith. The more I have given of my time, myself, my listening, my resources, then the more I have learned of how little I need to survive. The more I give, then the more I have to give. Those are some of the life lessons that I have learned.

Another lesson is the more time I spend with the Lord, then the more productive the rest of my time is.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church H Pastor replied as follows:

“This is what I have picked up from the legacy of others. I have learned from J.W. Baker that there is no greater gift than to share a witness with another person. There is nothing greater that you can do for another person than to share Christ with them. There is no greater source of strength, power, encouragement, comfort, confidence, and assurance than an honest prayer life at the feet of Jesus Christ. If our face is up too high to see the scars on his feet, then it is too high. Some would say that they want to see his face in glory, but I need to see his feet. It is the calluses on your feet that are going to make a difference in your community. I have learned that churches are built and church growth happens with shoe leather. Shoe leather is the key to church growth. I have learned that walking slowly through the crowd and pausing to look into the face of every person that speaks to you is the key to meaningful relationships. I have learned that relationships determine ministry. By the extent that you have a healthy relationship with another person, that person will be open to hearing what you have to say about Christ.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church H Pastor replied as follows:

“I work on a Bible reading plan which starts every January. I challenge my people to read the Bible. I want to do it and I want them to do it. There is nothing I can say or do that is going to be more important than the word of God. Concerning the daily Bible reading

plan, I plan it, push it, promote it, and celebrate it. I consistently encourage my people to share their faith in Christ. I encouraged my people one-on-one to share with others. There is somebody else out there in the world who needs to hear that today. I call it sharing their Jesus story. When I think of mentoring a man, I am constantly recruiting men. I love for those who are quiet, stand back, and are not engaged (to be) recruited to join my men's group. I call it Master's Men. The Master wants us to be godly men while living the life of a man. Another thing I do is pray (immediately) when someone shares a prayer concern with me. It teaches them to pray while praying with them. It can be in a grocery store, hospital, here at the church, or in the foyer. There may be 120 people standing around, but I will stop and pray. We will have people walk up, put their hands on our shoulders, and join us quietly as we pray."

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church H Pastor replied as follows:

"I think that the single greatest challenge in the local church is meaningfully discipling believers. I think the most pressing need in the local church is for those who have been disciplined to continue to disciple others. Most people take a discipleship course, they check off (that box), and look for something else. The challenge for me as a pastor and as an individual believer is to make my learning of Christ an everyday renewal. It is something that I must nurture every day. I will never arrive at maturity. I am always maturing. I mature only to the extent that I invest myself in those basic disciplines. I think the greatest need in the local church is developing a life of discipleship in believers. It is not a program or a plan, (but) it is a lifestyle."

**Church H Staff Member 1. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church H Staff Member 1 replied, “52 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served alongside the pastor, Church H Staff Member 1 replied, “21 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church, Church H Staff Member 1 replied, “21 years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church H Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“It has been an ongoing thing. It matures as I get older. I think that it has been a process.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church H Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“Every morning I read a couple of chapters. I usually pick a book of the Bible and go through it studying. I do not just sit there and read it, but I have a notebook and I record my thoughts. I also use two devotional books each time. I also have other books that are about a certain book of the Bible or a topic.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church H Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“I guess (that would be) a closer walk and an understanding. A study that I just finished was *Discerning the Voice of God*. That really spoke to me and I was able to use what I heard in a counseling session just a couple of days ago. I love it when God shows me something and, pretty much on the heels of that, brings me someone that I can show it to.

I think that is what discipleship is all about. It is learning and, at the same time, passing it on.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church H Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“I guess experience and ideas. We all experience times of dryness and during that time I may be in a conference, hear something, or read something that is a twist on what I was doing in my quiet time and devotional time. That then helps me to go in a little different direction and spurs me on to a deeper walk.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church H Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“What I try to do as minister of education is find courses or studies that speak to where we are as a church right now. It may be where some people have talked to me about where they are struggling. That is where *Discerning the Voice of God* came from. Several people had said that they wanted to know how to hear and they wanted to know how to do that. I think that (discipleship) needs to have some one-on-one (interaction). We have encouraged a lot of our mature Christians to pray and seek out someone that they can take under their wing and disciple. Especially some of our young adults. With children we offer the new Christian’s class as well as their ongoing Bible study time.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church H Staff Member 1 replied as follows:

“One thing that I see in churches now that really burdens me and makes me sad is that they do not do discipleship anymore. I am 65 years old, have been in the ministry a long

time, and have seen that churches that do not do discipleship are very superficial. They have their worship, but there is no deepening walk there. To have a deepening walk with the Lord, you have to have some discipleship in your life. We do not come to this naturally. There is too much in the world pulling us. We (should) root and ground ourselves in Bible study together. You might have an insight that they need to hear, and they might have an insight which you need to hear. We need each other. God put us together as a church and a body of believers. To do that we need each other to grow. You cannot really do that in corporate worship.”

**Church H Staff Member 2. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church H Staff Member 2 replied, “37 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have served alongside the pastor, Church H Staff Member 2 replied, “11 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many years you have served your current church, Church H Staff Member 2 replied, “11 years.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church H Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“That has been something that I am disappointed in. I did not have that (while) growing up. We had the normal Sunday school and an occasional Sunday night or weeknight Bible study. That was pretty much it.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church H Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“Scripture reading and I have a friend who is part of the ministry (with) a parachurch group. He and I have started working through some material that they have published. I have a friend from the church, who is one of our Sunday school teachers in the adult classes, and he is an accountability partner.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church H Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“Scripture memorization. In college we met in discipleship groups and I began using the *Navigators Topical Memory System*. The guy that I am with now as an accountability partner has many cards committed to memory and huge chunks of Scripture. He is amazing at it.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church H Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“The importance of Scripture in your life.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church H Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“That is one thing that I have been doing with a friend of mine. I had looked for something for many years that had a step-by-step (plan). Finally, I found that. It is called *The Relevant Discipleship Resource Manual*. When you are going through this with adults, you meet every three weeks. There are articles about each topic that are covered in the manual. They approach it from a coaching type (standpoint), which I am not really in favor of. In the material that we have been using, he has articles on prayer, the word, ministry, discipleship, community, and evangelism. There also coaching/teaching tools



that are on the same topics. There are lessons which are taught about being a disciple, self-evaluation, relevant discipleship pathways, your conversion story, and seven disciplines of the disciple. (It also has) 12 teaching things in here. You do it yourself and, when you meet with that person, you go over it. You have the accountability that you have done it, are thinking through it, and that it is a part of your life. As a church we do the traditional, typical, Lifeway material. On Wednesday nights we do a teaching time (an example may be) character studies throughout Scripture. One thing I have been upset with is a lack of knowledge. We focus so much on evangelism and the life of Christ that I have unintentionally neglected the approach of traditional biblical knowledge. We are going to start doing that in our student ministry. We have hit it hard with their international trips while being evangelistic and intentional. We have a lot of kids participating in that kind of stuff. In the last few years, we have had them in Haiti, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, and we are going to Southeast Asia this summer. We are doing things for them concerning evangelism. (Concerning) biblical knowledge, in my opinion, they are lacking in that department. This semester we are going to focus more on that type of thing.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church H Staff Member 2 replied as follows:

“I think there needs to be more discipleship. I think that we talk about how we need to do it, but I do not think that people are producing materials for the step-by-step process. There are so many people that were not disciplined. If you keep producing people who were not disciplined, then you will have a lot of people talking about discipleship who have

never been a part of it. Having that material out there would be tremendous, because people want a step-by-step (plan). (They want to know) how to accomplish that.”

**Church H Female Church Member. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church H Female Church Member replied, “46 years.”

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have attended church with the pastor, Church H Female Church Member replied, “22 years.”

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many church services you attend per month, Church H Female Church Member replied, “8 services.”

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church H Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I went to a Billy Graham movie in the theater and that is where I was introduced to the gospel. (The movie was) called Time to Run, and they gave me a track as I went out the door. I read that and said a sinner’s prayer by myself. It advertised his crusade in St. Paul, Minnesota. I am talking about being a Christian in 1973. I went to the Billy Graham Crusade called Yes ’73. I decided that I was going to go. I was 15 years old and I went with people I did not know. I stayed there a week, and that was my first discipleship training. I do not have a memory necessarily of what he taught me. We spent a week in class during the days and at night we would attend the crusade. After a couple of nights at the crusade, I went forward and made my decision public. That was my first experience with discipleship. A couple of months after me becoming a Christian my dad got a new job. I was raised by atheists. After my dad got the new job, we moved to a new city and it took me some time to find a new church. After a few months, (I found a church). I began attending there, going to Sunday school and the youth group. I was 16 at that time. I went

to the youth group once a week and they had something called Campus Life. I went there every Thursday. I got a lot of church during the week between the youth group, Sunday school, the church services (morning and evening), and Campus Life. I got a great foundation from the very beginning. My youth pastor required, (for admittance to go on) a trip, that we had to be physically fit and memorize Scripture. (We had to get each of those) signed off on, in order to go on the trip with him. From the beginning, I memorized Scripture. It is a passion of my life, and that is why I teach Bible drill. We do not have any programs in our church that are continuous like the Bible drill is.

Throughout the school year, we are learning this amount of material and they have to produce that material at the end. They have to have it memorized, and there is nothing else in Baptist life like that. In Sunday school, you might talk about a story that you have learned, but then you move on. I am passionate about Bible drill and memorizing Scripture, because of my foundation from my first youth pastor.”

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church H Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I have turned a corner, and I am so excited about it. I am dyslexic, so I have always had trouble reading the printed word. I cannot track words in lines across the page. I get lost with where I am (reading). (I had always wondered) how people would read the Bible through in a year. A few years back, (my reading) became more complicated due to (a retinal tear). I cannot see the written word. (About two years ago our pastor) challenged us to read one chapter in the book of John each day for 21 days. He said, ‘is that too much to ask?’ I know that that was not too much to ask, but some of the chapters in John

have 58 verses. Of course, I am going to do it, but I do not know how I will get that accomplished. Someone told me that my Bible app will read to me. So, I had it read to me. I became enamored with the book of John. I listened to it over and over and over. I decided that I was going to be an expert on the book of John and be able to tell you what the eighth chapter or ninth chapter (said). I devoured the book of John, and then (our pastor) wanted us to read the book of 1 John. Last Christmas, my son got me a subscription to *Audible*. Last year, I read through every single book of the Bible with an *Audible* book. It helped me to understand the historical elements of it. I cannot get enough. I went through a series of books. It takes you from the Exodus all the way to Deuteronomy. As I was listening to Deuteronomy, I was getting it for the first time in my life, after being a Christian for 46 years. I understand Deuteronomy, and, as Moses died, I am weeping. I am weeping as I am listening to the book of Deuteronomy, who does that? I am so tickled that at this time in my life I finally have got something that is helping me to understand all of the little nuances of the Scripture.”

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church H Female Church Member replied as follows:

“It is been my lifelong journey of putting God first and putting a priority on elements of my life. I volunteer at (a jail) by teaching a course called *Resolving Everyday Conflict*. (We had a) lesson on idols. (Prior to that lesson) if you had asked me if I were an idol worshiper by putting things ahead of God, I would have said no, absolutely not. (Since that lesson) yes I do. I do not have the right priorities in my life even now. It is a lifelong battle of always putting God first as the Supreme in my life. Courses like that, and many

others, teach me that nothing is more important than my relationship with God. That is been a lifelong journey for me.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church H Female Church Member replied as follows:

“The longest standing disciple-maker in my life is my pastor. I have sat underneath his teaching for (22 years). I would say that the love of God’s word is his life. He communicates that to me every week. He loves God, loves his word, and he discipless me every week. At age four my son wanted to give his life to God and live wholeheartedly for him. (My son started sitting) on the front row. It was such a visual for me. He would sit just feet away from my pastor’s teaching. I told (my pastor) that he is the biggest influence in my son’s life, besides his parents. I would not let (my son) sit underneath his teaching if I did not trust him.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church H Female Church Member replied as follows:

“I would say learn to live life fully so that you can be intentional. Wake up every morning with that whole mentality. I sit with my cup of coffee, my calendar, and my Bible. Everything surrounds me and I do not get out of bed as I spend time with the Lord and my calendar. The Lord speaks to me to help me order my day. I do not just make a checklist, but I ask what my day should be like. I try to live slow enough to hear him speak to me. If I need to make an abrupt change of direction, or (that he) would put somebody in my path. (God) understands our to-do list, but sometimes he wants us to stop and do this. It is about a life of obedience and hearing God speak to you. You have

to slow down and be aware of his leading and direction. I look people straight in the eye and not rush past them. I recently did that, but I caught myself and turned, looked her right in the eye, and said ‘Merry Christmas to you.’ If you are so busy rushing around, then you miss so much. I have a hard time balancing my life, but it is always a struggle. You are not going to hear from God if you are too busy.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church H Female Church Member replied as follows:

“My husband and I are passionate about discipleship. Everything that we do has that kind of flare to it. If we are going to do something with the grandkids, the jail ladies, or Bible drill group, (we incorporate discipleship). I hear parents say that they take their kids to church, but they are falling away from the church. It is so much more than just going to church on Sundays. That is not enough. (Through audio books) I am able to read the Bible and learn on my own. Why have I not been learning this? Part of the reason is because Sunday school lessons and little sermons (I am not criticizing because I will be right there Sunday) are not enough. We have to immerse ourselves in God’s word. It has to be much more than a Sunday school lesson. (Even the Gospel Project skips too much.) You do not get enough in the sermon or the Sunday school lesson. You have got to be part of a discipleship training program whether it is Bible drill, a women’s Bible study, or in-home studying. (You cannot) rely on the church to do all of the Bible teaching. We (must) teach about Jesus everywhere we go. The Bible says when you sit in the way, when you lie down, and when you wake up, we have to be speaking the words of truth into our children. We are losing our children. That haunts me and scares me. The new generation of kids know a whole lot less than when (my husband) and I first started

teaching in the 1970s and 1980s. There is a lot about God's word they do not know. They will go into these liberal universities and to the secular world and it will pull (them) away from believing in God. Discipleship is necessary."

**Church H Male Church Member. Interview question 1.** When asked how long you have been a Christian, Church H Male Church Member replied, "45 years."

**Interview question 2.** When asked how many years you have attended church with the pastor, Church H Male Church Member replied, "19 years."

**Interview question 3.** When asked how many church services you attend per month, Church H Male Church Member replied, "10 services."

**Interview question 4.** When asked how you would describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer, Church H Male Church Member replied as follows:

"I became a new believer and went off to college. That was a traumatic experience in its own. I was really learning what a Christian was and believed. I did get a heavy perspective of the discipleship responsibility to take and spread the gospel. I really did not have any support system to appreciate what that meant."

**Interview question 5.** When asked how you would describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ, Church H Male Church Member replied as follows:

"I would say it is robust in character and reinforced by my pastor, the social class that I teach, and the (weeklong) fellowship with my church members."

**Interview question 6.** When asked how you would describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship, Church H Male Church Member replied as follows:

“If a church does not preach it, then they will not do it. If a church does not do it, then God does not bless it. I have watched churches die because they ignored discipleship.”

**Interview question 7.** When asked how you would describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers, Church H Male Church Member replied as follows:

“I think the most important part of that is the commitment to making it real in your life. It is one thing for you to know about it, but it is quite another to make it a fundamental part of your life. (There is a person in my family) who lives every minute of her life as a disciple. She constantly asks people (that she meets) if they have a home church and if they would like to attend her church. It is the mental view that if I do not offer the gospel to someone, then I have failed in my fundamental responsibility to Christ.”

**Interview question 8.** When asked how you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith, Church H Male Church Member replied as follows:

“Growing in your faith is related to discipleship. I perceive that Southern Baptist churches missed that. They try to rush people directly into being disciples when they do not understand if they are strong Christians. A person without a firm understanding of their faith and the depth of their faith has problems committing to discipleship. Discipleship is a sacrifice, (if it) is done well. Discipleship draws fire on you. My answer to the question is to strengthen people in their walk with Christ and their fundamental understanding of that walk and to heighten their (foundational) understanding of discipleship.”

**Interview question 9.** When asked is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship, Church H Male Church Member replied as follows:



“Sometimes I think that we use the word and, to many people, the word is abstract.

(Discipleship) does not mean anything. If you were going to explain to me what discipleship was without using the word discipleship, how would you describe it? You would describe it in terms of the fundamental responsibilities used. Sometimes we hide the responsibilities of a Christian behind a word. (Others often say) to go out and reach people, but there are certain skills needed. Pastors are responsible for doing that.”

## **APPENDIX O**

### **Panel of Evaluators Findings**

#### **Church A Evaluation**

The following evaluation comes from Evaluator 1 who has 24 years of pastoral ministry and an earned Doctor of Philosophy degree.

The evaluation of Church A provided a thread of topics on discipleship. The phrase “not disciplined” occurred in each one of the respondents answer to question one concerning their own personal discipleship. All of the respondents felt like they did not receive adequate discipleship once they were saved. While they received program based ministry, it seemed that the respondents regret no personal or relationship discipleship. One staff member seemed to receive a little more discipleship through Wednesday night youth ministry but still felt they lacked a more personal and intentional form of discipleship. All of the respondents directly or indirectly mentioned the need for relationships in any discipleship methodology. The evaluator observed that each respondent utilized some method of discipleship that included a relational component. While none of the respondents felt disciplined as a new believer through intentional relationships, each one was actively discipling and being disciplined through personal relationships. The evaluator observed that while the respondents participated in church programs they each believed that needed more personal and intentional discipleship. Therefore, the evaluator recognized that programs may support a strategy for discipleship but not be an end in themselves. Programs may supplement personal relational discipleship but not substitute. A church should utilize multifaceted strategies to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

A common topic with each respondent was the word “process.” All five respondents directly or indirectly mentioned a process. Discipleship for these individuals included a process

that enabled a new believer to mature in their relationship with Christ. Church A Female Member stated, “It is an ongoing process more like a way of life.” Church A Male Member stated, “Discipleship involves a process of commitment and intentionality.” The pastor stated, “Discipleship is an ongoing process and one believer should never stop growing.” Church A Staff Member 1 indirectly shared the idea of process through regular meetings involving accountability, fellowship, Bible study, and prayer. In other words, discipleship is a process that involves intentionality and consistency for the purpose of spiritual growth. Church A Staff Member 2 stated, “Discipleship is a step-by-step process and we cannot expect people to just figure it out.” The evaluator observed that a key component in discipleship is understanding that making disciples is a process that involves commitment and accountability.

Another theme was “a personal quiet time” involving Bible reading, prayer, and accountability. Church A Female Member stated, “Daily Bible reading, prayer, and Bible studies” were her means of personal growth as an older believer. Church A Male Member shared the importance of consistent fellowship and accountability in addition to personal quiet time. Staff Member 1 described Bible reading, prayer, and accountability in order to stay focused. Staff Member 2 stated, of “ongoing discipleship” that he had a consistent daily time in Bible reading and prayer. The evaluator observed the need for ongoing discipleship in the life of the disciple-maker. Church A Male Member stated, “We should allow the disciples to observe our life as we do ministry together. We need to be humble, transparent, and honest with our struggles.” In order to lead others a disciple maker must continue to be disciplined.

### **Church B Evaluation**

The following evaluation comes from Evaluator 2 who has ten years of pastoral ministry and an earned Master of Theology degree.

One element to each of the responses was the inclusion of the phrase “Sunday school.” Most of the respondents spoke positively about Sunday school. The two exceptions came from staff members. Church B Pastor noted that his church’s discipleship process was “not just Sunday school.” His phrase was connected to an idea of “small groups” that “are meeting around town.” The evaluator’s interpretation of Church B Pastor’s remark was that Sunday school was not sufficient for the needs of people. Church B Staff 2 answered question four like this: “From a discipleship standpoint, other than going to Sunday school Sunday morning and going to the youth group on Wednesday night, there was *no real active discipleship* when I initially got saved” (emphasis added). His phrase made the evaluator question if he believed Sunday school was a “real active discipleship” strategy. Four of the five respondents stated that Sunday school was part of their personal discipleship. The only person to exclude Sunday school from their own experience of discipleship as a new believer was Church B Pastor.

A common thread found in all five responses was some form of the word “study.” Discipleship for those respondents included studying God’s word. Church B Pastor stated that “everybody needs to learn those tools so they can study, pray, and grow.” Church B Staff 1 said that “studying and meditating on the word” is “the only thing that makes a difference.” The other three respondents stated something similar or made a reference to their own personal Bible study. An analysis of the responses in regard to “studying” showed that four of the five respondents spoke of discipleship using some type of personal phrase. Church B Staff 1 stated, “I try to do my own reading and studying.” Church B Staff 2 stated, “The first would be my quiet time and personal Bible study on a daily basis.” Church B Male Member stated, “I try to get into the word every day, to decide what I am studying and preparing for.” Church B Female Member said, “I have a personal Bible study and a personal quiet time.” The one person not to mention

his current study practice was Church B Pastor. He noted how he learned from seminary to study and “to fish,” but did not divulge information about his current practice.

The three staff members mentioned the idea of mentorship in connection with discipleship. In response to question eight, Church B Pastor mentioned that the ladies in his church have a “mentorship thing.” Church B Staff 1 alluded to mentorship when he said, “you teach people how to pray by them listening to you pray.” Church B Staff 2 said, “As far as personal discipleship and another person, I try to share with them what I do.” The staff members communicated the idea that the researcher mentioned in his research. He wrote, “Godliness in the lives of pastors can be gleaned by maturing Christians. . . . In modern culture, this gleaned process may be described as a mentor/mentee relationship in discipleship” (Haynes, 2019, p.22). The comment of Church B Male Member solidifies their responses, “We have excellent staff at our church. . . . He is a giant of being an example of a disciple-maker. . . . Our associate pastor is the same way.” The staff of Church B see their roles and some of their members’ roles as mentors for others. The members of Church B do not see their roles as mentors, but they do see the staff as mentors.

### **Church C Evaluation**

The following evaluation comes from Evaluator 3 who has 40 years of pastoral ministry and an earned Doctor of Ministry degree.

Question 4, “How would you describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer?” The Pastor and the Male Church Member stated that they had no individual or small group approach to being discipled. Staff Member 1 and Staff Member 2 both spoke of individuals who discipled them, but Staff Member 2 stated that he was discipled more informally by family members and fellow church members.

Question 5, “How would you describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ?” All of those interviewed stated that they are meeting with others, and this is resulting in accountability and growth in their Christian lives.

Question 6, “How would you describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship?” Both the Male Church Member and Female Church Member have gained a clearer view of God. The Male Church Member expressed it more in regard to God’s sovereignty, whereas the Female Church Member expressed it more in regard to God’s grace. Both Staff Member 1 and Staff Member 2 spoke of gaining a heightened awareness of the need to love people more and to be more compassionate toward them.

Question 7, “How would you describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers?” The Pastor, Staff Member 1, Male Church Member, and Female Church Member all seemed to speak of the manner in which they have been influenced by other disciple-makers. The Pastor spoke of the need to disciple himself before attempting to disciple others, and I infer because of the question asked, that he has been influenced in this direction by other pastors, authors, etc. Staff Member 1 spoke again of the influence of his grandmother leading him to look at experiences of life through the lens of God’s word. The Male Church Member referred to his associate pastor as having positive personality traits, and I assume that, because of the question, he was expressing that he would like to adopt these into his own approach to discipleship. The Female Church Member referenced another female who had helped her to see God’s grace more clearly, and she obviously saw that as an important part of discipleship.

Question 8, “How do you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith?” The Pastor, Staff Member 1, and the Female Church Member seemed to have more in common in their approach. They

each referred to small group meetings, both formal and informal. Staff Member 2 and the Male Church Member both seemed to lean more toward individual discipleship.

Question 9, “Is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship?”

The Pastor and the Female Church Member both spoke more about the value of specific discipleship studies.

### **Church D Evaluation**

The following evaluation comes from Evaluator 2 who has ten years of pastoral ministry and an earned Master of Theology degree.

Church D Pastor articulated his position with clarity. The discipleship process for Church D Pastor begins with salvation. He stated, “You cannot disciple a person who is not a believer.” To determine if a person’s salvation is genuine or not, Church D Pastor asks questions in different ways to hear the person’s response. From that foundation of salvation, Church D Pastor wants people to make three intentional steps. First, Church D Pastor and Church D wants the person to commit to corporate worship. His description of corporate worship is attending church worship services regularly. Second, the person must commit to private worship. Church D Pastor described private worship as Bible reading and time in prayer for seven days a week. Third, every person should be involved in a small group. The description of small group involvement includes two different elements, attendance in the group and serving. Church D Pastor said, “There should be corporate worship, private worship, and small group (involvement). We base everything on these three expectations. We expect everyone to serve.” The connection of those phrases led the evaluator to believe that small group involvement involved attendance and service. Church D Pastor’s statements are echoed through the other interviews. Church D Staff 1 said, “Concerning discipleship, I teach a small group. I tell them that you have got to spend time

with the Lord in His word.” Church D Staff 2 echoed Church D Pastor directly with this statement, “So we always say, ‘worship, small groups, and service.’” Church D Male Member and Church D Female Member provided statements similarly to the pastor whether it was about the Gospel being the starting place or making small group participants participate.

Church D Pastor answered question six with adamant statements about caring for people. He said, “Discipleship cannot be done unless someone truly loves and cares about the people.” Two of the four other respondents mentioned their way of connecting and caring for people through discipleship. Church D Staff 1 spoke about building relationships and “investing” in their lives. Church D Female Member said, “When we have special gatherings at the church, I walk around and let them know that I am glad they are there. I try to love on them.”

Church D Pastor may encourage his congregation to use his sermon as Sunday school and small group material. Church D Male Member said, “This class is structured to follow the Sunday morning service. We dig in deeper to the passage that was just preached on.” Church D Female Member said, “I expect them to take notes during big church. When we talk about the sermon, (I ask) what applies to them or what they need to change in their life?” Church D Pastor did not mention this approach in his response to question eight. The evaluator believed the elaboration of that idea would be helpful to understand Church D’s discipleship plan. If Church D uses the sermon as teaching and discussion material for the small groups, then it reveals a more intentional plan for discipleship than just worship, small groups, and service. To state it differently, Church D may have their discipleship strategy to key phrases such as worship, small group, and service, but they are using an overarching paradigm to connect those ministries, especially the two ministries of worship and small group.



## **Church E Evaluation**

The following evaluation comes from Evaluator 3 who has 40 years of pastoral ministry and an earned Doctor of Ministry degree.

Question 4, “How would you describe your own experience of discipleship as a new believer?” All of those interviewed, with the exception of the Female Church Member, were recipients of good, organized church discipleship.

Question 5, “How would you describe your current experience of discipleship in your own personal walk with Christ?” The Pastor, Staff Member 1, and the Male Church Member each emphasized their personal Bible reading/Bible study and their personal quiet time with the Lord. Staff Member 2, and the Female Church Member indicated their discipleship was occurring through interactions with others in small groups.

Question 6, “How would you describe what you have learned through the experience of discipleship?” All except the Female Church Member gave very similar answers. They each spoke of the importance to minister to others. It seems evident that there is excellent communication within this church staff, and that the importance of discipleship is being transferred to the congregation. There is a mutual understanding that discipleship moves from one’s self to the spiritual growth of others.

Question 7, “How would you describe what you have gleaned from other disciple-makers?” The Pastor, Staff Member 1, and the Female Church Member indicated that they had learned methods to which they could adapt from the methods of other disciple-makers. Staff Member 2 and the Male Church Member both said others had impressed upon them the importance of knowing and loving the word of God in order to grow personally and to help others.

Question 8, “How do you go about the discipleship process with others, and are there specific practices that you employ to help others grow in their faith?” The Pastor and the Male Church Member spoke of using the one-on-one approach, while Staff Member 1 and Staff Member 2 were in agreement with the answer given by the Female Church Member, that they favored the use of small group gatherings.

Question 9, “Is there anything else that you think I should know about discipleship?” The Pastor and Staff Member 2 both said, in so many words, that we never get to the place that we no longer need to be discipled, or that we are finished discipling others. Both the Male Church Member and Female Church Member said we need to be more intentional in our approach to discipling others.

### **Church F Evaluation**

The following evaluation comes from Evaluator 4 who has 37 years of pastoral ministry and an earned Doctor of Ministry degree.

Question 1. Four of the interviewees have been Christians over 40 years. One has been a Christian 20 years.

Question 2. Participants have served with pastor a maximum of 20 years and a minimum of 3 ½ years.

Question 3. Church members are active in attending services. The Pastor has been at the church for 11 years. Staff 1 has been at the church longer than Pastor. Staff 2 has been with the Pastor for 3 ½ years.

Question 4. Two of the interviewees attribute their discipleship to their parents. Two interviewees attribute their discipleship to small groups. Two do not mention a process or others who helped them be discipled as a new believer.

Question 5. The Pastor uses small group meetings with staff for discipleship. The two staff members use personal time to disciple. The members use personal time and small group time for discipleship development.

Question 6. The pastor's emphasis on discipleship equating to evangelism and growth seems to resonate with staff and members. Four of the five interviewees mention something about others, evangelism, and growth as part of what they are learning about discipleship.

Question 7. Emphasis from the pastor on what he learns from other disciple-makers is that you grow the church through disciple-making. The others emphasized this by talking about setting a personal example by being a disciple. As they watched others model discipleship, they became better disciples.

Question 8. Without exception every interviewee follows the pastor's leads for making disciples: small groups. Each related how they employ a method that uses a small group organization to make disciples.

Question 9. Emphasis by interviewees if that discipleship is paramount to making a strong church.

### **Church G Evaluation**

The following evaluation comes from Evaluator 4 who has 37 years of pastoral ministry and an earned Doctor of Ministry degree.

Question 1. Number of years as a Christian were varied. Longest was Female Member at 69 years and shortest was Staff 1 at 15 years.

Question 2. Number of years served with the Pastor were about the same at 14-15 years with exception of Staff 1 who has been serving 1 ½ years.

Question 3. Pastor and Staff 2 have long tenure with the church at 15 years. Male and Female Member are regular in attendance at 8 and 10 times per month

Question 4. Three had positive views of their early discipleship experience. Male Member had a Minister of Students to disciple him. Female Member and Staff 2 had fathers who were pastors who disciplined them. Staff 1 and the pastor had weak early discipleship experiences. Those who had good early experiences were disciplined by men who had professional training or at least a professional vocation in discipling others.

Question 5. All interviewees had positive views of their present discipleship process. They all mentioned the basics of studying the Bible and praying. Most mentioned that others (peers, children, and spouse) were involved in their ongoing discipleship.

Question 6. The Pastor makes a general statement about maintaining his walk with Christ as being important. The other interviewees did not mention that. Female Member mentions her personal experience with her husband who was ill. The other interviewees talked more about personal disciplines and more in-depth Bible study. The emphasis seemed to be on Bible study rather than on-going growing relationships with Christ.

Question 7. Staff 1, Male Member, Staff 2 emphasized that they have seen disciple makers interact with other people as part of the process. The other interviewees emphasized that they have seen more personal growth without others being involved in the disciple process. There didn't seem to be much in common.

Question 8. Most all of the interviewees employed some type of small group as their discipleship making process. Perhaps this is following their pastor's lead of using workshops on Sunday night for discipleship. All of their processes were people intensive. Relationships seem to be the key to their successful disciple making.

Question 9. There is a consensus that discipleship is someone's responsibility. Someone has to be intentional for good disciple-making to occur. The staff and members agree with the Pastor's statement that keeping making disciples the main thing will be the greatest disappointment or challenge to the pastor's work.

### **Church H Evaluation**

The following evaluation comes from Evaluator 1 who has 24 years of pastoral ministry and an earned Doctor of Philosophy degree.

The evaluation of Church H provided similar topics on discipleship as the previous set of interviews with Church A. Again the phrase "Not disciplined and relationships" occurred in each one of the respondents' answer to question one concerning their own personal discipleship with one exception. Church H Female Member believed she received a solid foundation through a strong youth group that required accountability. The other respondents felt like they did not receive adequate discipleship once they were saved. While they received program based ministry, it seemed that the respondents regret no personal discipleship. Church H Staff 2 stated, "While we worship and engage in small groups, there is a need to go deeper." All of the respondents directly or indirectly mentioned the need for relationships in any discipleship methodology. The evaluator observed that each respondent utilized some method of discipleship that included a relational component. While none of the respondents felt disciplined as a new believer through intentional relationships, each one was actively discipling and being disciplined through personal relationships. The evaluator observed that while the respondents participated in church programs they each believed that needed more personal and intentional discipleship. Therefore, the evaluator recognized that programs may support a strategy for discipleship but not

be an end in themselves. Programs may supplement personal relational discipleship but not substitute. A church should utilize multifaceted strategies to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Another common topic with each respondent was the phrase “way of life.” All five respondents directly or indirectly mentioned discipleship as a way of life. Church H Female Member stated, “Discipleship is a life long journey.” Church H Male Member stated, “Discipleship is a way of life and we need to do it.” The Church H Pastor stated, “Discipleship is something we nurture every day and action precedes attitude.” All the respondents expressed the need for consistency through regular meetings of accountability, fellowship, Bible study, and prayer. The evaluator observed that a key component in discipleship is being and doing. Who we are directly affects what we do.

The topic of accountability occurred directly or indirectly with each respondent multiple times through the interview. Church H Female Member talked about the benefit of programs and accountability. Church H Pastor stated, “actions precede attitude.” Church H Staff Member 2 shared that discipleship must be personal and accountable. Church H Staff Member 1 shared the benefit of accountability in his own personal growth as a disciple-maker. Church H Staff Member 1 stated, “We learn so we can pass it on to others. Accountability helps me see my life from a different perspective.”

One final topic that was evident in each of the respondents was “Bible memorization.” Church H Female Member stated, “Memorizing Scripture is a high priority for me and one of the reasons I’m so passionate about Bible drills. I make Bible memorization a part of the discipleship process whether at the jail or small groups.” The Pastor shared Bible memorization as a part of his preparation for preaching. The other respondents shared indirectly how meditating on Scripture enables them to grow in their faith.